

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE  
JOINTLY WITH THE  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

----- X

April 25, 2014  
Start: 10:17 a.m.  
Recess: 2:00 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room  
City Hall

B E F O R E:  
MATHIEU EUGENE  
STEPHEN LEVIN  
Chairpersons

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Andrew King  
Fernando Cabrera  
David G. Greenfield  
Margaret Chin  
Carlos Menchaca  
Vanessa L. Gibson  
Corey Johnson  
Annabel Palma  
Ritchie Torres  
Darlene Mealy  
Laurie Cumbo

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Susan Morley  
Senior Advisor for Investigations  
NYC Administration for Children's  
Services

Deborah Harper  
Assistant Commissioner  
Vulnerable and Special Needs Youth  
NYC Department of Youth and  
Community Development

Sara Hemmeter  
Associate Commissioner  
Family and Youth Justice Programs  
NYC Administration for Children's  
Services

Susan Haskell  
Deputy Commissioner  
Youth Services  
NYC Department of Youth and  
Community Development

Kimberly Forte  
Supervising Attorney  
LGBT Law and Policy Initiative  
The Legal Aid Society

Jayne Bigelsen  
Director  
Anti-Human Trafficking Initiatives/  
External Affairs  
Covenant House New York

Megan Vizina  
Director  
Residential Services  
Safe Horizon Streetwork Project

Sarah Meckler  
Supervisor  
Homeless Youth Services  
The Door

Stephanie Gendell  
Associate Executive Director  
Policy and Government Relations  
Citizens' Committee for Children

James Bolas  
Executive Director  
Coalition for Homeless Youth

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you and good  
3 morning. I am Council Member Mathieu Eugene, chair  
4 of the Council's Committee on Youth services. I am  
5 pleased to be joined today by my colleague, Steve  
6 Levin, chair of the Committee on General Welfare.

7 Today's hearing will focus on the  
8 city's effort to determine the number of sexually  
9 exploited youth and runaway homeless youth and to  
10 learn a little more about the services available to  
11 them. This research is important because the first  
12 step toward providing services for our vulnerable  
13 population is to determine the size of such  
14 populations. However, determining the number of  
15 runaway and homeless youth and sexually exploited  
16 youth has proven to be very difficult. In 2013, in  
17 response to the difficulties in determining the  
18 number of youth who are victims of sexual  
19 exploitation in New York City, the Council passed  
20 Local Law 23. Local Law 23 requires the Department  
21 of Youth and Community Development, DYCD, and the  
22 Administration for Children's Services, ACS, to  
23 provide a yearly report to the City Council on the  
24 number of sexually exploited children in contact  
25 with DYCD or ACS. DYCD and ACS were chosen for

2 these reporting requirements because they are the  
3 two City agencies most likely to come in contact  
4 with sexually exploited young people.

5 In 2014, the Council received the first  
6 annual report required by the Local Law 23. The  
7 report outlines the difficulties of identifying  
8 children who have been subject to sexual  
9 exploitation, the services available for such  
10 children and the administration's use of Safe  
11 Harbor funding to better identify and serve such  
12 children.

13 As both DYCD and ACS are testifying  
14 here today, I will leave it to them to summarize  
15 the report in more detail. I would, however, note  
16 that DYCD and ACS identified 458 children in 2013  
17 who have been victims of sexual exploitation. This  
18 is likely a conservative estimate due to the  
19 underground nature of sex market and the stigma  
20 associated with sex work.

21 At today's hearing, I hope to learn  
22 more about the City's effort to identify and serve  
23 vulnerable young people. At this moment, I would  
24 like to turn it over to my co-chair, Council Member  
25 Levin.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
3 much, Chair Eugene. Good morning, everybody. My  
4 name is Stephen Levin. I am the chair of the  
5 Council's Committee on the General Welfare and I  
6 would like to thank everyone who is here this  
7 morning to discuss this very important topic.

8 Today, we are going to be discussing  
9 data collection efforts of two populations of  
10 vulnerable young people; those who have been or are  
11 at risk of sexual exploitation and those who are  
12 homeless. To continue on the remarks of my  
13 colleague, Council Member Mathieu Eugene, chair of  
14 the Committee on Youth Services, homeless youth are  
15 in dire need of resources and assistance here in  
16 New York City, but in order to know how to best  
17 serve this population, we need to know how many...  
18 we need to know more about these young people  
19 including how many homeless youth are in the city  
20 and where they are sleeping at night.

21 A 2007 study estimated that there are  
22 as many as 3,800 homeless youth in New York City.  
23 In addition to the 247 beds in the DYCD runaway and  
24 homeless youth continuum and the DHS shelter  
25 system, these youth are sleeping outside on the

streets, in abandoned buildings, on the subways, couch surfing, and exchanging sex for a place to stay every night.

For the first time in 2013, the federal government worked with the City of New York and eight other cities to conduct a count of the street homeless population. In conjunction with the annual measure of unsheltered individuals, the HOPE Count, DYCD, DHS and advocates worked to measure the number of homeless youth. The City uncovered an estimated 1,420 homeless young people including those in the DYCD and DHS shelters and on the street. The count only found 128 people; young people sleeping on the streets. Some advocates deem these figures to be unrepresentative of the actual number of homeless youth. Concerns were raised that no attempts were made to locate youth in areas where they typically congregate. With a limited amount of resources for runaway and homeless youth in New York City, an accurate estimate of the size of the population is essential in order to advocate for additional resources. In addition, having gone out myself with my staff for I think four consecutive HOPE Counts to the middle

2 of January or end of January this year, the  
3 temperature was below 20 degrees. That... and  
4 admittedly, from DHS's perspective, that  
5 constitutes often a absolute baseline of who is  
6 homeless in New York City or who is sleeping on the  
7 street; those that have absolutely no other place  
8 to go but the street, but nobody I think contends  
9 that it is an accurate number of the homeless  
10 population in New York City.

11 Today, the committees hope to hear what  
12 changes were made for the 2014 count and what the  
13 difficulties are in locating these young people and  
14 what was uncovered in 2014, as well as what  
15 policies we can look at moving forward in the new  
16 administration to meet the needs of homeless and  
17 runaway youth and sexually exploited youth. Thank  
18 you very much and I now welcome testimony from the  
19 administration.

20 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
21 much, Chair Levin, but before we move forward, I  
22 would like to take the opportunity also to thank  
23 Jennifer Wilcox, legal counsel and also Michael  
24 Benjamin, legislative analyst because they  
25 certainly worked so hard to make our public hearing



possible and I want to also take the opportunity to thank my staff, Debbie Suarez and Hedda Hart [phonetic]. Let me acknowledge also that we have been joined by Council Member King, Council Member Cabrera and Council Member Greenfield. Thank you very much. Before we csll the first panel, let me also take the opportunity to thank everyone and all of you here for the wonderful job that you are doing on behalf of our young people. We all know and we all agree that the young people they are facing many challenges, tough challenges and some of the challenges they cannot overcome them themselves and those challenges keep them on the wrong path, and every single day when we turn on the TV or we look at the newspaper, we see so many negativities and bad things that happen you know, among the young people, the young current population. But when I see so many dedicated, wonderful people in the room you know, today, there is hope. That means we have dedicated people who have dedicated people who have been doing a wonderful job and we have what it takes to change you know, those young people; to bring them from the negative life into the positive one and I think

2 the best formula would be in the humane... you  
3 know, the fact that we have to work together, join  
4 forces, put our resources together and also  
5 advocate for more resources; advocate for more  
6 resources that will allow us to build on the basis  
7 on what we have already and to create more positive  
8 programs and offer more opportunities to our young  
9 people. And to all of you, thank you for being  
10 here and thank you for what you are doing. Thank  
11 you. Now, let me... let us call the first panel.  
12 As a matter of fact, you are already ready, I  
13 believe. Susan Morley, Senior Advisor from ACS,  
14 thank you. Susan Haskell, Deputy Commissioner for  
15 DYCD; Deborah Harper, Assistant Commissioner, DYCD  
16 and also Sara Hemmeter, Associate Commissioner,  
17 ACS. Thank you very much. You may start anytime.  
18 Please state your name before you start.

19 SUSAN MORLEY: Susan Morley. Good  
20 morning, Chairs Eugene and Levin and members of the  
21 Committees on Youth Services and General Welfare.  
22 I am Susan Morley, the Administration for  
23 Children's Services Senior Advisor for  
24 Investigations and I'm testifying today and I'm  
25 testifying today on behalf of Commissioner Carrion.

2 With me from ACS is Sara Hemmeter, Associate  
3 Commissioner for Family and Youth Justice Programs.  
4 Also seated with me from the Department of Youth  
5 and Community Development is Susan Haskell, Deputy  
6 Commissioner of Youth Services and Deborah Harper,  
7 Assistant Commissioner for Vulnerable and Special  
8 Needs Youth. Thank you for the opportunity to  
9 discuss our work with sexually exploited youth and  
10 our efforts to collect data on this population  
11 pursuant to Local Law 23.

12 Both ACS and DYCD are committed to meet  
13 the needs of young victims of commercial sexual  
14 exploitation, commonly referred to C-SEC youth.  
15 Over the last several years, we and our provider  
16 partners have implemented a continuum of care that  
17 includes outreach and support services, placement  
18 options and programs. In 2013, New York City  
19 received \$622,220 in funding from the New York  
20 State Office of Children and Family services to  
21 enhance our capacity to serve this population.  
22 With input from providers, ACS and DYCD developed  
23 and implemented a plan to expand our capacity to  
24 assist young people who are risk of and victims of  
25 sexual exploitation.

2 DYCD provides core services through its  
3 Runaway and Homeless Youth RHY program that  
4 addresses the needs of C-SEC youth. DYCD offers  
5 emergency services via crisis shelters, which  
6 provide emergency shelter and support services,  
7 while helping young people to identify a safe place  
8 to live. In addition, DYCD contracts with  
9 providers who offer services at seven drop-in  
10 centers; three in Manhattan and one each in  
11 Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and the Bronx, each  
12 of which offer food, clothing and access to  
13 counseling, support and referrals for education,  
14 employment and housing.

15 DYCD also contracts with Safe Horizon  
16 Streetwork Project to conduct street outreach for  
17 young people. Streetwork staff offer food,  
18 clothing and information about services, while  
19 developing relationships with young people in order  
20 to help them make appropriate referrals. They can  
21 transport youth to safe locations including their  
22 home, a friend or a relative, crisis shelters and  
23 other safe locations. Through state Safe Harbor  
24 funding, Streetworks was able to hire additional  
25 staff and to purchase an additional van with

special focus on connecting with at risk youth, who may be Absent Without Leave, known as AWOL, from ACS foster care placements.

In addition, DYCD contracts with community-based organizations to provide Transitional Independent Living homes including specialized services for young men and women, parenting youth and LGBTQ youth. Girls and young women who are identified as sexually exploited can be referred to the nationally recognized Girls Education and Mentoring Services, known as GEMS. They have an eight bed Transitional Independent Living Program. Young people in this program receive counseling to address issues associated with exploitation.

Outside of the Runaway and Homeless Youth program, DYCD also manages the City's Summer Youth Employment. Young people often find difficulty to find employment and they become susceptible to the commercial sex industry as a means of survival and economic security. To assist with career development, state funds were allocated to place ACS's at risk and sexually exploited youth into jobs through SYEP. Youth were engaged in a

2 six-week employment program, which also focused on  
3 educational activities that integrated life-long  
4 learning and career planning.

5 Since the passage of Safe Harbor in  
6 2008, ACS has cross-divisionally tried to identify  
7 C-SEC youth. These efforts included bolstering our  
8 investigative work to identify cases of commercial  
9 sexual exploitation and training frontline staff.  
10 In addition, Children's Services has incorporated  
11 the expertise of specialists in our facilities and  
12 expanded our specialized foster care, juvenile  
13 justice placement and preventive services.

14 Identifying suspected cases of sexual  
15 exploitation is a fundamental priority for ACS.  
16 Prior to my assignment at ACS, over eight years  
17 ago, I served 21 years with the NYPD, the majority  
18 of which was spent investigating sex crimes and  
19 child abuse and after rising through the ranks, was  
20 appointed the first Commanding Officer of the  
21 Special Victims Division. At ACS, I oversee the  
22 Investigative Consultation Program, a team of over  
23 100 retired law enforcement professionals who  
24 assist child protection specialists with fact  
25 gathering, interviewing and locating at risk

children. CPS involved Investigative Consultants in any potential C-SEC case. The ICs use investigative databases, social media sites and other resources to assist CPS staff in investigations. ICs also refer appropriate cases to the NYPD and the FBI.

ACS has also provided Child Protective Service staff with guidance, training and support to identify C-SEC youth and help them access specialized services. In June 2012, ACS released a comprehensive policy on how to identify, engage and support victims of sexual exploitation and hosted a multi-disciplinary conference at our Children's Center. Since 2010, ACS staff have participated in several C-SEC trainings. In particular, from November 2012 through January 2013, ACS training academy partnered with Safe Horizon to present nine separate three-hour training sessions to DCP staff focused on our policy. This past December, through OCFS's Child Right Project, over 200 ACS and provider agency staff participated in another training to create program champions, knowledgeable resources within their different divisions on this issue.

2 In partnership with DYCD, ACS  
3 incorporated specialized expertise into our  
4 facilities by locating youth counselors experienced  
5 working with sexually exploited youth at ACS's  
6 Children's Center and detention facilities. A  
7 dedicated MSW counselor from Safe Horizons was  
8 placed at the ACS Nicholas Scoppetta Children's  
9 Center facility to meet with suspected victims of  
10 sexual exploitation and provide necessary support,  
11 referrals and case management. This counselor also  
12 facilitates group sessions, consults on individual  
13 cases and trains Children's Center staff. In  
14 addition to the work provided by Safe Horizons,  
15 GEMS also provides weekly support groups and  
16 outreach to both ACS's Children's Center and two  
17 juvenile justice facilities that serve girls.

18 To meet the needs of at risk and  
19 sexually exploited youth in our foster care and  
20 juvenile justice placement, ACS contracts with the  
21 Jewish Child Care Association, JCCA, whose Gateways  
22 program provided intensive trauma informed services  
23 including assessment, therapy and counseling. ACS  
24 also contract with Mount Sinai-St. Luke's  
25 Roosevelt's New Beginnings Program, a unique



preventive program which works with 12 to 17-year olds at risk of or victims of sexual exploitation and their families, with the goal of keeping the youth safely in their own home.

ACS and DYCD recognize that at risk LGBTQ youth are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation. ACS allocated state Safe Harbor funding to three youth providers that have LGBTQ specific expertise and services. First, the Ali Forney Center developed a four-week internship program and began running weekly psycho-educational groups, which support young people who have engaged sex for money or other resources. Second, the Hetrick-Martin Institute created two support groups including one specifically for transgender and gender non-conforming youth. They also developed outreach materials describing available support services and developed a model staff training curriculum focused on identifying working with sexually exploited LGBTQ youth. The ACS Office of LGBTQ Policy and Practice plans to work with the agency's training academy to implement this training curriculum more broadly. Finally, The Door created a support group for transgender and

non-conforming youth and a job development group, which assisted youth with resume writing, job searches, as well as setting goals and developing plans towards their career goals.

In addition to expanding supportive services, we recognize the challenge of coordinating services, resources and care for this vulnerable population. With Safe Harbor funds, ACS commissioned Lynne Echenberg, an attorney and expert in the field of child welfare and juvenile justice to provide technical assistance to Safe Harbor grantees. Miss Echenberg was also tasked with developing an agency-wide strategic plan to address child commercial sexual exploitation in New York City. Her work consisted of meeting with diverse stakeholders including several ACS divisions, provider partners and youth to survey existing resources, identify gaps and prioritize future funding and resource allocation. Her comprehensive report identifies ACS's C-SEC efforts, as well as areas for further development, such as adopting a validated screening tool, investing in piloted and data collection tools and

as well as creating a training plan tailored to frontline workers, clinical staff and supervisors.

Given the often hidden and coercive nature of sexual exploitation, agency staff and providers face enormous challenges to identify commercially sexually exploited children.

Oftentimes, we encounter young people who are traumatized and fearful and many are understandably reluctant to disclose sexual exploitation. Others feel ashamed. Practice and research also shows that many sexually exploited children do not view themselves as victims and will not identify with terms like "sexual exploitation" or "sex trafficking." Many children do not trust either law enforcement or child welfare systems.

Identifying sexual exploitation requires much more than posing a list of questions or checking a box off on a form.

To that end, ACS, DYCD and our providers focus on building rapport over time with at risk youth and suspected victims of sexual exploitation. Young people are highly unlikely to disclose commercial sexual exploitation during initial intake sessions and it's critical to allow

the youth to speak openly and comfortably about their experiences in a sensitive manner, while recognizing the realities the youth faces. Since sexually exploited youth come through ACS and DYCD systems through multiple avenues: juvenile justice, child welfare, homeless services, among others, they may be in contact with multiple caseworkers, providers and facilities, which make it difficult to develop rapport. In addition, many of these young people may be transient and are unable to continuously engage in services. We are continuously striving to better engage youth, which is why we have expanded training, located specialized services within our facilities and further developed outreach efforts.

Collecting data is a critical component of our work. It assists in our efforts to evaluate our programs, identify gaps in services and determine how to allocate scarce resources. But ACS and DYCD collect data pertaining to... both ACS and DYCD collect data pertaining to sexually exploited youth by gathering regular reports from contracted providers, which include the number of youth served, the type of services offered, the age

and the gender of the youth and identification of possible sexual exploitation. ACS obtained demographic data, as provided in our report and appendix, of young people served by Safe Harbor funded programs from providers, ACS's databases, as well as reports from Lynne Echenberg. As discussed in our Local Law 23 report, obtaining all the figures required by law from vulnerable youth was not always feasible. For example, some of the providers conduct time limited outreach with youth at one time; example Streetwork, and many may not be able to gain or obtain complete information from their participants; example, whether the young person had contact with ACS or DYCD. In addition, since providers often collect demographic information without identifying information, they may not know whether a young person has been previously counted.

ACS is working to improve ways that we collect data about the thousands of children that... youth we serve. ACS divisions work with several distinct case management systems, each of which serves different purposes, some of which are controlled by the Office of Children and Family

2 Services and others that are controlled by ACS. We  
3 use state databases to collect and track child  
4 welfare and juvenile placement information and we  
5 use City databases to collect and track information  
6 about our preventive and juvenile detention cases.  
7 We are currently evaluating options to collect C-  
8 SEC specific data among these various systems.  
9 Improving the state operated CONNECTIONS system is  
10 the most promising option for capturing this data.  
11 Currently, caseworkers do not have the ability to  
12 electronically check a box, denoting a child at  
13 risk of or involvement in commercial sexual  
14 exploitation. Instead, any of this information  
15 must be recorded in progress notes. ACS is in the  
16 process of evaluating ways to streamline our  
17 documentation and reporting systems so that data  
18 can be collected and shared more easily.

19 In addition, ACS is pursuing additional  
20 training for staff and implementing best practices  
21 screening tools. To that end, ACS and OCFS are  
22 planning an additional large scale training for  
23 later this year. ACS is also currently  
24 participating in the testing of a screening tool  
25 developed for the child welfare and juvenile

2 justice systems in collaboration with OCFS, IOFA's  
3 Child Right Project and Loyola University's Center  
4 for Human Rights of Children. Once testing is  
5 completed, this screening tool will be the first  
6 validated instrument in the country developed  
7 specifically for young minor victims of  
8 trafficking.

9 Thank you for this opportunity to share  
10 with you this important work we are doing to  
11 address the needs of sexually exploited children  
12 and document the number of youth in this  
13 population. We are grateful for the support of the  
14 Council as we continue to work to improve services  
15 for the City's most vulnerable young children. We  
16 are happy to take any questions you may have.

17 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you. Thank  
18 you very much. Before we move forward, let me  
19 acknowledge we have been joined by Council Member  
20 Chin; Council Member Menchaca; Council Member  
21 Gibson and Council Member Johnson. Thank you very  
22 much, Council Members. Any other speaker? Anybody  
23 else who's going to testify? Okay.

24 [Pause]  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Commissioner, you  
3 mentioned in your testimony that in 2013, New York  
4 City received \$622,222 in funding from New York  
5 City and State Office of Children and Family  
6 Services. Could you... could you... do you... how  
7 much funding you are anticipating receiving for...  
8 you know, for this current budget or the next time?

9 SUSAN MORLEY: This...

10 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Do you think that  
11 you...

12 [crosstalk]

13 SUSAN MORLEY: \$550,000.

14 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So that means it's  
15 going to decrease.

16 SUSAN MORLEY: It was a decrease  
17 because the State had funded a total of five  
18 counties...

19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] Mm-  
20 hm.

21 SUSAN MORLEY: Including all of New  
22 York City and with the increased funding that they  
23 received, they added three other additional  
24 counties across the state, so they had to divide  
25 the funding.



2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Mm-hm.

3 SUSAN MORLEY: We took a little bit of  
4 a decrease.

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Mm-hm. You  
6 mentioned also one of the services that DYCD or ACS  
7 have provided is emergency services via crisis  
8 shelters. Could you give us more detail about  
9 that; you know, what is the step you know, through  
10 where should the young people go... should go  
11 before they get involved in the emergency shelter?

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Yes,  
13 good morning. My name is Deborah Harper. I'm the  
14 Assistant Commissioner for Vulnerable and Special  
15 Needs Youth at DYCD. Young people come into our  
16 crisis shelter through several avenues. They can  
17 enter directly or most commonly is through our  
18 drop-n centers that we have in all five boroughs.  
19 And so a young person who comes into a drop-in  
20 center and meets with a counselor and describes  
21 their current living situation as being one of  
22 homelessness or at risk of being homeless, the  
23 counselor will do an assessment and if a  
24 determination is made that the young person would  
25 benefit by entering into a crisis shelter and if

the young person is willing to enter into a crisis shelter, they will then be referred to one of DYCD's crisis shelters.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So you mentioned drop-in centers. Could you please elaborate a little bit more on the drop-in center for... in case there are people who are not aware...

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER:  
[interposing] Mm-hm.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Of the drop-in centers.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER:  
Certainly.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And could you tell us also how many are in New York City that's within the five boroughs and where they are located?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Okay, we have seven drop-in centers within the five boroughs. We have one in Staten Island; we have one in the Bronx; we have three in Manhattan; one in...

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] In where?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER:

3 Manhattan.

4 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Mm-hm.

5 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: And one  
6 in Brooklyn.

7 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And one in  
8 Brooklyn.

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Excuse  
10 me?

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: One in Brooklyn?

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: What about... you  
14 don't mention Queens. Is there...

15 [crosstalk]

16 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Queens?  
17 Oh, I'm sorry, and one in Queens.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Oh, so we have in  
19 the five boroughs, right?

20 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Yes, in  
21 all five boroughs.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Mm-hm. So  
23 regarding outreach you know, to the young people,  
24 what type of outreach system that you have? How do  
25 you get to those young people... how do you get to

2 those young people who are homeless or who are  
3 sexually abused? What is your outreach system?

4 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well,  
5 we do have street outreach teams who operate out of  
6 minivans throughout the five boroughs. Prior to  
7 the Safe Harbor funding, we had two of these  
8 outreach vehicles, but through the Safe Harbor  
9 funding, we were able to purchase another van, as  
10 the Commissioner had mentioned, and they travel  
11 throughout the five boroughs at different hours of  
12 the day and night all the way up until like 5:00 in  
13 the morning, going to locations that have been  
14 identified as locations where homeless young people  
15 congregate, and so the outreach teams will provide  
16 information to the young people on services that  
17 they can get. They will also transport them to our  
18 crisis shelters. They will also transport them  
19 back home if they meet with the young person and  
20 you know, the young person says that they think  
21 they would want to go home or to another relative  
22 or another responsible adult. So that's how the  
23 outreach takes place, as well as in the drop-in  
24 centers because young people come to the drop-in  
25 centers who are not only homeless, but also at risk

of being homeless, so you know, they might be experiencing some you know, conflict at home and you know, they're bordering on leaving the home. So those are the primary ways that young people will enter into the RHY continuum.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So you know, with respect to homeless young people, we know that there are some people they are homeless, but they sleep with friends, with relatives, with boyfriends and some of them also are in hospital. Do you put in your outreach effort... do you make any effort to reach out to those homeless also and how do you do that?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well, typically, within the runaway homeless youth population, there is like the unofficial connections that young people have amongst themselves and so they might know young people who are in a situation and they can be that type of a connection to get young people in to receive services. We you know, wouldn't have resources to go to... and we wouldn't have a way of really knowing where to go to apartments where people might be couch surfing, so that's kind of a

population that's difficult to reach, but we do believe that those young people are coming in to our drop-in centers to receive the services offered at the drop-in centers.

SUSAN MORLEY: There's also been a public awareness campaign funded by the City over the last couple of years and still many of the posters are still on bus stops, which you know, goes through some of the scenarios that youth... you know, they get offered a bed in exchange for sex and it's the human campaign and the City also has a website to help educate not only children and youth involved, but parents. Parents are very unaware of this problem in the city.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Mm-hm. We know that, you know, DYCD and ACS are required to provide a report to the City Council every year. Based on your report, how many young people are homeless in New York City and how many are sexually abused?

SUSAN MORLEY: Do you want to take the homeless piece and then I'll take the other part?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well, we don't have a concrete number for the number of

2 youth that are homeless and I am happy to say that  
3 we are working with our advocates and providers;  
4 with youth advocates and providers to come up with  
5 an accurate means of identifying and reaching the  
6 homeless youth population in New York City.

7 DYCD... you know, you had mentioned the 3,800  
8 number and DYCD has not been in total agreement  
9 with the methodology that was used to obtain that  
10 number because that number was not a direct head  
11 count of young people. It utilized multipliers and  
12 so because we do want to get to a point where we  
13 can identify and say this is how many homeless  
14 youth there are in New York City, we felt that it  
15 was very important that we reach out to the  
16 providers and advocates and work on this together  
17 and I'm very happy to say that this year we've had  
18 two meetings; two work group meetings and we will  
19 be having more because we do think that this is  
20 something important to do and you know, we've been  
21 working very positively with the providers and  
22 advocates to get this.

23 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I was going... I'm  
24 sorry.

25 SUSAN MORLEY: Oh, I'm...

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing]

3 Please.

4 SUSAN MORLEY: I'm going to give the  
5 other half for C-SEC. I mean in the report,  
6 there's a number of 458. As we discuss the new  
7 report...

8 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] 458?

9 SUSAN MORLEY: There... sexually  
10 exploited youth was what was reported, but I want  
11 to clarify what that actually is. That is by no  
12 means the number of sexually exploited children in  
13 our city. This is a number that we obtained from  
14 the Safe Harbor providers that only began their  
15 work, most of them, in October and November at the  
16 end of the year. As we discussed in the report, it  
17 is very challenging to get children to disclose  
18 that they are being sexually exploited and many  
19 times these... any kind of questioning is done at  
20 intake where the child does not trust you, they  
21 don't trust in government systems and they may not  
22 disclose that. The other issue is even in Covenant  
23 House, and I know the author, Jayne Bigelsen is  
24 here today, children basically told her, "No matter  
25 how good your screening tool is, if I don't like



you and I don't trust you, I'm not telling you."

So that's a message for the training we need to do with engaging youth. We also do not come across every child in this city that is involved in C-SEC and there are many other agencies that also come into contact and we have to do some work there with coordinating all the agencies because the DOE comes across them; the Police Department comes across them; homeless youth; DYCD. Wherever children are basically, and especially children between 12 and above and some even younger, unfortunately, there's a risk. We, particularly in child welfare, if you look at all the research, red flags: former foster children, child welfare experience, former sex abuse, educational neglect, truancy; all red flags and we get many of the cases that we see through neglect reports from the DOA. So if you think about the studies, the prevalent studies that were done in 2007 by Westat and 2008 by the Center for Court Innovation with John Jay College, and back then they were estimating anywhere from 2,500 to 4,000, and you think about how technology has advanced and how our young people have all these smartphones, I can tell you that the problem has

not decreased; it increased. What I can't tell you is that we have great data on it because of the challenges that are faced with collecting data and because this is a challenge I should say, because we've been studying it, that is a national problem. Nobody has figured out a great way to do this. So we are trying and part of our plan we hired Chapin Hall to try to assist us in that and that's why we are going to be looking at how we can collect data until we fix our databases, even if we have to do it manually; how to collect it; where we should collect and that's our frustration. We're really trying here.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I was going to ask you another question. I was going to ask you to break down the homeless... the population of homeless youth and sexually abused young people in gender also and ethnicity and age, but you don't have you know, the number; the size of the population of homeless youth. So I think that could be a big problem because one of the goal of this public hearing is to try to identify the size of the homeless youth and young people who are sexually abused because if we don't know the size

2 of the population, how are we going to be  
3 effectively plan and strategize to help them and to  
4 get the resources that we need? I think... I do  
5 understand that you know, it is very difficult  
6 because when we talk about sex, this is a very  
7 complex you know, situation and a very sensitive  
8 situation with respect to our young people, but I  
9 think that we should make the effort to get  
10 approximately how many young people are homeless  
11 and how many young people are being you know,  
12 sexually abused. This is a very, very important  
13 component because if we cannot get approximately  
14 the number and the size, I don't think that we are  
15 going to reach our goal to help them and...

16 [crosstalk]

17 SUSAN MORLEY: We absolutely agree with  
18 you, sir and that is why we have steadily been  
19 building our capacity to identify youth since 2004  
20 and one of the things we are participating in with  
21 Loyola University and the International  
22 Organization for Adolescents through the Child  
23 Right Project that OCFS has funded is the screening  
24 tool we mentioned in the testimony. We are  
25 piloting it at our Children's Center, which is

where children come in for temporary placement so we're able to place them and we also are piloting in one of Sara's shops our Family Assessment Program and this is a rapid screening tool to identify youth at risk of C-SEC or actually involved in C-SEC. It's short; it's something quick. It's something where if they say to certain things, we will then investigate further and refer them; for example, we want to build up our Safe Horizon's counselors at our Children's Center. That was newly done with Safe Harbor funding last year. We plan to increase that this year because we realize that we need to have experienced expertise people that really know how to talk to children to talk to them about this and also to dissuade them from AWOLing 'cause... which that is a big, huge issue with this population; to dissuade them to try to keep them safe. So we agree with you. We're struggling through this. We're getting closer to be able to collect data, but it's not an easy issue and we will never really know because despite what we do, it's going to still be underreported because of the very nature of this crime.

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: One other comment  
3 that I would like to make is you know, there's a  
4 very important component. You know, young people  
5 that trust their peers; young people you know,  
6 young people that congregate with.. yeah and I  
7 think one of you mentioned that they don't trust  
8 government. They don't trust you know, agency, but  
9 I think we should capitalize on that; use young  
10 people to reach to young people and we have the  
11 same situation. When it's about veterans and any  
12 other you know, group of people, they trust people  
13 who look like them and I think that we should make  
14 an effort to use young people to do the outreach  
15 because they talk. See what I mean? They share  
16 information; they share challenges you know, ideas  
17 and experience and I think this is something we  
18 should look into; how we can use young people to  
19 reach out to other young people. My last question  
20 is, before I turn it over to my co-Chair Levine,  
21 thank you for your patience and what is... I know  
22 it is very, very difficult; you mentioned that and  
23 we know that, to recruit and to know exactly how  
24 many young people are involved in sex abuse and sex  
25 trafficking and also how many young people who are

homeless, but what is the biggest challenge; the biggest challenge that you face in terms of reaching out to young people and trying to count exactly how many young people are in trouble? What is the biggest challenge? If you...

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well, there's many challenges...

[crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I know, but what is the biggest...

[crosstalk]

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Right.

[crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: One? At least two...

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER:

[interposing] Well...

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] Major ones or three major ones.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: It's definitely to identify the young people and see them at the time that counts are being taken. One of the things that we did this year for the 2014 HOPE Count that DHS conducts was we provided DHS

this year with 27 locations around the city where we know young people congregate so that they can add this to the number of sites that they go out to during the annual HOPE Count, and that's something that hasn't been done before, so those numbers haven't been... so those numbers haven't been released yet, but we think that that would certainly help to count more. And the other challenges you know, that young people, I guess you know, they do couch surf. They find places for the night and with that population it's very, very difficult to count and as you stated, we definitely are looking to see how we can include youth in the HOPE Count... in a Youth Count rather, because youth do know where other youth are and they would probably be more inclined to speak to another young person about their housing situation than to an older official adult, so we are exploring and utilizing all of those techniques. But locating young people who are very, very resourceful is the biggest challenge.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.

SUSAN MORLEY: It's hard to pick one challenge. I mean when you think of ACS, by the

time a child comes to ACS, usually somebody has failed that child. By the time a child is homeless, somebody already has failed that child and sometimes we're trying to protect the child from what was going on at home. Often, sex abuse, when it comes to C-SEC, they often had previous sex abuse and the child, at that point, is angry. Things may have been going on their home, but they certainly didn't want you to take them out, regardless of what was going on in the home, so now you... the biggest challenge there is trying to engage a child that's angry, that's disappointed in the adults in their life as it is, and really utterly traumatized by their experience, both at home, perhaps by the removal from their home and perhaps by what's going on if they're on the streets, so that's a big challenge. When you're working with these youth, another big challenge is holding onto them. They will run, especially if they have been already been exploited, so we may get a case for educational neglect and everybody thinks oh, it's no big deal. It's a teenager, 15-year old not going to school and then you interview Mom and Mom's like, "I don't know what's going on,



but somebody bought her a cell phone and she's wearing different clothes. She has this new older boyfriend. She's staying out two or three weeks at a time and I'm getting a case on me." And the parents are a little upset with you too, but what we try to talk to staff about is identifying what that may be and we gave them a desk aid to do that; when you see these red flags to bring that to the investigative consultant, the retired law enforcement and we try to find the child. Often, they're missing. You know, we use technology to find them. If we get the cell phone number, we... unfortunately I can't tell you how many cases that when we do that's an area I just gave you and get the cell phone number and we run that cell phone number with just a simple Google. The child comes advertised on back page, so it's a big challenge when you want the child to have the services that we do have and the child might not be ready at that point. So it's a challenge for staff who you know, are in rescue mode, as Lynne Echenberg put in her report. We want to rescue that child, but at that point, that child may only be ready for harm reduction information and they're not going to

2 listen. We were recently working with a child  
3 that's saying, "I know what you're saying, but I'm  
4 going back out there tonight." So it's tough, but  
5 we have to keep working on it and we have to keep  
6 working with them and giving them information until  
7 they're ready.

8 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
9 much. Now let me pass it over to my co-Chair  
10 Levin, but I want to mention also I have another  
11 public hearing going on at the same time and I have  
12 to leave now to go over there. I'll be back very  
13 soon. Thank you very much.

14 [crosstalk]

15 SUSAN MORLEY: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Co-Chair Levin,  
17 please?

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
19 much, Chair Eugene. We've also been joined by  
20 Council Member Corey Johnson, who is here and he  
21 had a root canal, so he's... [laughter] Thank you  
22 very much for being here. Thank you all and I want  
23 to thank you all very much for your dedication  
24 to... I'm sorry, we're having microphone problems,  
25 hold on one second... to... for your dedication for

the youth in New York City that are the most vulnerable and for dedicating your careers to this. It's great work that you do and we're very appreciative. So I'm going to try to channel my inner Lew Fidler. [laughter] If you know Lew, then you know how passionate he is and was in his 12 years as chair of the Services Committee around this issue, and the thing that I having... I got to serve with him for four years, you know, remember him talking about so much is the woeful inadequacy of the number of beds that are available; crisis beds, transitional beds for our runaway and homeless youth and that's something that we focused on here at the Council. We had to fight year after year to make sure that beds that were cut as a result of PEGs were restored. I'm hopeful and very much expect that the new administration will not... will be more supportive and my question is... I guess my first question would be funding aside, so availability of funding aside, in a perfect world where there was you know, a billion dollars available for beds, what would be the optimal number in your estimation for crisis beds and transitional beds in the DYCD system?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well, I  
3 think that probably goes back to us get a more  
4 accurate count, so that would be very hard to say  
5 right now because we wouldn't want to say a number  
6 that would exceed the number of youth who would  
7 need the beds. So I think that we would look to do  
8 first is try and get an accurate count of the  
9 number of youth who are in need.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, so that's  
11 then challenge number one, right, if we're going to  
12 kind of be building this up, but can you explain...  
13 you mentioned that DYCD and DHS have been making...  
14 have been working with RHY providers and advocates  
15 in I guess the last few months about establishing a  
16 criteria, coming up with a plan. Can you speak a  
17 little bit more about how that's been going and how  
18 we can expect that to progress?

19 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well...  
20 [coughs] excuse me. Well, we've had meetings with  
21 a number of our providers and advocates, as I said,  
22 and we've been discussing... well, first, we look  
23 back at what we did because many of those who are  
24 attending these Youth Count meetings participated  
25 in the 2013 Youth Count and so looking at what we

2 did then; what we were able to learn from that  
3 whole process and we're really like brainstorming  
4 ideas of what a count would look like going forward  
5 and we're also looking at other entities that might  
6 help us in doing that; other research entities that  
7 would help us formulate a methodology that both the  
8 City and our providers and advocates would be in  
9 agreement with because it's not helpful to have a  
10 number out that not everyone you know, is in  
11 agreement with.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: On board, right.

13 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER:

14 [interposing] So...

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right and I mean  
16 that speaks a little bit to the limitation. I mean  
17 the HOPE Count is a useful tool, but by no means...

18 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER:

19 [interposing] Right.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: A... should be seen  
21 as determining exactly what the number is and so  
22 you mentioned multipliers before you know, and that  
23 past studies have used some of that methodology. I  
24 mean I imagine you can't do a straight head count  
25 of every homeless youth in New York City.

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: That's  
3 correct.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So some of that has  
5 to be part of it, right?

6 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: I'm not  
7 a researcher, so I don't know all of the different  
8 tools that are available to researchers. That is  
9 why we are...

10 [crosstalk]

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hm.

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: As a  
13 group looking to see who we can bring in to help us  
14 identify what makes sense for this population.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay and then o r  
16 like academic institutions, part of that as well.  
17 I know you're working with different academic  
18 institutions on various programs. Is that part of  
19 it in terms of like statistical...

20 [crosstalk]

21 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well...

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Stuff and...

23 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: We  
24 brought in to discuss some of the issues around  
25 doing a count like this to CIDI...

2 [crosstalk]

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hm.

4 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: And you  
5 know, we've listened to some of the suggestions  
6 that they brought up and so you know, we're  
7 bringing in information from all sources because it  
8 is very important that we get a number that  
9 everyone is in agreement with and also learn some  
10 more about this population 'cause...

11 [crosstalk]

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

13 [crosstalk]

14 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: I'm  
15 sure...

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, absolutely.  
17 Yeah, go ahead.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Hi, I'm  
19 Susan Haskell, Deputy Commissioner of Youth  
20 Services with DYCD. I just wanted to add to that  
21 that we... every... you know, every time we get  
22 more information about young people, even when it's  
23 not perfect information, it helps like add to the  
24 pot of and it's all very valuable and we have...

2 for example, we just bought 76 new crisis beds  
3 online, which is a you know, big growth for...

4 [crosstalk]

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: What we  
7 had and looking at the utilization rates that we  
8 had and utilization rates that we'll have now with  
9 the additional beds will help us know that the  
10 demand is there and we have other... when you say a  
11 perfect world; billions of dollars; how many beds,  
12 we also... I like to think about our other services  
13 and not just the beds because so many of those  
14 young people who may be precariously housed don't  
15 need a bed that night.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Mm-  
17 hm.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: They need  
19 services. They need to get connected back to  
20 school. They need support and counseling. They  
21 need to get jobs. They wouldn't necessarily all be  
22 accessing a shelter. We know that because our  
23 street outreach teams see many young people and not  
24 you know, a very small minority of them are ready  
25 that night to take transport to home or to a crisis



2 shelter, so I would... oftentimes... and we're so  
3 grateful for the Council's support. You've been a  
4 huge partner for you know, more than a decade on  
5 beds for this population, but I always love to  
6 expand the conversation beyond beds to the kind of  
7 services that can help prevent people from having  
8 to come to a shelter in the first place.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right and I  
10 appreciate that and I think another point of data  
11 that I saw in our report was the number of youth.  
12 I mean just speaking to beds and knowing that it's  
13 not all about beds, but speaking to the fact that  
14 not every kid needs a bed every night, the number  
15 of youth that have used a crisis bed over the  
16 course of a year is much higher obviously than the  
17 number of beds available, right? So kids are using  
18 it for the time when they need it and then not when  
19 they don't. Is there... but I do want to kind of  
20 focus on this because to me, I mean look, I...  
21 particularly with social services I view, our  
22 policies often are working. We don't have the  
23 resources necessarily available, so I want to make  
24 it... I want to really make the case right now that  
25 we need to have increased funding for this. Are

2 there youth that are turned away from beds on any  
3 given night? Or what... that's one question and  
4 then I've got some other kind of related questions.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I'm sure  
6 there are young people who are not able to get a  
7 service when they go to the crisis shelter. We  
8 know that sometimes you show up at Covenant House  
9 and there's not a bed available, but...

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Mm-  
11 hm.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We would  
13 never turn a young person away to the streets,  
14 never. So there are other services. We have to  
15 work to help young people access those services.  
16 For example, an 18, 19, 20-year old has a place to  
17 go in the adult shelter system. If they're not  
18 willing to go there because they're not ready;  
19 they're still a young person; they feel more  
20 comfortable in a youth environment, then we have to  
21 work with them to help make that transition. We  
22 have to help counsel them and you know, get them  
23 access to resources. We can't just say, "There's  
24 no place for you tonight." The younger population  
25 is prioritized, so we would... you know, a 16 or

17-year old we would look at that in multiple ways with our partners at ACS, including trying to explore the young person; if they are disclosing abuse and neglect, one thing. What can we assess about their situation about our suspicions or abuse and neglect, but we wouldn't say to a young person, "There's nothing here for you. You need to go to the..."

[crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I...

[crosstalk]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL:

"Streets."

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I did not...

[crosstalk]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah.

[crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I did not mean to imply that.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I meant just in terms of if they were to come in and say, "I need to sleep in a bed tonight," and there's not... all

2 the beds are full and do you... in a related  
3 question, I mean do you have like a nightly vacancy  
4 rate similar to how DHS does that where I mean  
5 they'll be able to tell me how many empty beds they  
6 have and like in the family system there's six  
7 empty beds or you know, a very low vacancy rate?  
8 Can you tell me what the vacancy rate is on the...

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER:

10 [interposing] Yes, we get a...

11 [crosstalk]

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: On the DYCD beds?

13 [crosstalk]

14 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Census  
15 report every afternoon.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay and what is it  
17 currently or what's the average or what is it  
18 around?

19 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: I  
20 believe from yesterday we had five vacancies in our  
21 crisis shelter. Oh, actually... [background  
22 voices] So it... it...

23 [crosstalk]

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: It  
25 initially grew in five to three...

2 [crosstalk]

3 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Yeah,  
4 yeah.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: And the  
6 percent... the...

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So under five  
8 percent, right? I mean five out of 198 or  
9 something like that.

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSSIONER HARPER: I  
11 would say so.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And then is that  
13 around the same with the transitional beds or is  
14 it...

15 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: With  
16 transitional beds there... [background voice]  
17 Right, transitional beds because of the nature of  
18 the program; it's a longer program so the vacancies  
19 don't turn over as frequently...

20 [crosstalk]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

22 [crosstalk]

23 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: As in  
24 the crisis shelters.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And then speaking  
3 to DHS, can you explain a little bit about the  
4 coordination? I'm a little concerned about  
5 interagency communication and coordination you  
6 know, as young people are on that... in that in  
7 between area of being able to have access to the  
8 DHS system. Is it seamless? Are the... is  
9 programming seamless? Is all the programming that  
10 DYCD provides in your crisis centers available to a  
11 youth that, for instance, takes the bed in a DHS  
12 shelter, but then are they then losing out on you  
13 know, a tremendous amount of counseling and  
14 services that are available through DYCD? And if  
15 so, then I mean what are we doing to... and I would  
16 actually love to have DHS here as well, but I mean  
17 I think that interagency coordination is an  
18 essential component to success, so.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We  
20 absolutely agree with you. We've had several  
21 meetings with the new Commissioner, Gilbert Taylor,  
22 from DHS. You asked if it's seamless. We can do  
23 much better in that area and we're working really  
24 closely with he and his team to talk about how we  
25 can handle referrals and help smooth that out for a

2 young person who's maybe intimidated to go to a  
3 place there's going to be like you know, 48, 49-  
4 year old men there. As a 19-year old young male,  
5 this is just not a comfortable environment for me.  
6 I might prefer to stay somewhere which is much  
7 riskier; you know, just stay out on the streets or  
8 stay on a subway. We have to do better to help  
9 encourage young people and make it a comfortable  
10 environment for them to get access. So the system  
11 is there to make referrals, but I think we can do a  
12 much better job to make it seamless and we're  
13 working very closely with our colleagues there to  
14 improve that.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Turning a little  
16 bit to the shelter beds available for youth that  
17 are sexually exploited, I am going through the kind  
18 of the programs. You know, I noticed that it's a  
19 relatively modest number of beds; you know 12 beds  
20 in one program, eight beds in another program. are  
21 those sufficient numbers and is that...

22 [crosstalk]

23 Well...

24 [crosstalk]

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Are the numbers...  
3 I realize how intensive the services are and how...  
4 how much structure is involved in it and resources  
5 that, aside from just the placement of the beds,  
6 but is that a number that is limited due to funding  
7 constraints or is that just kind of what the  
8 programming can handle with the amount of  
9 programming that's...

10 SUSAN MORLEY: Probably a little of  
11 both. I think it's important to note nationally  
12 there are very few specialized beds and if you put  
13 together some of what... they probably have more  
14 that I know of, but what we have and what they  
15 have, at a minimum we have 26 and one of the  
16 Justice Reports said there's less than 100 in the  
17 country, so but that being...

18 [crosstalk]

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Wow.

20 [crosstalk]

21 SUSAN MORELY: Gateways, JCCA's  
22 program, is wonderful. It's 12 beds plus we have  
23 six in our non-secure placement. We need something  
24 else, so if I could spend of that billion that you  
25 were talking if in my dream world, we need what I



would call a pre-Gateways, not just for our use, but for other agencies uses. Our Children's Center, 8,000 kids come through that center a year and I really get concerned with mixing the population of you know, known C-SEC youth that the police may bring us they just recovered in a hotel with our child abuse youth that have no C-SECs and you've really got to worry about those populations mixing. I think we need a pre-Gateways. Gateways program basically they take the children that are ready to come out of the life and that's evolved into that by experience that they were having as they began working with this population and if you have kids doing really well and then you force somebody to go there that's saying, "I'm going to run away," or "I'm not ready," and you force them to go to this program, it could have a detrimental effect on the other youth already in the program and it's probably not going to work for that youth, so you've sort of got to meet them where they're at. In my dream world, we would have a separate facility with mental health services, medical services, assessment center or something, even where we could temporarily house until we assess

2 these children for what they really need and then  
3 get them to the right services and the right place  
4 and you know, even you know, the Police Department  
5 sometimes, "I really don't want to bring this child  
6 to the Children's Center," and we sometimes have no  
7 options, you know.

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: And...

9 SUSAN MORLEY: So I think we could do  
10 more.

11 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: And I  
12 would just add that out of the DYCD continuum, we  
13 do have the program at GEMS whose mission it is to  
14 service young women who have been sexually  
15 exploited and they do an excellent job, but I would  
16 also like to say that the providers and all of our  
17 programs are well-skilled to work with sexually  
18 exploited young people, so if there's not an  
19 available bed at the GEMS program, a young person  
20 who's been sexually exploited is going to receive  
21 excellent services at any one of our other provider  
22 agencies. They are all trained. They have  
23 required training every year and it includes work  
24 with sexually abused and commercial sex workers, so  
25

2 they would receive services outside of those beds  
3 at GEMS.

4 SUSAN MORLEY: I also think we can use  
5 a place for our boys in LGBTQ youth; the  
6 transgender youth. We have to do more work in that  
7 area...

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Mm-  
9 hm.

10 SUSAN MORLEY: You know, one in six  
11 boys; one of the stats; in the United States is  
12 sexually abused and if you figure boys do not like  
13 to disclose sex abuse period, much less that  
14 they're having to traffic themselves to survive out  
15 there on the street and when they grow up to be  
16 young men and fathers, it's going to manifest  
17 itself in all kinds of family issues if they don't  
18 receive the counseling they need when they're  
19 younger and the help that they need when they're  
20 younger. So I think investing money when they're  
21 young will save the government in the long run and  
22 families.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. So I  
24 wanted to ask you actually, and I might be jumping  
25 around a little bit here 'cause we have so many

2 different topics. There was a large training  
3 session in 2012 that was in your report.

4 SUSAN MORLEY: Right.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And you mentioned  
6 that you're looking to do another scale training  
7 session later this year. Is that the same session  
8 or the same type of thing and was that successful  
9 in 2012 and would it make sense to do it more  
10 frequently than every two and a...

11 [crosstalk]

12 SUSAN MORLEY: Yes, well...

13 [crosstalk]

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Half years?

15 [crosstalk]

16 SUSAN MORLEY: Well, the one in June  
17 2012, of 2012 was ACS partnered with our provider  
18 agencies to come up with this training. This is  
19 before we had actually Safe Harbor money and not  
20 only do we have it in our Children's Center, we  
21 beamed it out to our borough offices to try to get  
22 more people involved and it was deemed a very  
23 successful training. It's where we rolled out our  
24 policy and it's where we rolled out our desk aid  
25 and we had a panel of you know, the FBI, the Vice

2 Squad for NYPD, we had a provider panel and we  
3 actually at that training broke out into groups and  
4 gave case scenarios and we sent them all to  
5 different rooms to come back with what they did  
6 with that case. They had people really thinking  
7 about it and then we had them report out so they  
8 could learn from each other, so yeah, we thought  
9 that was extremely good and that training that we  
10 did later on that we had mentioned was a follow-up,  
11 a shorter version of that that we took out to our  
12 borough offices...

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Mm-  
14 hm.

15 SUSAN MORLEY: To try to reach more  
16 people. The state contracted the International  
17 Office of Adolescents for the Child Right Project  
18 when Safe Harbor funding was given last year, and  
19 they want baseline training basically for the whole  
20 state, the child welfare system, so the training  
21 last year, last December, was IOA for with some  
22 city providers also invited to participate. We had  
23 a two day training for the people that we called  
24 program champions. We know these children move  
25 throughout our divisions as they go from child

2 protection to foster care to our Family Services  
3 units, providers and preventive agencies, so we  
4 wanted to develop in every division in our  
5 organization people that care about this topic,  
6 inspire people to work on this topic and some of  
7 the focus groups that Lynne Echenberg and a few of  
8 us conducted with these different divisions, you  
9 know, it's almost like you saw light switches going  
10 off in people's eyes as you talked about this topic  
11 and almost every person that we sat with you know,  
12 wanted to go out and do something about it, so we  
13 were very encouraged by that and we got to develop  
14 that a little bit more formally and meet with them  
15 more often. So this training in September is more  
16 of the Child Right Project and we want to try to  
17 capture some more providers, as well as ACS staff,  
18 preventive staff and some NYPD staff we want to try  
19 to get to come as well.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Would it make sense  
21 to coordinate that with DYCD as well because  
22 obviously the DYCD staff is on the ground...

23 SUSAN MORLEY: We can certainly invite  
24 them and Safe Horizons has been a big part of all  
25 our trainings.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hm. You  
3 mentioned... you've spoken about Safe Harbor  
4 dollars. Do we know how much of the... I think the  
5 state has allocated \$3 million this year in Safe  
6 Harbor for FY '15 Budget. Do we know how much is  
7 coming to New York City?

8 SUSAN MORLEY: \$550,000 and we're happy  
9 to say our plan actually was approved for that  
10 funding yesterday.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So oh, it's been  
12 approved as of yesterday?

13 SUSAN MORLEY: Yeah, 'cause we had to  
14 submit a plan...

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

16 SUSAN MORLEY: And we had to wait until  
17 it was approved, so they had told us two weeks ago  
18 it'd be coming down and we got it yesterday.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So the rest of the  
20 dollars are going throughout the state or into...

21 SUSAN MORLEY: The rest... for the  
22 training plan there, the state's actually working,  
23 and we're on the subcommittee for this, on a  
24 blueprint for the whole state in response to human  
25 trafficking for the child welfare system and the

2 juvenile detention systems for the state. We're a  
3 part of that work and the city and the state  
4 actually had a work group to learn from each other.  
5 In fact, we do biweekly phone calls and you know,  
6 we actually helped on a case in Allegany County.  
7 They were looking for a severely trafficked youth  
8 that they believed was in New York City and they  
9 needed to get some cooperation from law enforcement  
10 and we really bridged a gap and we actually helped  
11 recover that child, so some good intercounty work  
12 is coming out of this. We actually met with our  
13 three neighboring states to learn from each other;  
14 learn what each other's doing...

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] 'Kay,  
16 yeah, I saw that.

17 SUSAN MORLEY: And you know, we want to  
18 continue that and of that you know, you know who to  
19 call.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Connecticut and New  
21 Jersey, sorry... could...

22 SUSAN MORLEY: New Jersey, Connecticut,  
23 New York; we all sat down together.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 'Kay.  
25



2 SUSAN MORLEY: And we went to  
3 Connecticut; went to Jersey and Connecticut is  
4 doing a lot of work in this and Jersey as well.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

6 SUSAN MORLEY: We were on alert for the  
7 Super Bowl. We actually...

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] 'Kay.

9 SUSAN MORLEY: At least one child I  
10 know of we had dealings with from the Super Bowl  
11 and you know, the mom had brought her up for it, so  
12 we have mothers recruiting their own daughters for  
13 this. It's really a tragedy.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I had one more  
15 question; then I'll turn it over to my colleagues  
16 for questions. With regard to law enforcement, one  
17 thing that has struck me, and I don't know the  
18 number right now, is how low the number is for  
19 people that have been arrested and prosecuted for  
20 sexual exploitation, both the children and adults.  
21 But can you speak a little bit to the challenges  
22 there and what we could do better about it as a  
23 former commanding officer of the Special Victims  
24 Unit...

2 SUSAN MORLEY: Well, I don't want to  
3 speak for the NYPD.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Yeah.

5 SUSAN MORLEY: I've been gone there for  
6 about 10 years now.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But in terms of I  
8 mean the numbers are pretty low...

9 [crosstalk]

10 SUSAN MORLEY: Well...

11 [crosstalk]

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In terms of...

13 [crosstalk]

14 SUSAN MORLEY: I can tell you...

15 [crosstalk]

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Kids that are...

17 [crosstalk]

18 SUSAN MORLEY: Conversations I've had  
19 with the... the Police Department really has been  
20 working on human trafficking themselves and have  
21 created their own unit.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hm.

23 SUSAN MORLEY: And you know, they are  
24 not arresting as many children as they used to.

2 Very few get arrested, as a matter of fact. I  
3 think they're viewing them as rescues.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yep.

5 SUSAN MORLEY: And you know, that's  
6 where sometimes they bring the child to us at the  
7 Children's Center and...

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Yeah.

9 SUSAN MORLEY: To speak to the problem  
10 I spoke about earlier, so I think it's probably,  
11 you know, a good thing that those arrest numbers  
12 are down. I would love to see the demand arrest  
13 numbers go up. I think...

14 [crosstalk]

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

16 [crosstalk]

17 SUSAN MORLEY: We could always attack  
18 the demand. If we stop the demand, we can save  
19 some victims.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And also pimps; I  
21 mean...

22 [crosstalk]

23 SUSAN MORLEY: Yeah well, that's...

24 [crosstalk]

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Those that are...

2 [crosstalk]

3 SUSAN MORLEY: Pimps as well.

4 [crosstalk]

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Those who are...

6 yeah, those that are...

7 [crosstalk]

8 SUSAN MORLEY: I mean you know...

9 [crosstalk]

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Engaged in  
11 trafficking.

12 [crosstalk]

13 SUSAN MORLEY: Just you know, I don't  
14 want to speak for the NYPD, but you know, with the  
15 technology expansion these days, it's not just kids  
16 standing on the tracks on the streets anymore.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Mm-  
18 hm.

19 SUSAN MORLEY: That makes it very  
20 challenging and you know, the pimps train the girls  
21 do not disclose; the pimps train the girls to lie  
22 about their age.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 'Kay.

24 SUSAN MORLEY: So you may have a 13-  
25 year old saying she's 18 when she's getting

2 arrested and you know, unless you have a savvy law  
3 enforcement officer or a caring person that  
4 realizes this child's really younger, that kid  
5 could just keep getting arrested as an adult you  
6 know. So definitely a lot of coordination and we  
7 do... our Investigative Consultants are retired law  
8 enforcement and we would closely with the Missing  
9 Persons Unit and the Vice Unit and the Special  
10 Victims Unit and if we have a child or we get  
11 alerted that a child is missing and she's involved  
12 with C-SEC, we let them know.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

14 SUSAN MORLEY: We're like you know,  
15 Vice, if you come across this kid, she's actually  
16 14, so here's her picture and...

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Mm-  
18 hm.

19 SUSAN MORLEY: So we can try to help  
20 recover her and you know, if we get a case... many  
21 times we're getting cases law enforcement does not  
22 know about because of what I spoke of earlier.  
23 We're getting inadequate guardianship and neglect  
24 and based on what the mother is telling us, because  
25 of the training we gave our child protection

2 specialists, they go to the Investigative  
3 Consultants...

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Yeah.

5 SUSAN MORLEY: And say there's all red  
6 flags for trafficking here. Okay, does the mom  
7 have her phone number? Okay, let's run it. And  
8 then we find her on Backpage and then we reach out  
9 to law enforcement to help recover the child.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And I wanted to ask  
11 about that really quickly, just as a quick follow-  
12 up 'cause in our previous term, the Council was  
13 very vocal about shutting down Backpage and going  
14 after...

15 [crosstalk]

16 SUSAN MORLEY: Craigslist.

17 [crosstalk]

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: The parent company,  
19 *Village Voice* and how big a problem is that and  
20 then I mean I'm sure your unit is keeping track of  
21 it and trying... I mean is it... I...

22 [crosstalk]

23 SUSAN MORLEY: I think it's a huge...

24 [crosstalk]

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: The part of the  
3 issue...

4 [crosstalk]

5 SUSAN MORLEY: Problem.

6 [crosstalk]

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is that it... it...

8 [crosstalk]

9 SUSAN MORLEY: Yeah.

10 [crosstalk]

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. If they  
12 shut down, it might pop up somewhere else, but how  
13 big a problem is it and...

14 [crosstalk]

15 SUSAN MORLEY: There's very mixed  
16 feelings on it because it also helps you locate the  
17 children.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

19 SUSAN MORLEY: So that's the dilemma  
20 there because if you know, I'm finding some of  
21 these children because they are on Backpage.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

23 SUSAN MORLEY: Right, so but it's a  
24 real dilemma. I mean you know, you look at the  
25 back of some of the local newspapers...

2 [crosstalk]

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: (**INAUDIBLE 18:56**)

4 [crosstalk]

5 SUSAN MORLEY: And magazines...

6 [crosstalk]

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

8 SUSAN MORLEY: It's advertised in there  
9 you know, but on Backpage they actually have photos  
10 of you know, of the child you know and she's not  
11 saying she's 14, but she is you know...

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Mm-  
13 hm.

14 SUSAN MORLEY: So I think basing it  
15 just anecdotally on the number of times since we've  
16 been involved in this in ACS, where we started to  
17 learn the phone numbers and all... I'm going to say  
18 the majority of the cases that I know about were on  
19 Backpage.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah, yeah.

21 SUSAN MORLEY: That my guys alerted me  
22 to.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So it's a real  
24 dilemma and everything.

25 [crosstalk]



2 SUSAN MORLEY: Yeah.

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah. I'm going to  
4 turn it over to my colleagues for questions. I  
5 want to acknowledge Council Member Annabel Palma  
6 has joined us and Council Member Ritchie Torres has  
7 joined us and Council Member Darlene Mealy was  
8 here; she may be back and Council Member Laurie  
9 Cumbo as well. Is that everybody? We're going to  
10 go with questions first Council Member Margaret  
11 Chin.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair.  
13 I wanted to ask a question about your... the drop-  
14 in center 'cause in your testimony you were talking  
15 about that. In every borough you have one and then  
16 in Manhattan there are three?

17 SUSAN MORLEY: Yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Can you maybe  
19 describe a little bit more about what kind of  
20 services happen in those drop-in centers? Are they  
21 you know 24-hours?

22 SUSAN MORLEY: Mm-hm.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And also how big  
24 are the facilities and if you could let us know  
25 where they are.

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Okay,  
3 the services in the drop-in centers consist of  
4 counseling; crisis counseling. There's also  
5 computers availability so young people can search  
6 for jobs, for housing, for... those are probably  
7 the primary things. They can also do their resumes  
8 on the computers. Young people can also get basic  
9 needs met such as a place to take a shower, meals  
10 and depending on the shelter you know, I mean the  
11 drop-in, some are much larger than others. One has  
12 like a quiet space with a cot if someone needed to  
13 just you know, take a nap for a few hours they  
14 could do that and also depending on the drop-in,  
15 there's a lot of other services; medical services.  
16 They might have some mental health services,  
17 testing for HIV or other sexually transmitted  
18 diseases. So they do vary in terms of the services  
19 based on the size of the facility because some of  
20 our drop-ins are not only funded by us, but by  
21 other entities as well so they have more expansive  
22 services.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Are they 24  
24 hours?  
25

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: We do  
3 not have a 24-hour drop-in at this time.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So what are the  
5 hours?

6 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Most of  
7 them operate from around 5:00 or 6:00 in the  
8 evening 'til about 10:00 or 11:00 at night. Oh,  
9 actually some actually are like three... yeah, they  
10 have various varying hours, yeah, but most of them  
11 are open over you know, the nighttime hours, so  
12 like between 6:00 and 9:00 most of them are open  
13 and then some open up much earlier in the day.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I mean are there  
15 any plans to really think about expanding these  
16 drop-in centers so that they can provide overnight  
17 services? I mean just thinking from a youth you  
18 know, perspective if they manage to find a drop-in  
19 center and get referred there, if the drop-in  
20 center you know, besides all the services that you  
21 talked about, which is important and great, I mean  
22 just imagine they can also allow somebody to stay  
23 overnight until they get a bed or find housing. I  
24 think that's something that the city should really  
25 look at.

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well...

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] And  
4 also you know, really expanding the services at the  
5 centers 'cause if they know like there's a place  
6 that they can go; a safe place that they can go and  
7 get some basic necessity met and then while they're  
8 there, they see that there are other services that  
9 are available, it's a way to really... it's a great  
10 way to help them.

11 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: And I  
12 absolutely agree with you and we will be releasing  
13 an RFP for our continuum next... well, perhaps  
14 later this year actually and we are definitely  
15 thinking about what other opportunities for  
16 programming and the drop-ins, as well as other  
17 programs in that plan.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: But in the RFP,  
19 is it possible for the... I mean I would really  
20 love to have the City really look at... if you are  
21 issuing RFPs, to really look at 24-hour or longer  
22 time in the evening from evening to morning or...  
23 so that you can provide some overnight service,  
24 especially for the kids who are you know, sleeping  
25 in the street or in subway cars.

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: That is  
3 being looked at in our planning; being looked at  
4 and discussed in our planning.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And then the  
6 other thing, Chair, is really working with DHS or  
7 under ACS to really have shelters that are meant  
8 for young people. I mean it's really difficult for  
9 them to be mixed in with an adult population. I  
10 mean a lot of adults don't want to go to the adult  
11 shelters. So there really needs to be a special  
12 position you know, for the young people and then  
13 hopefully can graduate them to temporary housing or  
14 permanent housing, but the way the shelter system  
15 is right now it's not meeting their needs. Yeah, I  
16 mean that's something that I really want you to  
17 bring back to the administration. Thank you,  
18 Chair.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
20 Member Chin. Next up we have questions from  
21 Council Member Corey Johnson.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Hopefully  
23 people can understand me. [laughter] I had a  
24 wisdom tooth taken out this morning, but I wanted  
25 to be here today, given the real importance of this

topic and how much it really means to me. Thank you to Chair Levin and to Chair Eugene for having this hearing so early in this legislative session and I also want to recognize, as Chair Levin did, Lew Fidler, who was a champion on this for many, many years and I think helped countless young people through his advocacy year after year. I wanted to just bring up a few points and questions and comments and I'm happy to have you jump in whenever you think you think it would be helpful. One is the number that was discussed; 128 youth are estimated during the HOPE Count in 2013. I mean that seems so unbelievably low and inaccurate that it sort of makes me think that if we're building off of that number, there's so much faultiness involved that how do we actually talk about these things in a real way for a disadvantaged, totally disenfranchised population in our city without an accurate... that's not an accurate number. It's not even close to an accurate number, so we have to do better in actually getting an accurate number and I think I know that DYCD and ACS have great relationships with the providers that are doing this type of work, but until we have accurate, real

data, I don't understand how we can move forward in a thoughtful and substantive way. So I would love to hear how you believe we can actually do that and how the City Council can be helpful in partnering with the administration to get this done because as I said at the beginning of my remarks, this is such an important priority I believe for members of these two committees, the Council as a whole. I don't want to speak for the Speaker, but I know she cares about this and I know that the administration given in the Preliminary Budget one of the cornerstones was increasing the number of beds for runaway and homeless youth, but we need to do a better job and I want to hear constructively how you think we all can do that.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well, as I stated, we are working with our providers and advocacy groups in coming up with a plan and methodology to go forward with a Youth Count, and so we've actually invited and have spoken to CIDI and have heard some ideas about how we can... what methodologies we could use to count youth and reach homeless youth, including those who are couch surfing because those are very difficult to count

2 because they're not out on the street where you can  
3 do a head count, so...

4 [crosstalk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: What's the  
6 timeline? What's the timeline in working with the  
7 providers coming up with something real, concrete  
8 for a plan so that when we do the HOPE Count next  
9 year; when these surveys are done that we actually  
10 have a better snapshot of what the reality is in  
11 this city for homeless youth?

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well,  
13 it would be hard for me to predict how long it's  
14 going to take to come up with the methodology, but  
15 we are I would say progressing because in the past,  
16 the different groups... we had not set down jointly  
17 to discuss planning a methodology to do a Youth  
18 Count.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: How many  
20 meetings have occurred so far?

21 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: We've  
22 had two meetings this year.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: This year and  
24 how many meetings do expect to have with the  
25



providers and the coalition of folks working on this over this year?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well, we're... I think we've been planning them about every four... yeah, four weeks or so, so... I mean we've... yeah, we've moved to a good place in terms of us getting to where we know that we're going to collaborate on this together and come out with a number that everyone can stand by. I mean that's what's really important as well because we don't want numbers where you know, one group is saying those numbers are inaccurate and so forth, so I think we're at a very good place right now that we are collaborating to make a count that is as accurate as can be and that we can all stand by and say this is the number for New York City homeless youth.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Do you feel comfortable with the 128 youth number for 2013?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well, sure, mm-hm.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Our colleague was just reminding us to point out that, and you can probably say more to this, was that the

2 128 was a segment of the young people we spoke to  
3 who are in this you know, expanded homeless  
4 definition as unsheltered that evening and you  
5 know, back to...

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: [interposing]  
7 But if you count all youth what's the number for  
8 the count?

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Yes, it  
10 was 1,420 youth and the process by which we did the  
11 count, because it was a pilot, as was stated, that  
12 the federal government enlisted a number of cities  
13 to participate in. So it was an attempt that was  
14 made and it wasn't planned over... we didn't have  
15 the luxury I should say of planning it over a long  
16 period of time. It was brought to us I believe  
17 around October and the count was in January and so  
18 we really wanted to participate because we feel  
19 that it is important and so we put together what we  
20 could put together in that short amount of time,  
21 but it's our anticipation and hope that through the  
22 planning; the careful planning that we're doing  
23 right now that when we do put together a  
24 methodology and involve all of the stakeholders,  
25 they're going to come out with something reliable.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Well, at least  
3 for me it would be important to understand on a  
4 more regular schedule and report back to the  
5 Council how that's going; when the methodology you  
6 expect is going to be adopted; what an actual  
7 realistic timeline is so that we have a better  
8 sense, and this is not meant in any way to be  
9 antagonistic. I'm stating it this way because I  
10 think we as a Council have a much better  
11 opportunity when we feel like we have real numbers  
12 to go back to our federal elected officials, our  
13 state elected officials and the Council as a whole  
14 in fighting for resources that are actually needed,  
15 and when there's an undercount or not an accurate  
16 account, we know that we're not getting the money  
17 we deserve or are able to direct to this. So I  
18 want to have as accurate a number as possible and  
19 you know, the number's sad. It's very devastating  
20 and depressing and when you look at the statistics  
21 here with regard to the average length stay for  
22 youth surveyed as part of the count that was done,  
23 927 days. It's like heartbreaking and then when  
24 you look at the percentages; 13 percent on a  
25 subway; 12 percent in a relative's home; 10 percent

2 on the street; 10 percent in the youth shelter; six  
3 percent in a regular shelter; five percent with a  
4 boyfriend or girlfriend; five percent in an  
5 abandoned or foreclosed building. I mean this is  
6 like heartbreaking to look at these numbers. I  
7 know it is for all of us. I want to give time to  
8 my other colleagues and to the Chair to continue to  
9 ask questions, so I just want to ask a couple of  
10 more questions with regard specifically to LGBT  
11 youth. In 2009, the previous administration  
12 announced the appointment of the New York City  
13 Commission for LGBTQ Runaway and Homeless Youth,  
14 and the commission established a real comprehensive  
15 agenda to address the youth... I mean the root  
16 causes of why this was actually happening. There  
17 were four recommendations from that for LGBTQ young  
18 people who were homeless. There were best  
19 practices guidelines to be actively integrated into  
20 all aspects of programming, not just stuff on  
21 display in places where this outreach was being  
22 done: initially, an ongoing staff training to  
23 provides agencies serving disenfranchised youth and  
24 young adults in New York City to address strategies  
25 for safe, affirming, humane environment and an

efficient response protocol for harassment and discrimination towards LGBT youth and their families, broadening community awareness of the frequency and causes of homelessness for LGBTQ youth and increasing the available funding, both through youth service funding and adult housing funding develop more shelter and transitional beds, which more adequately meet the needs of homeless LGBTQ youth population. I know that a significant amount of time was spent by the agencies in working on this. I know that the advocates and stakeholders were deeply involved. I would love to hear sort of in a comprehensive way, both from ACS and from DYCD, what is the sort of larger plan on dealing with this specific segment of the population? We know that if you take the LGBT population throughout the whole, it's a small population, a significant one but small, and then if you look at disproportionately the number of youth that are homeless, it shoots up much higher, so this is disproportionately affecting young LGBTQ youth. Parental rejection is a huge part of that and so I'd love to hear what the overall

2 comprehensive plan is in dealing with this segment  
3 of the population.

4 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well,  
5 in the DYCD continuum, making sure that all of our  
6 providers are sensitive and have welcoming  
7 environments to LGBTQ youth is paramount. So we  
8 spend hours on training. We provide materials to  
9 our providers. We actually in November, which  
10 recognizes Runaway and Homeless Youth Month, for  
11 the last few years we've highlighted presentations  
12 and film screenings on the issues confronting LGBTQ  
13 youth and transgender youth. So this is a  
14 significant issue that we address amongst the  
15 providers in our continuum and we also in June host  
16 a LGBTQ sensitivity training forum for Pride Month  
17 and we've had Lambda Legal do a train to trainer  
18 session two years ago, where staff from I believe  
19 it was 12 City agencies participated in getting  
20 training of their staff on the curriculum present  
21 that Lambda Legal presented and then taking that  
22 training back to their respective agencies and  
23 conducting those trainings for their staff and last  
24 year, we had the LGBT Center here in New York City  
25 conduct a similar training and we're planning

2 another one for June. So we want to make certain  
3 that every one of our provider agencies is one such  
4 that LGBTQ youth can enter and feel welcome and in  
5 addition to that, we have providers who they're  
6 specialty is servicing LGBTQ youth and you know, so  
7 those shelters actually house youth who are LGBTQ.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: And one more  
9 quick question to follow up on that. When you're  
10 doing street outreach that you talked about with  
11 the mobile van units, is there training done for  
12 the people doing the street outreach around LGBT  
13 youth? Are there materials that are specific to  
14 LGBT youth that you're giving out when you're  
15 interacting with this population? And when you are  
16 doing that, are you going to places where we've  
17 seen these numbers? In my district, I represent  
18 the West Side of Manhattan from Canal to 623rd  
19 Street. Christopher Street, as we know, is a huge  
20 population centered place where it occurs every  
21 weekend and a significant number of those young  
22 people are homeless that are there congregating  
23 together. I'd love to hear a little bit more about  
24 that.

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Yes,  
3 our street outreach team gives out those materials  
4 and then I also left off our family therapy  
5 intervention pilot that is run by one of our  
6 providers, and this particular pilot is one in  
7 which families and young people; LGBTQ young people  
8 can receive therapy around acceptance of that young  
9 person's sexual identity and this was a program  
10 implemented by DYCD two years ago because of the  
11 research that's been done on how much negative  
12 behavior will be lessened through family  
13 acceptance. And one of the most remarkable pieces  
14 in that is the lowered rate of suicide attempts by  
15 LGBTQ youth with just some acceptance by their  
16 families. So we definitely see the importance of  
17 servicing this population and making sure that all  
18 of our programs are competent in servicing this  
19 population. So where a youth cannot return home,  
20 if their family can at least accept them and accept  
21 their sexual identity, that helps a lot and also  
22 being able to interact with caring adults in our  
23 programs who are sensitive to their needs, that  
24 also helps them. And so again, it reduces a lot of  
25 negative behavior, whether it's the suicide; also



2 risky sexual behavior and all of these things are  
3 lessened when youth are in an accepting  
4 environment.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I'd like  
6 to add something if I could. Beyond the scope of  
7 you know, Deborah's focus on runaway, homeless and  
8 vulnerable young people, the agency implemented...  
9 I'm getting a lot of notes from my colleagues  
10 'cause there's been a lot of... there is always  
11 more work to be done, but we really have made huge  
12 efforts to help improve services and for all of our  
13 contracted programs, we have a very collaboratively  
14 created program quality monitoring tool and this is  
15 used by our program managers when they go out and  
16 look at the work being done that is funded through  
17 DYCD it feeds directly... the responses done by  
18 program managers feeds directly into the agency's  
19 VENDEX report on their quality and can impact  
20 funding and we've carefully incorporated evaluation  
21 on how well people are connecting with LGBT  
22 population and how much training is going on; is  
23 there a sensitive staff available so that all of  
24 the services that we do for young people, not just  
25 the work on runaway and homeless, are keeping this

2 in mind. To your point about a broader response,  
3 we're really looking like across programs, not just  
4 in the most vulnerable, about how we can take  
5 initiatives to make young people feel supported as  
6 early as possible.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you.

8 SUSAN MORLEY: ACS is very committed to  
9 the needs of LGBTQ youth and we're very proud of  
10 our office that handles this and they're in the  
11 audience here today. They have been doing  
12 tremendous work with our providers. In fact, the  
13 Commissioner just last week sent out a letter to  
14 all the providers writing what her expectations are  
15 for the agencies to all have an LGBTQ affirmative  
16 practice plan where they must designate liaisons  
17 within their agency who will be a liaison to our  
18 Office of LGBTQ Policy and Practice. They must  
19 display posters in their agencies; Safe Space  
20 posters that has contact information to the LGBTQ  
21 point people. They must certify foster homes on  
22 the front end to be affirming of LGBTQ and also  
23 upon recertification of foster homes, they must  
24 give training to those foster parents. They must  
25 report incidents and inquiries to the ACS Office of

2 LGBTQ Policy and Practice and they have to submit  
3 training plans on how they're going to train staff  
4 and they've all submitted their plans already. We  
5 funded through Safe Harbor funding last year, as I  
6 mentioned in the testimony, three of our providers,  
7 One of them, HMI, developed a curriculum, which are  
8 Office of LGBTQ folks plan to work with our  
9 training academy to train our own staff, CPS staff  
10 and Children's Center staff, and we plan to  
11 increase the funding to these three providers for  
12 the good work they done last year so they can do  
13 more good work, including the work they are doing  
14 to assist in resumes and internships because these  
15 kids need jobs. And you know, a big reason for  
16 homelessness and what leads them to C-SEC is when  
17 they cannot have jobs and they don't have the job  
18 skills or they don't view themselves as being  
19 employable, they turn to this life, so I think you  
20 know, we're proud of work and we certainly can do  
21 more and as I mentioned earlier, if we have that  
22 billion, we could use some additional places to  
23 help take care of these children.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Well, I wanted  
25 to say thank you. I want to thank the Chairs for

2 allowing me to ask a few questions. I would just  
3 say we don't need to talk about it now, but  
4 recommendations that were made a few years ago; I  
5 would love to submit this to the Committee Council  
6 and hopefully have you all respond on how you think  
7 that's been carried out thus far where there have  
8 been shortfalls to see how we can build on these  
9 goals that came out of that report. And I just  
10 lastly want to say thank you for doing this work.  
11 I think it's a new dawn; a new day; a new  
12 administration that has made this a priority; a  
13 Council that cares about this, so I look forward to  
14 doing the work and I want to thank all the  
15 advocates that are here today as well, who I know  
16 we're going to hear from and who are going to  
17 submit testimony who you all work with. I look  
18 forward to being engaged with the Chairs of these  
19 two committees on these issues. Thank you very  
20 much.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
22 Member Johnson. Just one quick question for DYCD,  
23 and I know I sound like a broken record, but in  
24 terms of the beds, how much does each bed cost and  
25

2 what's the current allocation in the City budget  
3 for beds specifically?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Let's  
5 see, between... for this fiscal year between...

6 [crosstalk]

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah...

8 [crosstalk]

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: The...

10 [crosstalk]

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Purposely.

12 [crosstalk]

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Council  
14 and what was previously baselined and what will be  
15 baselined in the future...

16 [crosstalk]

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is there a  
18 different cost for the Council ones and the  
19 baselined... [crosstalk]

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: No, no,  
21 I'm just...

22 [crosstalk]

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

24 [crosstalk]

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Giving  
3 you the total numbers; then I'll give you...

4 [crosstalk]

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, right,  
6 right.

7 [crosstalk]

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: The range  
9 in costs. So total allocation on Transitional  
10 Independent Living beds \$5.6, \$5.7...

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Okay.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Million.  
13 Total cost... total allocation for crisis shelter  
14 \$5.2; about \$13.3 million in total for the Runaway  
15 and Homeless Youth services. We do outline bed  
16 costs in the RFP, so we sort of limit what  
17 providers are able to spend per bed, which we  
18 purchase for the whole year. Those allocations are  
19 between I think 25 and 35; correct me if I'm off by  
20 a little bit; for crisis shelter beds and closer to  
21 the 35 range...

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] 35...

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL:  
24 Obviously. We allow between \$25 and \$35,000 on  
25 crisis shelter beds.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That sounds right.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: And  
4 between 35 and 42 for a Transitional Independent  
5 Living bed.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Per bed.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good, okay. Thank  
9 you. That's very helpful. And then just one other  
10 thing and I could ask Safe Horizons 'cause I think  
11 they're here, could they use another van if they  
12 have three vans citywide right now? I mean could,  
13 you know, could they use like six vans or five  
14 vans?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: If you  
16 have a van laying around...

17 [crosstalk]

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I'm sure  
20 Safe Horizons would be happy to put it to good use.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. I'll ask  
22 them, but I mean you know, vans it's not the most  
23 expensive capital item in the City's budget. You  
24 know, I mean it's possible. I don't know.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Talk to  
3 them. I know we're excited because they were able  
4 to get a van last year through the Safe Harbor  
5 funds that they... you know, hasn't broken down  
6 yet.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Which is  
9 great, but then it allows us because they've made  
10 that purchase to use the funding that went toward  
11 that purchase more towards direct services this  
12 year.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: So  
15 yeah...

16 [crosstalk]

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure.

18 [crosstalk]

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I...

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, I'll ask  
21 them.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I just wanted to...

24 SUSAN MORELY: We need people for the  
25 van too though.



2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry?

3 SUSAN MORLEY: I said you need the two  
4 people for the van too.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. Oh, that's  
6 right, right, right, personnel costs, of course,  
7 yes. Council Member Ritchie Torres.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: First, I want  
9 to thank the Chairs for holding the hearing today.  
10 I mean it's one of the most pressing issues of our  
11 time and I just want to thank my colleague, Council  
12 Member Johnson, for his impassioned commitment to  
13 runaway and homeless youth. DYCD provides 247  
14 beds; certified residential beds, which strikes me  
15 as vastly smaller than the scale of homelessness  
16 among runaway and homeless youth and so I'm  
17 wondering how many young people do you turn away  
18 from those beds? Do you collect data on that?

19 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well,  
20 we don't have data... DYCD does not have data on  
21 youth who are turned away you know, to another  
22 shelter to the adult shelter side, no.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: And why is  
24 that? It just strikes me as logical to collect  
25 data on the number of young people who are turning

2 away just to get a sense of the scale of the  
3 problem.

4 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Mm...  
5 yeah, some providers keep information on that, but  
6 DY... that's not a statistic that DYCD...

7 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Is that a  
8 practice you're willing to rethink or...

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: It's a  
10 practice that we could consider looking at.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I'm just  
12 curious if the City were to decide that we should  
13 have... hello? Okay, a Vision Zero initiative for  
14 runaway and homeless youth, you know, seek to  
15 eradicate it from our streets, how many beds would  
16 we need to eradicate homelessness among runaway and  
17 homeless youth? And I hope we have the data to  
18 answer that question.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We don't  
20 have the data to answer that question. Council  
21 Member Levin posed that question to us and we did  
22 just vastly expand the number of beds that we have  
23 by adding 76 in the new crisis shelter beds in the  
24 last couple months and we're you know, going to  
25 monitor utilization on those beds and you know, I

2 have no doubt that they will be put to good use and  
3 Assistant Commissioner Harper noted our efforts to  
4 really hone in in a collaborative way on the  
5 numbers that we're talking about so that we do have  
6 a better sense of how we can get to zero. And I  
7 think the difficulty in counting is also that  
8 sometimes the difficulty in having conversations  
9 like this about services, because many young people  
10 who may be in need of shelter if you... if they're  
11 in unsafe situations, we have to encourage them to  
12 come to safety in our residential services, but  
13 many young people who are living uncomfortably;  
14 family conflict at home; doubled up, may need other  
15 kinds of services. We may not want to pull those  
16 young people into shelter. We might want to work  
17 with them through counseling to help, also Deborah  
18 mentioned, alleviate the conflict and improve the  
19 situation if a young person let's say is unable to  
20 get a job or hasn't been successfully connected  
21 with school. They're home all day; they're driving  
22 the other adults in the household crazy. The  
23 conflict escalates, escalates, escalates; suddenly  
24 it's like get out and don't come back and it seems  
25 unresolvable. What some of our providers report is

2 that after a young person sort of stabilizes and  
3 they start moving their life forward in a positive  
4 way, that home situation in some cases can improve  
5 to the point where it's the next best situation, so  
6 that's the long answer.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: So there's  
8 no... so if Governor Cuomo, Mayor de Blasio,  
9 Speaker Viverito were to go into your office and  
10 say, "We want a number. How many beds can we  
11 finance to eliminate the problem?" You couldn't  
12 give them a number?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I don't  
14 think we could right now.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Okay, much has  
16 been said about homelessness among LGBT youth, but  
17 of course, it's by no means a monolith.  
18 Transgendered youth have their own distinct set of  
19 needs and I'm wondering is there housing specific  
20 to the needs of transgendered youth?

21 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Not  
22 specific to transgender youth, no.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: And so in the  
24 absence of I guess transgender specific housing,  
25 how do service the needs of that population?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well,  
3 as I stated, our programs are definitely competent  
4 in working with the types of young people who come  
5 into the homeless population. They have to be  
6 exceedingly competent to deal with the range of  
7 young people coming to the shelter situation. So  
8 while we have a couple of TIL providers, who that  
9 is their mission and their stated specialty, all of  
10 our providers are definitely competent and we've  
11 had transgender youth in our continuum who have  
12 been serviced and have not... well, who have been  
13 serviced and are you know, receiving all of the...  
14 all of their needs are being met. So our programs  
15 are competent in knowing about the process of the  
16 transition and of course, they have attended  
17 trainings that we've had at DYCD around transgender  
18 and LGBTQ issues, so... well... [background voice]  
19 right and the new RFP if our proposal puts... if a  
20 proposer puts forth a proposal that targets  
21 transgender youth, that would certainly be a  
22 welcome addition to our continuum and we would  
23 consider you know, that in our funding decision.

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Okay, that's  
3 the extent of my questioning for now. Thank you so  
4 much.

5 [Pause]

6 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you, co-  
7 Chair Levin. Thank you so much and thank you to  
8 all of you for your cooperation because as I  
9 mentioned before I left, you know I had two other  
10 public hearings and I had to go to make an  
11 appearance, so I'm very glad to be back. So I know  
12 that you are providing not only shelters to the  
13 homeless youth, but also you are trying... you  
14 making an effort to reunite them with their  
15 families, so this is a very important part. Have  
16 you been successful in doing that?

17 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Yes,  
18 we've had a lot of successes in reunification. I  
19 mean that is first step when a young person comes  
20 into whether it's the drop-in or one of our crisis  
21 shelters; to make an effort to reunite the young  
22 person with either their immediate family or other  
23 family members where it's safe. You know, some  
24 situations it might not be a safe thing to do. So  
25 that is the first priority, but yes, many of the

2 young people do return, especially from the crisis  
3 shelters back to their immediate family or other  
4 family members.

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Do you have a  
6 number? Can you tell us approximately how many  
7 young people you have been successful in connecting  
8 with their families?

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Yes.  
10 We have out of the youth who are discharged from  
11 TILs, 33 percent who returned to live with friends  
12 or relatives and who are discharged from the crisis  
13 shelters 13 percent to friends and relatives and...  
14 oh, wait a minute, sorry. We have more than 50  
15 percent that went home to relatives who went home  
16 to their immediate family or into their own  
17 apartment and we have... over 60 percent of that  
18 same group of the young people who are in TILs who  
19 went home to their immediate family or to friends  
20 or relatives or into their own apartment.

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And can you break  
22 down this number in terms of ethnicity and gender  
23 and age?

24

25

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: We can.  
3 I don't have that here with me, but we have the  
4 demographics on all of our youth.

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: What is your...  
6 could you give us all some more detail about your  
7 working relationship with the parents to make this  
8 happen? And also do you have any follow-up with  
9 the parents to make sure that... to ensure that  
10 those young people stay with their parents?

11 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well,  
12 that would be on our providers you know, in terms  
13 of the contacts with the family members and after a  
14 young person is discharged, regardless to where  
15 they're discharged to, the providers are to follow-  
16 up where we know where the young person is  
17 discharged to. The providers are charged with  
18 doing a follow-up 30, 60 and 90 days to... well, 30  
19 days from the crisis shelters up to 90 days from  
20 the TILs to ensure that their placement is stable.

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So there is  
22 another very important issue I would like you to  
23 talk about: the safety of the youth in the  
24 shelters. So when you place those young people in  
25 shelter, are they really safe? Do you know that



2 there... has been there any incidents you know,  
3 related to abuse or other type of you know,  
4 wrongdoing in the shelters? How do you ensure that  
5 those young people who go to the shelter they are  
6 safe? What is the condition; the safety condition  
7 in the shelter system and so you have staff  
8 following up; doing follow-up or supervising the  
9 shelters?

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well,  
11 from our Runaway and Homeless Youth Department at  
12 DYCD, we have monthly site visits conducted. Our  
13 contract managers go out to the sites to inspect  
14 the sites and make sure that the physical  
15 conditions are appropriate and also you know, they  
16 interact with young people I have also going on  
17 site visits and interacted with young people and if  
18 they have an ear to listen; if they wanted to  
19 complain, they would definitely complain and  
20 there's not complaints about abuses or anything  
21 like that that we've received and in addition to  
22 the DYCD contract managers, OCSS also makes period  
23 site visits to the shelters.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: When those people  
25 there already have several challenges; that's

2 mentally and physically they have been challenged;  
3 their families. Health is a very important you  
4 know, component even for normal people; people who  
5 are not homeless; people who didn't face conditions  
6 or challenges that those young people went through.  
7 What about the health conditions; the health  
8 services; health care services? What do you have  
9 in place to help them in terms of psychology and  
10 the medical services? Because those young people  
11 they are in a special condition, as you know. What  
12 do you have to provide them with the best medical  
13 care services you know, that their condition may  
14 require?

15 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well,  
16 most of the young people in our shelters are  
17 eligible for Medicaid and so they will have health  
18 insurance through Medicaid and all of our providers  
19 are linked to a health care provider in their  
20 community, which is where the young people would be  
21 scheduled to have their regular health care taken  
22 care of.

23 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Another question  
24 you know, that came you know, into my mind right  
25 now: so we know that among the young people that

many of them also are immigrants that may come from family where English is not their first language.

Do you have staff or do you have a system to address their issues if they may not be proficient in English? Do you have any type of assistance to help them navigate through the shelter system and to help them in case you know, they need additional help based on the language barrier and also cultural barrier?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well, we certainly have had young people for whom English is not their first language, but we have not, to my knowledge, been presented within a youth who are not competent in English, but if that was to occur, all of our sites are also known to be able to use the language bank if they had to, and also I believe the majority of our sites have bilingual staff in different languages.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay, I think at this point it's going to be my last... I'm sorry, go ahead, please.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Maybe a quick note about safety. I wanted to say that Deborah and her team get very few incident reports.

2 Our RHY continuum is voluntary and it's done with a  
3 youth development framework. It's very homelike  
4 and the facilities are for the most part really  
5 beautiful. So when you asked about their care in  
6 our providers' residences, the crisis shelters and  
7 the TIL, I want you to have a picture of like a  
8 really welcoming homelike environment where young  
9 people can feel safe. Because of the small size;  
10 because of the required staff supervision; because  
11 of the youth development framework like that's  
12 really the image that I want you to take away about  
13 our continuum. I mean young people... the more  
14 vulnerable you are, the more likely you are to have  
15 anger issues and there are conflicts and young  
16 people get into fights, but the incidents are very  
17 low.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay, thank you  
19 very much. I think this is going to be my last  
20 question and before I ask you the last question, I  
21 want to thank you one more time for being here.  
22 Thank you for your presentation, your testimonies  
23 and thank you for the wonderful job that you are  
24 doing and I think that we have the moral  
25 obligation, all of us, providers you know,

2 institutions like DYCD and ACS and government we  
3 have to join forces, as I said. We got to work  
4 together because the job is huge, is huge and by  
5 working together we will have a better result.  
6 That's what we are planning to do on the Committee  
7 on Youth Services and on General Welfare. We are  
8 willing to work together with you and we will have  
9 a follow-up. We will have to come together and  
10 meet and strategize together, not only in a public  
11 hearing, but have meetings to try to see how we can  
12 join forces to provide better services to the young  
13 people. But before I turn it over to co-Chair  
14 Levin, let me go back to the data collection, which  
15 is a very, very, very important you know, part. We  
16 know that whatever we are doing, we have to be able  
17 to evaluate what we are doing and go back to  
18 strategizing and improve our strategy; improve our  
19 way to provide services. It seems that there is a  
20 problem in terms of collecting data. What I am  
21 going to ask you can you go and when you go back  
22 and you take your time to create you know, a  
23 detailed comprehensive strategy plan for data  
24 collection and send it to my office and to Council  
25 Member Levin's office, just your plan; what you are

2 planning to do to improve your way to improve your  
3 way to collect data because this is a very  
4 important part and I would appreciate it if you can  
5 go back you know, try to develop a strategy; a  
6 strategy plan; you know, a system that you probably  
7 will use to improve your way and your method of  
8 collecting data. I would appreciate that. Can you  
9 promise that? Can you do that for us? Because by  
10 working together, that will be very important for  
11 us in terms of planning and strategizing within the  
12 City Council. Thank you very much in advance. Let  
13 me turn it over now to co-Chair Levin.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
15 much, Chair Eugene. I just had a few more  
16 questions and then I'll let you guys go shortly  
17 'cause you've been here over two hours and I  
18 appreciate your time very much. It's an important  
19 topic, so we want to make sure that we get all of  
20 our questions in. I first wanted to ask about  
21 mental health services and focusing a little bit on  
22 mental health services. In the DYCD runaway  
23 homeless youth continuum, are there specific mental  
24 health budget lines, allocations? I mean are  
25 mental health services directly funded at the

2 providers? Is there, for instance, a funding line  
3 available for a provider to hire a mental health  
4 specialist to be there at a crisis center?

5 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well,  
6 the providers submit their budgets to us and we  
7 don't have a provider who has put a line item for a  
8 mental health professional. However, what our  
9 providers do utilize are mental health clinics in  
10 the community and also we're very fortunate that  
11 for several of our providers; they're very large  
12 organizations; that through some of their other  
13 services they have mental health providers on site  
14 that are willing to provide services to the RHY  
15 youth and so you know, I feel that you know, we and  
16 those providers are very fortunate when that's in  
17 place. But other than that, again, utilizing their  
18 Medicaid services they're able to access other  
19 community mental health services.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but one  
21 thing, and this comes up actually in talking about  
22 the broader homeless system, is that sometimes  
23 having it... the going out and seeking the services  
24 if they're not on site or if they're kind of in an  
25 auxiliary organization or a different organization

2 sometimes present an obstacle to getting the  
3 services at the end of the day because a person  
4 with mental health issues might not really go out  
5 to seek it that much, so if a provider were to  
6 submit a budget line for a mental health  
7 specialist, is that something that DYCD would look  
8 favorably upon or is there an opportunity to do  
9 that? Is this a question of limited funding and if  
10 there were more funding available would that be  
11 something that could be more widespread?

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Well,  
13 it certainly in terms of all of the service that  
14 any provider puts together in their budget package  
15 you know, we would look at the services that are  
16 enhancing what young people will get as favorable,  
17 mental health services included and so it is a  
18 matter of the providers themselves making that  
19 decision in terms of what they want to put into  
20 their budget, so...

21 [crosstalk]

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hm.

23 [crosstalk]

24

25



2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: You  
3 know, we would... yes, we would look favorably if  
4 they had a line for mental health services.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great. Thank you.  
6 Let's see, I wanted to ask about the age that youth  
7 are able to be served in the DYCD system. So right  
8 now, it's up to the age of 20? Is that correct?

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Their  
10 21st birthday...

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] 21st  
12 birthday.

13 [crosstalk]

14 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Is the  
15 cut-off date.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Now, is that... do  
17 federal guidelines limit that or is there... do  
18 federal guidelines allow up to 24? I had heard  
19 that that... that federal guidelines allow youth  
20 service dollars to be allocated to somebody up to  
21 the age of 24. Is that true or...

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER:  
23 Actually if... well, in our continuum and in our  
24 drop-in services, we service young people from 14  
25 to 24. In our residential services, which are our

2 programs are licensed by OCFS, OCFS has the 21 year  
3 cut-off.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, so it's a  
5 state regulation. Is... does this federal  
6 regulation have any bearing on this whatsoever  
7 or...

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: We  
9 don't have federal funds for any of our programs,  
10 so that doesn't bear on us.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I wanted to ask  
12 about LGBT youth and what... LGBT youth that are  
13 trafficked and/or involved in sex work. Are there  
14 specific efforts in place by DYCD and ACS to  
15 prevent the youth from going into the juvenile  
16 justice system or is there... like we spoke a  
17 little bit or you spoke a little bit about this  
18 before in that you know, those arrests have  
19 decreased, but are we looking at a community-based  
20 partnership or framework that can... that's intent  
21 on getting... keeping kids out of the juvenile  
22 justice or overall criminal justice system?

23 SUSAN MORLEY: Well, we invested a lot  
24 of money overall in preventive services. We serve  
25 like 22,000 families in general. We work with our

2 preventive program that deals specifically with C-  
3 SEC is St. Luke's New Beginnings Program, and they  
4 will work with LGBTQ youth, as well as boys and  
5 girls and it's a preventive program that actually  
6 will work in the home with the youth and the family  
7 in an effort to prevent foster care and by working  
8 with the youth hopefully you know, law enforcement  
9 involvement. We also invested a lot of money in  
10 evidence-based practices for our teens and one of  
11 the reasons we brought Safe Horizons into the  
12 Children's Center as well is because we wanted the  
13 provider to work with all our youth, not just  
14 girls, so...

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Mm-  
16 hm.

17 SUSAN MORLEY: Safe Horizons you know,  
18 will counsel youth one-on-one and that's one of the  
19 reasons we really... we think they did tremendous  
20 work in the short time last year that they were  
21 with us and we want to increase their capacity at  
22 our Children's Center so they can work with even  
23 more youth. Do you want to... Sara might have  
24 something on this.

2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HEMMETER: Yes.

3 Hi, Sara Hemmeter. I'm finally speaking today. I  
4 run the Family Assessment Program, which is the  
5 PINS Diversion Program at ACS and so we see about  
6 8,000 families a year through the Family Assessment  
7 Program and those are families where parents are  
8 bringing their youth in for services because of  
9 truancy, running away from home, substance use and  
10 we also do see some C-SEC youth and LBGT youth who  
11 have been just not accepted into their families.  
12 We are working on collecting data on all those  
13 families. We are building a database, so hopefully  
14 next year we'll be able to report out on some of  
15 the data that we're seeing for these 8,000  
16 families, but the services that we provide to the  
17 families for the PINS Diversion Program do prevent  
18 kids from entering the juvenile justice system and  
19 they are what Sue mentioned in terms of the  
20 evidence-based programs, so they work collectively  
21 with the family and the youth to stabilize the  
22 family, address whatever the concerns are and try  
23 to keep that young person at home and in their  
24 communities rather than going into foster care and  
25 hopefully preventing them from entering the

2 juvenile justice system as well, and we'll provide  
3 services for young people up to the age of 18.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. I  
5 wanted to ask about your report or your response to  
6 the requirements of Local Law 23; speak to a report  
7 by Lynne Echenberg that is... I think you mentioned  
8 before has been completed and is that available  
9 publicly or is that available...

10 [crosstalk]

11 SUSAN MORLEY: It's...

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: For this meeting?

13 [crosstalk]

14 SUSAN MORLEY: We're still internally  
15 reviewing it.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

17 SUSAN MORLEY: So I'm sure when we're  
18 done, I don't... I would imagine we could share it,  
19 but...

20 [crosstalk]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Be very  
22 interesting.

23 [crosstalk]

24

25

2 SUSAN MORLEY: We're reviewing it  
3 internally and still have to sit down with our  
4 Commissioner about all the recommendations.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Be very, very  
6 interested to see it, so when... as soon as it's...

7 [crosstalk]

8 SUSAN MORLEY: It's a well written, in-  
9 depth report.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great, great. In  
11 terms of your response, is that... is that  
12 available online or on your website? Is that  
13 publicly available, the response to Local Law 23?

14 SUSAN MORLEY: I'm not... you know  
15 what, I'm not sure.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It...

17 SUSAN MORLEY: It will be.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, if it's not  
19 could it be... that'd be great if the...

20 [crosstalk]

21 SUSAN MORLEY: Yeah.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 'Cause the public  
23 access.

24 [crosstalk]

2 SUSAN MORLEY: I know our Safe Harbor  
3 plan usually the state puts it up on their website  
4 once...

5 [crosstalk]

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

7 SUSAN MORLEY: They approve them.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, 'cause it's a  
9 very informative document...

10 SUSAN MORLEY: [interposing] Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And as I went  
12 through it, I... it was...

13 SUSAN MORLEY: [interposing] Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It puts it in a  
15 very workable framework for anyone that wants to  
16 know...

17 SUSAN MORLEY: [interposing] Yeah.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: What the responses  
19 are.

20 SUSAN MORLEY: The more we can educate,  
21 the better, so if it helps...

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Okay.

23 SUSAN MORLEY: You know, when people go  
24 to a website to see that report.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: With regard to the  
3 young people in both the DYCD system; in fact, all  
4 of them; I mean DYCD system, ACS system and DHS  
5 system, do we keep track of... how do we... do we  
6 keep track of what benefits these young people are  
7 entitled to; public assistance, food stamps, things  
8 like that? And is DYCD staff trained... it's more  
9 on the DYCD side of things than the ACS side, but  
10 trained to help these young people enroll in  
11 programs that they're qualified for?

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Yes, a  
13 big piece of what the work at the drop-in centers  
14 and the crisis shelters consist of; making sure  
15 that young people are connected to whatever  
16 services they're eligible for; also getting their  
17 identification documents and things that young  
18 people might typically lose in the process of you  
19 know, leaving home under...

20 [crosstalk]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hm.

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER:  
23 Stressful situations.

24

25



2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah, 'cause young  
3 people might be entitled to public assistance and  
4 their food stamps and you know, those are...

5 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Right.  
6 We just had Community Service Society come and do a  
7 presentation on... I forget their application name  
8 right now; to all of our providers so that our  
9 providers can be made aware of... it's kind of like  
10 a one-stop shop so that...

11 [crosstalk]

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hm.

13 [crosstalk]

14 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: They  
15 can look at it...

16 [crosstalk]

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

18 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: And put  
19 it in information about the client that they're you  
20 know, working with and you know, what benefits and  
21 the forms and everything are right there online for  
22 them to access, but the idea is so that they don't  
23 have to make several phone calls to different  
24 agencies and so forth to get access to services.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great and then with  
3 regard to like supportive housing placement or  
4 permanent housing placement, can you describe some  
5 of the efforts that DYCD has in terms of helping to  
6 secure supportive housing and do we know how many  
7 young people are applying for supportive housing  
8 and were accepted or were able to secure supportive  
9 housing? It's a broader conversation 'cause we  
10 need more supportive housing than we need an NYNY  
11 four and that needs to I think happen in New York  
12 City and New York State in the next several months.  
13 I think it's kind of underway now, but in terms of  
14 the need for supportive housing, it's always there.  
15 Do we keep track of that and can you speak a little  
16 bit to DYCD's efforts on that?

17 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: 'Kay,  
18 we have information. I don't have the number of  
19 referrals to supportive housing right in front of  
20 me, but we actually represented on the continuum of  
21 care of New York City, which is part of the  
22 supportive housing that was... alliance and what we  
23 did... well, our providers complete the packets for  
24 the young people who are applying and who are  
25 considered to be eligible to apply for supportive

housing. Yeah, and also our providers when they open new locations; like for instance, The Door opened up another location, they sent us an email letting us know we had x number of new beds available in this particular supportive housing program and so we disseminate that information immediately to all of our providers to let them know if you have young people who might be eligible you know, put their packets together as quickly as possible and send them out. So we do stay on top of the supportive housing piece you know, for our clients.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much and I have just a couple more questions here. With regard to the HOPE Count this year... sorry, because these are questions that we want to be able to have on the record so that we can do our due diligence here. With regard to the HOPE Count this year, you mentioned locations that DYCD identified that are congregation sites... I think you said 27 congregation sites. Can you share with us what those are either generally or specifically as specific as you can get?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Okay  
3 well and we collected those locations from our  
4 providers and...

5 [crosstalk]

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

7 [crosstalk]

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: So...

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: And  
11 then we gave it to DHS. They gave us locations of  
12 like some fast food establishments around the city,  
13 some public housing, parks and common areas. You  
14 know, so places like that where they know from  
15 young people that homeless young people will be  
16 there at night. What else? They gave us like  
17 street corners you know, so I have a list of what I  
18 sent to DHS.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And an open call  
20 went out to providers to say hey, can you tell us  
21 where...

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: Oh,  
23 yes, mm-hm.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah, alright.  
25

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: And  
3 especially our street outreach team you know, they  
4 were the primary...

5 [crosstalk]

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: The  
8 primary folks who gave us the locations.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Are you confident  
10 that you reach most of those or do you think that  
11 there are others that are out there that we don't  
12 know about?

13 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HARPER: I think  
14 that from young people talking with their  
15 counselors we learn more you know, from day to day  
16 because you know, young people are very resourceful  
17 and so they'll move from location to location if  
18 the circumstance warrants it for them.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. You  
20 mentioned the report says that in the  
21 investigative... sorry, I'm going back to the  
22 report and ACS's role. The report states that  
23 Investigative Consultants are called in every case  
24 involving suspected sexual exploitation. How many  
25

2 of those... how many cases called in Investigative  
3 Consultants in 2013?

4 SUSAN MORLEY: Okay, so the policy  
5 dictates that if a child protection specialist  
6 suspects trafficking or has confirmed trafficking  
7 to go to the Investigative Consultant. The  
8 Investigative Consultants, to give you some  
9 context, consulted on over 58,000 cases and out of  
10 those cases probably like 2,600 involved sexual  
11 abuse allegations. However, the problem when the  
12 system was built we didn't foresee or work with C-  
13 SEC and we do not have the ability to check off the  
14 box to pull out... out of that sex abuse how much  
15 involved C-SEC.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Ah.

17 SUSAN MORLEY: It's something that I  
18 have requested our IT to modify and again, that  
19 will... if we're able to do that; if they're able  
20 to modify...

21 [crosstalk]

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

23 SUSAN MORLEY: The system, it'll be a  
24 small piece of the data and it relies on CPS  
25 actually recognizing and identifying and coming to

2 us for help, but it would at least give us some  
3 data. I can...

4 [crosstalk]

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Are you able to...  
6 you'd be able to break that... those cases out...

7 [crosstalk]

8 SUSAN MORLEY: To break down...

9 [crosstalk]

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: From the rest.

11 [crosstalk]

12 SUSAN MORLEY: To break down the  
13 number.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

15 SUSAN MORLEY: The ideal thing is like  
16 we said earlier, connections to system. If we can  
17 get that system fixed, that'll work a little bit  
18 better 'cause providers and child protection and  
19 different points of the system. As the child gets  
20 engaged, the disclosure could occur then, so if  
21 we're just relying on the front part of the system,  
22 we're going to miss so we really have to figure  
23 this out a little better. I can tell you  
24 personally that I've been notified on just myself  
25

2 that I'm aware of 25 cases that come up to my  
3 level...

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Mm-  
5 hm.

6 SUSAN MORLEY: Where we needed you  
7 know, to either get the ICs involved that people  
8 reached out to me or my ICs alert me that they're  
9 having problems on a case and we need to you know,  
10 use my resources to connect all... help connect all  
11 the dots between the agencies and I sometimes have  
12 providers... because I do a lot of presentations at  
13 training. I've participated in the Mount Sinai  
14 conference recently in training foster care  
15 providers and mental health folks. So sometimes  
16 they... once they go to a presentation and have  
17 your name, they reach out to you for help and  
18 guidance, so we sometimes become aware of the cases  
19 that way. We've become aware of other cases when  
20 the Children's Center needs help or if the child  
21 they suspect of C-SEC had AWOLed, so you know,  
22 that's just what... I know kids by names. Sara and  
23 I know kids over the years by names, unfortunately,  
24 children you try to help at a very young age. One  
25 that really got my attention on this eight years



2 ago was 10 years old and she was running away and  
3 we'd find her and then next thing you know she's in  
4 New Jersey with a 14-year old and we're looking for  
5 her. The Investigative Consultant said they have  
6 her picture and it's one of the saddest things.  
7 They asked the man in 7-Eleven, "Have you seen this  
8 child?" "Oh, yeah, she's a regular prostitute.  
9 She's usually in that hotel." We're talking about  
10 a 10-year old and you know, she was a runner and  
11 moving cars; jumping out of. So it's really  
12 challenging and sad and there have been kids since  
13 I'm here that we did everything human possibly to  
14 help including relocating to other states and it's  
15 not always the outcome we want.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Speaking of just in  
17 term of the foster care component or the  
18 specialized foster care, there's...

19 SUSAN MORLEY: [interposing] Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Something in the  
21 report about one placement being made last year and  
22 it didn't quite work... it didn't quite work out  
23 or... and how... I'd have to go back and look and I  
24 could follow-up with you.

25 [crosstalk]

2 SUSAN MORLEY: The JCCA's developing  
3 foster care beds?

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

5 SUSAN MORLEY: It has been extremely  
6 challenging. They probably are one of our best  
7 providers in this. They run the Gateways  
8 Program...

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Yeah.

10 SUSAN MORLEY: And non-secure. It's  
11 extremely challenging. They've been having a  
12 really difficult time recruiting foster care  
13 parents. We are exploring right now with other  
14 providers to try to see if they can develop beds as  
15 well, but that program, despite their best efforts,  
16 I think one bed and maybe there's three possibly in  
17 the works, but it...

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It's tough to  
19 develop. It's... the skills...

20 [crosstalk]

21 SUSAN MORLEY: It's very...

22 [crosstalk]

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Of the foster  
24 parents.

25 [crosstalk]

2 SUSAN MORLEY: Touch, yeah and the one  
3 they did develop closed, so I mean it just shows  
4 you the struggle here.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hm.

6 SUSAN MORLEY: I mean the ideal is to  
7 link a child with a family, whether their own or  
8 some other caring family and it takes you know,  
9 really special folks to want to help children at  
10 risk of C-SEC.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah and then just  
12 lastly, and this'll be my question, 'cause... so  
13 the report found 458 sexually exploited youth that  
14 have had contact with either ACS, DYCD...

15 [crosstalk]

16 SUSAN MORLEY: The proper providers for  
17 the most part, which...

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Mm-  
19 hm.

20 SUSAN MORLEY: You know, most of them  
21 only started their work in October.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But then there are  
23 other reports that have said 2,000...

24 [crosstalk]

25 SUSAN MORLEY: Through...

2 [crosstalk]

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 200...

4 [crosstalk]

5 SUSAN MORLEY: Other prevalent studies,  
6 yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Or 3,900. Do we  
8 have a sense... I mean we asked this about... a  
9 similar question about the number of runaway and  
10 homeless youth and we were kind of focused on that,  
11 but do we have a sense of what a real number is out  
12 there in the city of kids that are sexually  
13 exploited?

14 SUSAN MORLEY: I definitely have the  
15 sense that it's not 458.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

17 SUSAN MORLEY: I can tell you that and  
18 when I... I think the state said they may be with  
19 Safe Harbor funding thinking about doing another  
20 prevalence study and I think there have been  
21 centers... they're going to be coming out with one  
22 if I'm not mistaken, but I'm just thinking if they  
23 were right back then in 2007 and 2008, when I think  
24 about how technology has advanced and how it's in  
25 the hands of our youth and what we're finding on

2 Backpage, I think the numbers are in the thousands  
3 and unfortunately, I don't have concrete data...

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing]

5 Right.

6 SUSAN MORLEY: To share with you...

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Uh-

8 huh.

9 SUSAN MORLEY: But I do know I am  
10 seeing too many cases of these children and even  
11 458 is outrageous.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yep.

13 SUSAN MORLEY: So.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Well, I want to  
15 thank you all for your dedication to the youth of  
16 New York City and for protecting them and for doing  
17 everything we can as a city government to stand up  
18 for these kids and provide for them and I can't  
19 think of a better use of our tax dollars than to do  
20 this.

21 SUSAN MORLEY: I would like to ask you  
22 for a favor.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah, sure.

24 Absolutely.

2 SUSAN MORLEY: Because it's very real,  
3 the report; the deadline on the report...

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Oh.

5 SUSAN MORLEY: When the data that needs  
6 to be analyzed is up to December 31st, if we could  
7 have like 90 days to actually... 'cause we have to  
8 collect it from providers that analyze it, it would  
9 help to give...

10 [crosstalk]

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

12 [crosstalk]

13 SUSAN MORLEY: A better report and make  
14 us feel like you know, we can do a better job with  
15 it.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And it's a great  
17 report and I think Council Member Eugene and I will  
18 work on that together and work collaboratively with  
19 you all 'cause we do very much appreciate the  
20 amount of effort that goes into not only providing  
21 the services, but putting together the report and  
22 we want to help you make it as accurate as  
23 possible, so. And again, I want to thank you all  
24 very much for your time here today and for the good  
25 service that you do for the City of New York.

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you, Chair  
3 Levin and thank you very much to all of you from  
4 the panel. Thank you again for the wonderful job  
5 that you are doing. So we'll follow-up with you.  
6 Thank you.

7 SUSAN MORLEY: And thank you for  
8 supporting us.

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And remember, I  
10 will be waiting please for the strategy plan and to  
11 tell us, you know, how you're going... what you're  
12 going to do to improve your data collection. Thank  
13 you so much. Have a wonderful day.

14 SUSAN MORLEY: Thank you,

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.

16 [Pause, background voices]

17 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
18 much. Thank you. [background voices] Now we want  
19 to call the next panel, please. I think it's Jayne  
20 Bigelsen from Covenant House New York; Kimberly  
21 Forte, the Legal Aid Society. And also Megan  
22 Vinzina from Safe Horizon. [off mic] Where is her  
23 testimony? Where is her testimony?

24 [Pause]

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: 'Kay, you might  
3 start any time, but state your name, please, for  
4 the record.

5 KIMBERLY FORTE: Hello, my name is  
6 Kimberly Forte. I'm the supervising attorney of  
7 the LGBT Law and Policy Initiative at the Legal Aid  
8 Society, and I'm here today on behalf of the  
9 Coalition for the Homeless and the Legal Aid  
10 Society. I want to thank Chairs Eugene and Levin  
11 and all the committee members for inviting us for  
12 our input today on this very important issue of  
13 data collection as it relates to runaway and  
14 homeless youth. We applaud the Committees on Youth  
15 Services and General Welfare for continuing to  
16 tackle this important subject and look forward to  
17 the valuable contributions that the chairs and the  
18 committees will make in this area in the future.

19 I'm not going to read my testimony. I  
20 have provided it to the committees, but I do want  
21 to focus on... the City spoke a lot today about  
22 what it's done and I do, in some respects, applaud  
23 some of their recent efforts to do... focus on some  
24 of the issues that many of us who will testify  
25 today as advocates and also the committees



themselves have been raising for many, many years as problems that we've seen related to the runaway and homeless youth population. The City's been aware of the lack of services, the lack of capacity for many, many years and we, as a City, have just not progressed far enough and so today I'm going to focus on the issues that should be dealt with and our lacking currently on the part of the City itself. And I'm going to talk about the City as a whole. I'm not going to silo it, which I think is what's happening, unfortunately, for this age group of young people.

Chair Levin, you raised the issue of looking at this population up to 24 years old with regard to the federal government. In recent years, the Department of Housing and Urban Development have begun to fund services; housing services for youth for up to 24 and I think, as Chair Levin said earlier, one of the drastic realities today is that DHS is not in this room and so when we talk about runaway and homeless youth, we also have to talk about the young people that are in their care and they too should be held to the same standards and expectations of the provision of services that many

of the providers do so well for our young people today. But what we have is a flip flop, right? We have a system that is targeted towards runaway and homeless youth that has limited capacity and unfortunately, time limited time that they can work with young people in crisis shelter. And then we have a DHS system that has the capacity to have young people in their system 18 to 24 in their system for long periods of time, but do not have the same expertise that the DYCD providers have in serving young people, and what we need to do as a City is to sort of bring all that together and start looking at this area much broadly and when I say broadly, I include HRA in that conversation. The City talked about how it works with young people to do support housing applications and to do benefits applications, but if you talk to a lot of people who work with those young people to try to do those applications, when they reach out to HRA they often get no assistance from that staff, so we really have to look to HRA too about how they're going to open their doors and work better with DYCD and DHS to serve young people to ensure there is a seamless progression to supportive housing if

there's availability, that benefits are not held up because of missing paperwork or missing information and that there is a more cooperative experience so that providers who do serve them or DHS's staff who do serve this age group of young people can actually get things done in a timely fashion that it can really matter to young people.

You know, like I said before, the siloing of services really creates on this part of the young people a lot of frustration, right? They feel like they can't get often what they need. Many young people who enter DHS feel that they can't get the services that they need. They do utilize drop-in centers, but sometimes that's not enough for them. They want to go home to an environment that is supportive of young people and DHS shelters should be that way. So another example of that is trafficked youth. We can't sit here and talked about trafficked youth and think they're only going to DYCD providers or they're only being found by ACS. They must be in the DHS system and we don't see DHS here talking about its efforts to recognize that and its facilities and

2 what efforts they're doing to have those young  
3 people access services.

4           And I truly believe if the City had  
5 more collaboration; if there was more interagency  
6 work going on we'd have better data. We would be  
7 able to start answering some questions about how  
8 many young people need supportive housing; how many  
9 young people are on benefits, but because there's  
10 that lack of cooperation, we have City officials  
11 who come and can't really testify to specific  
12 numbers or really what they need and in order to  
13 see that broader perspective, we need to start  
14 forcing agencies to kind of work together. So I  
15 guess my fantasy is for you to have a hearing where  
16 you have DHS, the DOE, HRA, DYCD, ACS sort of all  
17 sitting here and answering questions about what  
18 they're doing to work together to recognize who's  
19 runaway and homeless and then what they're doing to  
20 ensure that they're getting the right services.

21           I do want to point out that I agree  
22 with... I appreciate that ACS... that they're  
23 seeing less arrests of young people who are  
24 involved in sex work or who have been trafficked.  
25 That is true, but when we talk about young people,

2 unfortunately, with the juvenile justice system; I  
3 know that the Chairs and the committees know this;  
4 we're talking about young people under the age of  
5 16. So when we talk about youth up to 24, which  
6 I'd like to see the City really begin to do or many  
7 of us would like to see the City really begin to  
8 do, those young people are in the criminal justice  
9 system and they're being arrested all the time.  
10 And if you look specifically at the transgender  
11 population and many of the gender nonconforming  
12 youth in our city, many of them are being arrested  
13 at high rates on the issues of loiter... on the  
14 charges of loitering for the purposes of  
15 prostitution or prostitution itself. And so we see  
16 many of them in the system and what we don't see is  
17 either if you're arrested and in the Juvenile  
18 Justice Courts, in the Family Courts or you're  
19 arrested in the Criminal Justice Courts is a  
20 program available for trans youth; specifically  
21 boys or gender nonconforming youth or gay youth who  
22 feel comfortable that addresses the issue of  
23 trafficking or sex work in those systems. So yes,  
24 there's a lot of prevention work going on and I  
25 applaud that on the part of the City, but what

there isn't is a community-based program after an arrest has happened that can prevent that young person from being detained at Rikers or going into a juvenile detention center or perhaps into a placement. That program needs to exist. The City needs to fund that program and it needs to fund program for youth above the age of 16 and through you know, what we could classify as youth. I'm hoping the Council would look at youth up to the age of 24.

Chair Eugene, I'm glad you raised the issue of young people who are struggling with disabilities often being lost in the system; often having more complications. I want to talk specifically and react to some of the things that the City said with regard to mental health services. I appreciate that the City said that the providers can just put it in their budget, but that for the provider would be at the expense of some other service. So what they can't do is say we want to have these services and these beds with what we do and we want to add mental health services to our budget. There is no real money coming in the way... from the City itself to afford

mental health services. That's privately raised money and I appreciate that some of these organizations may be very big, but their task is also very big, so to say that they're big enough to do this I think is really unfair to them and unfair to our young people who need this service. So what happens is they do get money to provide mental health services, but it's never enough. What we know is, whether we're talking about youth involved in sex work or trafficked youth or we're just talking about most runaway and homeless youth, they've experienced a large amount of trauma and they need a large amount of services and there needs to be some funding stream coming from the City to assist that and a deliberate effort on the part of DHS and DYCD to assist providers in providing more mental health services for young people. And when young people do have mental health diagnosis and do have... perhaps may fit definitions of where they could get into supportive housing in this City, we need to figure out a way that they're not just seemingly... that providers are put in a position often to discharge them 'cause they have waiting lists of other young

2 people and that we ensure that they're staying in a  
3 safe place that's meeting their needs. So I'll  
4 pass it onto my colleagues.

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thanks.

6 JAYNE BIGELSEN: Thank you. I am  
7 Jayne Bigelsen. I'm the Director of Anti-Human  
8 Trafficking Initiatives at Covenant House and also  
9 of External Affairs. First and foremost, I'd like  
10 to say thank you; thank you to Chair Eugene and  
11 Chair Levin for having this hearing and for the  
12 council members here today. In the past, the City  
13 Council has really been our saving grace; has been  
14 our leader in the fight to support homeless youth,  
15 as well in supporting human trafficking victims and  
16 we know that's going to continue under both Council  
17 Member Eugene's and Levin's leadership and we are  
18 so immensely grateful for that.

19 Just real quick, a little bit of a  
20 background about Covenant House. We serve  
21 homeless, runaway, at risk youth around the world,  
22 although today I'm talking about Covenant House New  
23 York. Last year, just Covenant House New York  
24 alone served over 3,000 young people. Our Crisis  
25 Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



2 We do the basics; food, clothing, shelter, laundry,  
3 so many of the things that we all take for granted,  
4 but also our young people receive a comprehensive  
5 continuum of care, including medical care,  
6 education, unemployment assistance, legal services,  
7 transitional housing, substance abuse counseling  
8 and mental health services. And I should add that  
9 over 60 percent of our funding is from non-  
10 governmental sources.

11 I had planned today to talk mostly  
12 about Local Law 23 because my expertise is in human  
13 trafficking, but I do want to address a few of the  
14 points that were mentioned this morning. For one,  
15 Susan Haskell was absolutely correct that we never  
16 intentionally turn away any young people to the  
17 streets. That said, in March, I believe we turned  
18 away at Covenant House or we did not have beds for  
19 over 200 young people. That means 200 young people  
20 asked for services or a bed and we did not have a  
21 bed available. No, we never turn away a young  
22 person to the street. We still provide all of our  
23 other services. They can get drop-in services;  
24 they can get food; the RGD classes; employment  
25 training; counseling, but what they want is a bed

and we didn't have a bed for that number of youth in March. No, we don't send them to the street, but frequently all of our other colleagues in the continuum are full as well. So we have to send them to an adult homeless shelter and they do not want to go to an adult homeless shelter and for that reason, that is why they frequently end up sleeping in the subways, on the streets, in the piers and there's a huge relationship between that and human trafficking. Covenant House released a study about a year ago where we found this huge relationship between homelessness and human trafficking, and that's because the pimps are sophisticated and they know that the shelters are full and they come up to homeless young people and say, "The shelters are full. Where are you going to go? Why don't you come with us?" And the young people that I spoke with; the trafficking survivors said they had a choice. They can sleep on the street where it's cold; where they're scared or they can go with this young person.

We are... on a positive note we've been working with DYCD. The new administration has been wonderful. We do have some new beds and we are

extremely grateful, but it is just the first step and it's not going to be more than the first step until we don't turn anyone away. I also want to add to you that it's got to be the entire continuum. And we talked a lot about crisis beds, but after crisis, we need Transitional Living beds and then we also need permanent housing because our kids are leaving the Transitional Living Program after 18 months and our kids, they've saved money. They save money every month. They are working, they're in school, but yet there's nowhere they can afford for permanent housing and when that happens, it puts a log jam in the entire continuum. We don't want to discharge them from the TIL until they've got a place to go and that... it log jams the entire continuum. And also I think it was Susan Haskell who said this morning as well, it's not just about the beds. It's about we need the resources for job training. The trafficking studies show that; that a lot of our survivors said, "Who's going to hire me for anything else? Sex work is now my resume." We need job training. We need mental health counseling. We need GED classes. We need it all. We need it all.

2           So now, I'm just going to take a little  
3 bit of time to talk about what I was planning on  
4 talking about, which was Local Law 23. We you  
5 know, are firm believers in the need for this law  
6 because without data you can't allocate funds; you  
7 can't create programming. Most importantly, we  
8 cannot provide the services a young person needs  
9 until they disclose their trafficking experiences.  
10 But as Susan Morley mentioned today, there's always  
11 going to be a discrepancy between reported numbers  
12 and true, real life numbers. I think the number  
13 given today was 458, yet the study that I mentioned  
14 before by Covenant House and Fordham University, we  
15 found that out of 200 young people, approximately  
16 15 percent had experiences that fit the federal  
17 definition of trafficking and another eight percent  
18 has engaged in survival sex, and survival sex is  
19 when you feel like you have no choice but trading  
20 sex for something of value, usually a place to  
21 sleep. If these numbers were to hold the entirety  
22 of the 3,000 youth we see each year, we can  
23 approximate that Covenant House New York alone  
24 serves approximately 750 youth who have either been  
25 victims of sex trafficking or engaged in survival

sex. So you see the huge discrepancy between reported number and actual numbers, and that's because in practice it's... Susan Morley said it; it's extremely difficult to obtain an accurate count of trafficking survivors. The young people don't necessarily... are fearful of disclosing. One of the first things we learned from the study was that despite the fact that we were using scientifically validated questions, if a young person wasn't ready to disclose their experiences or didn't like who they were talking to, they weren't going to disclose. For this reason, I think all service providers and the agencies here today struggle with the idea of when do you ask these questions. You can't really ask them in intake 'cause trust hasn't had a chance to build, but if you wait too much longer, the young person might no longer be in a crisis program. So trafficking identification requires time, training... extensive time and training and also a young person is going to be especially reluctant to disclose if there are no services that occur as a result of that disclosure. So if they know there are no beds available at GEMS, why are they going

2 to recount something that's traumatic? So  
3 basically at the end of the day, these are their  
4 experiences to share and they're only going to do  
5 so when they wish to.

6 So I guess my main point is that a law  
7 requiring reporting is a wonderful thing, but it's  
8 not going to give you anything close to an accurate  
9 picture of trafficking until there's training;  
10 there funding; there's resources. That said, I  
11 mean I think reporting is important. I think we  
12 know of 500 more this year than we knew last year,  
13 but it's only the first step. And I close thanking  
14 you all again for the opportunity to testify today.

15 MEGAN VIZINA: Good afternoon. It's  
16 nice to see you again. I'm Megan Vizina, Director  
17 of Residential Services at Safe Horizon Streetwork  
18 Project. Chairman Eugene and Chairman Levin, thank  
19 you so much for this opportunity to speak with you.  
20 I am going to deliver our Safe Horizon testimony  
21 and welcome questions afterwards.

22 Safe Horizon is the nation's leading  
23 victim assistance organization and New York City's  
24 largest provider of services to victims of child  
25 abuse crime and to their families and communities.

We share the Council's conviction that more information about prevalence will help ensure the City's appropriately funds program, housing and other critical services for homeless and sexually exploited youth. We also recognize the difficulty in accurately developing these datasets, given the diverse identities, experiences and needs of the population. In the decades that we have been working with sexually exploited youth, we have found that many young people do not disclose their exploitation for many years, if they disclose at all. Safe Horizon encounters youth who have been sexually exploited, primarily through three of our programs: our Streetwork Project, our anti-trafficking program and our child advocacy centers.

Since 1984, Safe Horizon has operated the Streetworks Project, which services homeless and at risk youth under the age of 24. A great majority of these young people have been exploited and abused and are at significant risk for injury and disease. Every year, through our peer and staff outreach, Streetwork reaches over 19,000 homeless and at risk youth. Through our two drop-in centers and our youth shelter we provided a safe

2 and healing environment for over 1,400 of these  
3 youth. Three years ago, Safe Horizon was awarded a  
4 demonstration grant by the Federal Office for  
5 Victims of Crime for the purpose of providing  
6 dedicated services to sexually exploited youth. We  
7 were awarded this grant due to our proven track  
8 record and decades of experience serving all youth  
9 who have been impacted by the sex trade.

10 A 2008 John Jay study of commercially  
11 sexually exploited children in New York City found  
12 that Safe Horizon Streetwork Project works with  
13 more minors involved in commercial sex trade than  
14 any other youth program who serves young people in  
15 New York City. Our experience in this area led to  
16 our selection by ACS as a key partner in the Safe  
17 Harbor initiative. This partnership has allowed us  
18 to station a consultant at the ACS Children's  
19 Center, which is often the first stop for many of  
20 our young people entering or reentering foster  
21 care. Sorry, I'm cutting it a little short for  
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: That's good.

24 MEGAN VIZINA: You can thank me later.

25 John Jay's 2008 study of New York City's



2 commercially sexually exploited children reported  
3 that between 70 and 80 percent of homeless youth  
4 have traded sex for money, food, shelter or drugs.  
5 This same study notes that nearly 4,000 young  
6 people meet the federal definition of trafficking.  
7 At Streetwork Project, between 87 and 95 percent of  
8 our clients report they've exchanged sex for money,  
9 a bite to eat, a place to sleep or some other  
10 tangible item. They tell us this is primarily due  
11 to a lack of other options for survival. Of  
12 course, one cannot talk about the vulnerability of  
13 sexually exploited youth without discussing the  
14 alarming lack of emergency shelter for beds...  
15 shelter beds for homeless young people. There are  
16 approximately 260 crisis shelter beds in the City's  
17 homeless youth continuum for the roughly 38 young  
18 people who are homeless on any given night. Each  
19 and every night young people are turned away from  
20 shelter, even on the coldest nights because there  
21 are simply not enough beds. The waiting list at  
22 our 24-hour overnight program in Harlem  
23 consistently averages approximately 100 young  
24 people under the age of 21 years old. Without  
25 immediate access to safe, age appropriate housing,

homeless youth are forced to seek shelter in situations where they are at risk of becoming sexually exploited, increasing the chances of victimization and repeated trauma.

Through working closely with homeless youth for nearly three decades, we have learned that young people without appropriate shelter often enter into sex trade. Too often, the only alternative to say, spending the night on the subway is to sleep with someone in exchange for a place to stay. However, during this time we've learned a few lessons. The first thing that needs to be said is that there is no typical experience of the sex trade or profile of a young person engaged in the sex trade. We know this population includes youth of all genders, sexual orientations, races, ethnicities, citizen status, ages and family background. It is equally important to point out that while youth of many different identities may be involved in the commercial sex trade, youth who are marginalized to societal racism, sexism, classism, homophobia and transphobia are at greater risk.

2 In fact, some of the young people...  
3 oh, sorry. Over the past few decades, our work in  
4 engaging and providing services to vulnerable youth  
5 has also taught us that youth need room to discuss  
6 their ongoing struggles without feeling that they  
7 have failed or fearing that they will lose access  
8 to needed services. We have found that by creating  
9 a safe and supportive environment, we can build  
10 trust with our clients and over time learn more  
11 about their lives and their experiences. We  
12 acknowledge from the very outset that our clients  
13 are the experts in their own experiences and find  
14 that when the relationship is built on trust, our  
15 clients are more likely to feel a sense of  
16 ownership for their path of safety.

17 Another critical point is that we wish  
18 to caution the Council, as well as other partners  
19 at DYCD and ACS, against data collection strategies  
20 that place too much reliance on initial screening  
21 of young people before trust has been built with  
22 them or that may have the unintended consequences  
23 of driving young people away from the very programs  
24 designed to help them.

2           So I'm going to move onto our counting  
3 of homeless youth. We are extremely appreciative  
4 of the Council's interest in this matter. In 2010,  
5 the US Interagency on Homelessness, which is often  
6 referred to as USICH, identified ending youth  
7 homelessness as a policy priority, which has pushed  
8 municipalities across the country, including New  
9 York City, toward better understanding of this  
10 vastly underserved population. Counting  
11 unaccompanied homeless youth is notoriously  
12 difficult. Last year, the Continuum of Care, the  
13 Department of Homeless Services and DYCD partnered  
14 on a pilot count of homeless youth, as you all are  
15 aware. Due to the design of the counting process,  
16 most homeless youth were not included in the final  
17 numbers reported to the public. The annual  
18 Homeless Outreach Population estimate provides the  
19 City with an official approximation of how many  
20 people are street homeless; however, the  
21 methodology does not allow surveyors to enter in  
22 nighttime storefronts, such as fast food  
23 restaurants, where many street involved youth spend  
24 their nighttime hours. Surveyors only count people  
25 on the street and some subways during nighttime

2 hours in the winter. Accordingly, many youth who  
3 trade sex for a place to sleep, who we believe meet  
4 the definition of street homelessness, are not  
5 included in these numbers. A daytime service space  
6 encounter approach would assist in producing a more  
7 accurate number in New York City.

8 A couple more key points about this is  
9 that neither the federal government, which is  
10 mandating this count, nor the city government is  
11 offering any funding for it. So an unfunded  
12 mandate to count a large and widely dispersed  
13 population of homeless youth in a city as vast as  
14 New York creates a situation where large numbers of  
15 homeless youth will be systematically missed.  
16 Without dedicating the necessary resources, both  
17 the city and the federal government risk producing  
18 an estimate that is far from the reality as we, as  
19 providers, see it every day. Secondly, it is  
20 unclear how a count sponsored by the City, but  
21 separate from the HOPE Count, will be used in  
22 determining homeless policy in New York City.

23 We look forward to working with DYCD,  
24 DHS, as well as others and the Council to ensure  
25 that homeless youth are appropriately counted and

2 served. Thank you again so much for offering us  
3 the opportunity to speak and I look forward to  
4 speaking more with you.

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
6 much to all of you. So Council Member Levin, do  
7 you have any comments or questions?

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I just want to  
9 thank you all for the work that you do in providing  
10 direct services or advocacy, legal work. It's  
11 essential and nobody knows more than you what's  
12 happening on the ground and what policies ought to  
13 be changed and reformed and where the dollars can  
14 be best met. I guess my question would be are you  
15 getting a sense right now that DYCD and ACS are  
16 bringing the providers and the advocacy  
17 organizations around the table to determine these  
18 kind of vast array of policies, whether it's doing  
19 an accurate count, talking about expanding services  
20 to 24-year olds, how to address around... at the  
21 Children's Center or any of these vast array of  
22 issues. I mean are we getting the sense right now  
23 that the agencies; ACS, DYCD, DHS or even kind of  
24 City Hall and... because a lot of this is under the  
25 Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services, is there

2 an engagement right now that you're feeling and are  
3 you happy with it and I mean I don't want to put  
4 you on the spot, but things going in the right  
5 direction?

6 KIMBERLY FORTE: I think at times it is  
7 and at times it's not. I mean I think that there  
8 is a vast need for an improvement with DYCD and  
9 DHS.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hm.

11 KIMBERLY FORTE: I think you know,  
12 we're hopeful that the new administration will  
13 change that. I think many of us can say that that  
14 hope is there, but it's... you know, the time is  
15 now I think many of us feel, certainly from the  
16 perspective of advocates that we need to... we  
17 should have hit the ground running 10 years ago.  
18 We are far behind the eight ball and this stuff  
19 hopefully will be a huge focus of what they were  
20 talking about. We... as far as like counting,  
21 respectfully speaking to our colleagues at the  
22 Coalition for the Homeless, a lot of improvement  
23 needs to be done on the part of DHS and DYCD in  
24 that area and we're hoping that they do take, in  
25 fact, the advice and the expertise of people

2 working directly with the young people and with the  
3 adults that they want to count. They now consider  
4 adults, which I would also consider youth. You  
5 know, I think at times ACS does a better job of  
6 this and they are often bringing advocates and  
7 providers around the table and perhaps DYCD and DHS  
8 will take their example in many ways.

9 MEGAN VIZINA: I would echo Kim and I  
10 would also say that collaboration only helps in  
11 these situations where we all...

12 [crosstalk]

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hm.

14 MEGAN VIZINA: Provide a unique  
15 perspective. This community of providers is  
16 extremely brilliant and works together sometimes in  
17 a grassroots way because...

18 [crosstalk]

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

20 MEGAN VIZINA: There's not so much of  
21 that organization and moving forward it would be  
22 really great to enhance that community and  
23 collaboration through partnerships with DHS, DYCD  
24 and ACS.



2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And then just  
3 lastly, I mean I'm a big believer that our budget  
4 equals our policy and so I'm assuming that it's not  
5 just to throw dollars at the issue, but if more  
6 funding was available from the City, we can get  
7 more things done. Is that a fair assessment?

8 ALL PANELISTS: Absolutely.

9 JAYNE BIGELSEN: We want to get to the  
10 point where we're not turning any young person away  
11 to... I mean we can't give you a number right now,  
12 but we know how many we're turning away.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. We know  
14 it's not there.

15 JAYNE BIGELSEN: Yeah, we know it's not  
16 there.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
18 much. I appreciate it.

19 ALL PANELISTS: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
21 much, co-Chair Levin and before you go can I just  
22 make a statement? I think you deserve some you  
23 know, recognition or something and I just want to  
24 thank you for the wonderful job that you are doing  
25 and thank you also for your presentations, but it

2 is also sad to see that people who are dedicated to  
3 serve and to render services to the young people,  
4 you are facing so many challenges in terms of  
5 resources you know, available to do the job that  
6 you would like to do. So I think Miss Bigelsen,  
7 you mentioned that your organization were only able  
8 to provide shelter to approximately 200 young  
9 people. You had to, you know, to refuse them.

10 This is very sad and I believe that we have to make  
11 any effort to see where we can get the additional  
12 funding for these wonderful organizations that are  
13 striving every single day to provide services to  
14 our young people. And you mentioned something very  
15 important also: resources for job training. I  
16 think this is a very, very important issue because  
17 many young people, as you know, you know they get  
18 involved in sex trafficking because they don't have  
19 any other alternative. And right now, I'm working  
20 on a new initiative in talking with the Speaker and  
21 my colleagues to see how we can get funding for job  
22 opportunities; for job training because many of our  
23 young people get involved in bad things because  
24 they are looking for something you know, in order  
25 for them to fulfill their personal needs, so you

2 will hear from us. I think we are going to send a  
3 letter very soon you know, to all the service  
4 providers for youth and we have to come together to  
5 find out how we are going to address those issues  
6 because they are very, very important. It doesn't  
7 make sense; it is not acceptable that our young  
8 people in the greatest city in the world, New York  
9 City, cannot receive the resources that they need  
10 to have a better life and to become better a  
11 person. And another thing that you mentioned and I  
12 believe this is very important, collaboration  
13 between the agencies. Working together we will be  
14 so powerful. Putting our resources together will  
15 allow us to do so much and I welcome the idea also  
16 that what I think; that what Council Member Levin  
17 and all of us from this committee; from both  
18 committees what we think also and we're going to  
19 have a follow-up meeting to try to come together  
20 and strategize together to improve the services  
21 that we are providing to the young people. To all  
22 of you, thank you very much.

23 ALL PANELISTS: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you. Now  
25 let me call Sarah Meckler from The Door and

2 Stephanie Gendell, thank you. James Bolas from  
3 Coalition for Homeless Youth.

4 [Pause]

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Whoever wants to go  
6 first. You have to turn on the mic.

7 SARAH MECKLER: Good morning and thank  
8 you for this opportunity to testify today. I'm  
9 Sarah Meckler. I'm supervisor of Homeless Youth  
10 Services at The Door. The Door is a large multi-  
11 service youth development agency providing a full  
12 range of integrated services at a single one-stop  
13 shop to approximately 11,000 of New York City's  
14 youth between the ages of 12 to 24 each year. We  
15 have GED program; job training; legal services;  
16 meals; clothing; showers; laundry; a fully  
17 operating health center; art programming;  
18 recreation; sports; counseling; college access, as  
19 well as supportive housing facilities. In  
20 addition, our drop-in program, which is the  
21 official drop-in center for the borough of  
22 Manhattan, serves over 2,000 homeless youth a year  
23 through drop-in and street outreach programs. We  
24 have also for the past six months been providing  
25 services geared towards the commercially sexually

exploited children population through ACS's Safe Harbor programming.

Since we have been gathering data on sexually exploited youth, we have averaged a total of 24 new reports of sexual exploitation each month for a total of 146 youth over the past six months. 89 percent of the young people were homeless; 66 percent were female; 33 percent male and 50 percent were lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning or queer; 50 percent were heterosexual and the average age was 20. While this is a start, as the other service providers have said, it's not a truly accurate count of the population. They are assessed at intake and until trust is built up, they don't feel comfortable disclosing this information. For example, one of the Safe Harbor programs that we run is a support group for transgender youth who are at risk for sexual exploitation. It was the facilitators reported that the youth only started talking about their experiences with sex work after three months of meeting every single week. Up until then, it was a taboo topic, so it really takes time for them to feel comfortable disclosing this information.

Another challenge we've had is the very definitions of sexual exploitation in use. I feel we need a clear and more detailed definition of what we're reporting on because it could be sexual abuse, commercial sex trade or trading sex for survival. For example, we ask in our screening tool, "Have you ever felt like you had to trade sex for money, food, drugs or a place to stay?" Well, we consider that sexual exploitation and survival sex. Other studies do not consider this as a strict definition of commercial sexual exploitation.

The Door has also had the opportunity to participate as the New York site for the Federal Family and Youth Services Bureau 2013 Street Outreach Collection Project and we were able to obtain additional demographics on homeless youth who trade sex. 42 percent of the homeless youth surveyed stated they had agreed to be sexual with someone because they needed a place to stay, food, drugs, protection or money. The number one reason that homeless reported trading sex was for a place to stay. That was over trading sex for money; it was for a place to stay for the night. The

demographics were similar. There was overrepresentation of gay, lesbian and bisexual youth in this study. Transgender youth made up 42 percent of the youth who traded sex for money and males were also represented 38 percent, so we cannot ignore young men who are trading sex. They're out there, as well as especially transgender youth.

While it's important to collect this information, I feel we have a good sense of the demographics of homeless youth, what they need and how we can support them and I think that it's important to not wait until we have you know, a perfect accurate count of sexually exploited youth until we take action. We need action now. We have these youth in our programs now. We need resources to help these youth. It's estimated that we currently have enough youth shelter beds for about 10 percent of the homeless youth present in New York City on any given night. The numbers of homeless youth at our drop-in center are 50 percent greater than what we are funded for. We keep facing budget cuts that threaten our ability to provide basic services such as food, clothing and

case management. When our drop-in program closes in the evenings at 8:00 p.m., we routinely say good night to homeless youth knowing they have no shelter bed to go to because there are none available. We estimate that between 60 to 70 percent of the young people who come to our drop-in center seeking out placement in youth shelter programs we are unable to place because they are full. While we don't discharge them to the streets, the only other option is DHS facilities. We give them information. The vast majority do not... would rather sleep on the streets than go to the DHS facilities. They are not comfortable with the adult population. They report high numbers of assault, harassment and rampant drug use. When young people don't have age appropriate shelter beds to go to and no income, they are extremely vulnerable to being sexually trafficked and many feel they have no choice but to engage in sex work in order to have a place to sleep and food to eat.

While it is important to start taking immediate actions to address the needs of sexually exploited and homeless youth in the city, at the same time we are still in desperate need of an



2 accurate account of homeless youth that uses a  
3 methodology specifically designed for this  
4 population. The last survey that we feel was most  
5 accurate was the 2007 survey done through the  
6 Empire State Coalition. We are unable to get an  
7 accurate account of homeless youth using  
8 traditional methods of the HOPE Count because  
9 homeless youth do not congregate in the same ways  
10 as the adult homeless population and are much  
11 harder to identify. For example, the HOPE Count  
12 only counts youth in public locations. Most  
13 homeless youth are able to blend in with general  
14 youth populations by going to the Apple store; by  
15 going to the fast food restaurants that are open 24  
16 hours, so when we report the locations to DYCD,  
17 they are not counted because it's not considered  
18 part of their methodology.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mm-hm.

20 SARAH MECKLER: In addition, when we  
21 opened our drop-in centers for the HOPE Count,  
22 these were youth... I was there all night with  
23 them. They didn't even have cots; they didn't even  
24 have blankets. We had yoga mats and sheets rolled  
25 out for them. We had 60 young people come out in

the coldest night of the year to stay with us and they were not counted as street homeless in that count. So there are huge problems with the HOPE Count as it has been and I strongly feel we need a methodology specifically designed for youth outside of the HOPE Count because it's... you know, we aren't able to get an accurate count using their means.

Despite the challenges, we do have a beginning understanding of sexual exploitation of homeless youth in New York City. If we want to address the issue of the sex trafficking among New York City's youth, we must provide them with stable housing, alternative forms of income and support services such as counseling, health care and case management. Due to the high prevalence of sexually trafficked youth among New York City's homeless youth population, we must provide adequate funding and resources for runaway and homeless youth programs so we can prevent youth from being sexually trafficked. It's also important we get an accurate count of homeless youth in New York City utilizing a methodology designed specifically for this population. Thank you very much.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
3 for your testimony. I just had a couple... a quick  
4 point and a quick question. With regard to the  
5 HOPE Count, I mean I am in full accord and again,  
6 having done it for four years in a row, I mean I  
7 know what's most striking about the HOPE Count is  
8 its limitations and so I think it's... I think that  
9 there's a sense out there I think recognized by the  
10 agencies that the HOPE Count is useful maybe for  
11 determining the HOPE Count number...

12 [crosstalk]

13 SARAH MECKLER: Mm-hm.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But not for much  
15 else and that should be... I mean it has value, but  
16 it's not by any means should be used as a baseline  
17 or an accurate assessment or number. One thing I  
18 just wanted to ask about with regard to youth that  
19 are sexually exploited, do we feel like there's  
20 adequate resources available for sexual education,  
21 safe sex practices, testing, things along those  
22 lines? Is that... do we feel like there's adequate  
23 resources available for that to be part of the  
24 programming for these youth?

2 SARAH MECKLER: I mean I think there  
3 are a fair amount of resources for testing and  
4 sexual education. I mean of course, there could  
5 always be more, but I mean at The Door we have a  
6 fully health operating health center. We do  
7 testing all the time. There's several of the  
8 outreach teams that do testing on street outreach,  
9 so I do see that as a service that is available. I  
10 think...

11 [crosstalk]

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure.

13 SARAH MECKLER: I see the higher need  
14 for housing, both emergency and long-term, as we ll  
15 as case management and job training programs.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

17 SARAH MECKLER: I think that's more of  
18 a priority.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, right, of  
20 course. I just wanted to make sure. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Next speaker,  
22 please?

23 STEPHANIE GENDELL: Good afternoon. My  
24 name is Stephanie Gendell. I'm the Associate  
25 Executive Director for Policy and Government

2 Relations at Citizens' Committee for Children,  
3 which is a multi-issue independent non-profit child  
4 advocacy organization that doesn't accept any  
5 government funding or provide any direct services.  
6 Instead, we do all our advocacy based on facts, as  
7 well as community education. I just wanted to  
8 thank the Chairs for holding today's hearing and  
9 for your continued commitment to both sets of  
10 populations we're talking about today; runaway and  
11 homeless youth and sexually exploited youth. These  
12 are two very vulnerable populations who require a  
13 lot of attention from the City and we appreciate  
14 the Council's attention to these populations.

15 We agree with what all of my colleagues  
16 have said, so I'm not going to read my testimony  
17 and I'll try not to be repetitive, but obviously  
18 having a sense of the... who this population is and  
19 how big they are is important so we can figure out  
20 exactly what kinds of services we need and how  
21 much, but we agree with what has been stated by  
22 everyone today that we will never get a 100 percent  
23 accurate count for all the reasons that have been  
24 stated and that we need to move forward and provide  
25 services long before we get the full number, even

though we should continue to try to hone how we capture the number of youth who are homeless and the number of youth who are sexually exploited.

That said, the counts that we have done, including the information that was just shared by The Door, opens up and shows us really valuable information about the population and the kids in the city who are really very vulnerable in experiencing homelessness and sexual exploitation. Even looking at last year's youth count, the fact that the young people had an average length of being homeless as 927 days was, at least to me, very shockingly long. I didn't think it was short, but I was surprised at how long and I thought that was a really valuable lesson from the young people. Similarly, the new data from ACS and DYCD coming out of Local Law 23 about showing 458 youth that they believed they'd had contact with even though there might be some duplicates I thought was really revealing about how widespread and deep this problem is that they were able to, in probably less than a year, through various programs identify that many contacts to sexually exploited youth. The number is probably incredibly large if we were to

2 ever really capture it, but they actually got that  
3 many young people to say they'd been sexually  
4 exploited.

5 I think that going forward means that  
6 we need to continue to try to hone our count. We  
7 need to invest more resources for these young  
8 people. It's actually very disappointing that a  
9 lot of us here in this room advocated for  
10 additional state Safe Harbor money. We got  
11 additional Safe Harbor money, but actually New York  
12 City's allocation is actually now less because  
13 other counties are getting funding, so I find that  
14 deeply disturbing and look forward to trying to get  
15 some additional state funding, as well as City  
16 funding to help better serve these young people.  
17 One of the populations that's been mentioned a few  
18 times today is boys. While we need a lot more  
19 services for girls, we really are very limited in  
20 our services for boys and we echo the sentiments of  
21 those talking about investing more services for  
22 sexually exploited boys, and I can leave it at  
23 that. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
25 much. Next speaker, please?

2 JAMES BOLAS: Hi, I want to thank you  
3 for holding these hearings. I want to welcome you  
4 both into your roles. As Chair of the Services  
5 Committee, we look forward to working with you  
6 collaboratively and same with General Welfare.  
7 Thank you. Sorry, I'm like I can't read. My name  
8 is James Bolas. I'm the Executive Director of the  
9 Coalition for Homeless Youth, formerly known as the  
10 Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family  
11 services. I'm also the consulting project director  
12 for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and  
13 Technical Assistance Centers, HTR3 Anti-Trafficking  
14 Project that's funded through Family Youth Services  
15 Bureau. I'm also the co-private investigator for a  
16 homeless youth program impact study that we're  
17 doing with New York University to study the  
18 effectiveness of runaway homeless youth services,  
19 and this is a three-year study that we are just  
20 kicking off this week so sorry if I'm like  
21 scattered because doing a study is exhausting.

22 The Coalition for Homeless Youth,  
23 formerly known as the Empire State Coalition is the  
24 only statewide consortium of providers serving  
25 homeless, runaway and street involved youth in New



2 York State and we provide professional development  
3 of homeless... to homeless youth agencies in New  
4 York State through our extensive clinical and  
5 programmatic webinar-based and on-site training  
6 institute. We also founded and coordinate... well,  
7 we coordinate services and resources for homeless  
8 youth in New York State, including New York City,  
9 and since 1999, have founded, hosted and managed  
10 the New York City Association of Homeless and  
11 Street Involved Youth Organizations, which meets on  
12 a monthly basis of all the runaway and homeless  
13 youth agencies providing a collaborative think tank  
14 network and sharing environment, a service  
15 coordination environment. Also, we provided five  
16 biannual State of the City reports that were  
17 anecdotal, as well as statistical information  
18 around the issues affecting and impacting homeless  
19 and runaway youth services and youth in New York  
20 State... New York City.

21 In our 40-year history, we've seen only  
22 two comprehensive studies identifying the number of  
23 homeless youth in New York City. The first was in  
24 the '80s, which was Shaffer and Caton and the  
25 second was in 2007, which was our study of the

2 Coalition and we decided at that... prior to that  
3 time, we had decided that it had been long enough  
4 without that sufficient... that necessary data and  
5 sought funding from the City Council and this  
6 committee, the Youth Committee to conduct a survey.

7 I want to be very clear. There's been  
8 miscommunication about the study that was done in  
9 2008. It's not a count. It's a study. We did a  
10 point in time assessment of how many young people  
11 on any given night there are in New York City, so  
12 it's not that there are 3,800 homeless young people  
13 in all of New York City. It's probably a number  
14 times that. That's on any given night. So I just  
15 want to be very clear about that. At that point of  
16 doing that study over a period of three to four  
17 weeks, we certified providers through our IRB in  
18 collaboration with Columbia University and The New  
19 School to interview over 1,000 homeless youth in  
20 New York City, of which an estimated 945 interviews  
21 were usable. In collaboration with Columbia  
22 University and The New School, we found that on any  
23 given night there were at least 3,800 youth living  
24 on the streets of New York City. Out of that  
25 estimate; that extrapolation, we found that 150 of

those youth had spent previous nights with sex work clients in prostitution situations.

The tool that we used lasted about 15 to 20 minutes, so each interview lasted about 15 to 20 minutes; we timed it and the youth were reimbursed for their time. We conducted interviews in programs, as well as on the street in locations such as Union Square, the piers and through the work of street outreach workers and street outreach programs across the city. We involved youth in this process. We went into Apple stores; we went into McDonalds, the subways, all of the places the Department of Homeless Services does not go. Sorry, I'm summarizing, so please be patient. We understand that we've been working in the issue of trafficking really since before 2004 and we also understand that trafficking, as a formerly defined issue is still relatively new; however, programs serving homeless, runaway and disenfranchised youth are essentially founded; have been founded; these services have been founded on the issue of protecting sexually exploited youth.

So in 1974, when the Runaway Homeless Youth Act was established; the federal Runaway

Homeless Youth Act was established, that was in response to youth who were being sexually exploited. So we've been doing this work. It's just been recently in the past 10 years maybe given the name of trafficking. We also know that it takes a process, as has been said by numerous people, it's a process to engage a young person; to have them to trust you to say that they've been sexually exploited. Many young people, in order to emotionally survive on the streets, have to flip the perception and turn it into an ego strength. So they're not going to say that they're doing this because they need to make it seem like they're stronger than that; that it's not a dirty thing because otherwise they wouldn't be able to emotionally survive on the streets. Is that a good thing? Yes. Is it a bad thing? Yes.

We also know that trafficking still does not have clear strategies sort of defined or a clear definition sort of defined for engaging young men who have sex with men and these are young men who have sex with men that aren't necessarily gay identified. We're talking about surviving, so it's not necessarily LGBTQ because if we're designing

2 models to serve LGBTQ youth, we're missing these  
3 young people who don't... these young men who don't  
4 identify, so we have to really take that into  
5 consideration as well. There also is a huge gap in  
6 services and resources for young people who are  
7 transgender and being sexually exploited or  
8 involved in sex work in the community.

9           We're also confronted with a limited,  
10 if any, approach toward labor trafficking. I know  
11 we're talking a lot about commercial sexual  
12 exploitation, but if we're talking about  
13 trafficking, we have to take in mind the issue of  
14 labor trafficking because if you're looking at  
15 young people who are dancing in sex clubs or bars  
16 or whatever, that's labor trafficking, not sexual  
17 exploitation. It leads to sexual exploitation. So  
18 we have to be able to look at labor trafficking as  
19 well, which is also ripe throughout New York City,  
20 particularly within, as we found, through some of  
21 our anti-trafficking trainings in connection with  
22 the Asian American community, particularly through  
23 the New York Asian Women's Coalition, there is a  
24 large number of young people in the Asian American  
25 community who are disenfranchised, disconnected

from their families who are labor trafficked, sex trafficked, sexually exploited and runaway homeless youth programs aren't necessarily meeting those needs because there's a unique community that needs to be... to have these programs... that needs to be developed within these programs so that Asian young people can be met and feel engaged.

We also know that in the process of identifying individuals who are being or at risk of being trafficked, you must make services available and this again, we're getting back to the whole chicken and egg issue. It's like do we get the numbers so then we get the resources or do we put the resources out there because we need them if we're going to get the numbers because if you're going to identify someone, you have to connect them to services. You can't just count them and say, "Oh, you're trafficked," and then leave them go. We have to be able to connect them to services, so we really are caught in the chicken and egg scenario. And I think that services definitely are a priority because we're severely limited in services.

2           We have a number of recommendations for  
3 counting homeless youth. We did... I did or  
4 whatever the Coalition did an Op Ed piece in *City*  
5 *Limits* a year ago regarding the HOPE Count.  
6 Everything that you said about the HOPE Count, yes;  
7 everything that everyone's said about the HOPE  
8 Count, yes, agreed. First and foremost, however,  
9 and we've said this in meetings with DYCD and we've  
10 been working collaboratively with DYCD in the past  
11 couple of months, which it just started happening,  
12 so we're kind of like surprised and collectively  
13 exhaling because we're not sort of being... sorry,  
14 being challenged by them all the time, but we're  
15 actually... there's a collaborative effort. But  
16 what we've said, and this is something that's been  
17 said by their Citigroup [phonetic] or whatever  
18 their working with or they're talking about working  
19 with to do a count, that at a minimum you need  
20 \$200,000 to do an effective count. On a federal  
21 level, we were in... I was just in DC in March and  
22 we were meeting with Senators and Congress people  
23 and we're asking on a federal level for \$2 million  
24 to do a National Prevalence study and the Senators  
25 and the Congress people were saying that that was

low, so there's the math or part of the math. You know, the recommendations are in the *City Limits* Op Ed piece. I'm not going to really go into that necessarily. We know that if you're going to do a count you need to do it over time, not in the middle of January because homeless young people are resilient. They're not idiots. They're going to go and get out of the cold, so if they're out of the cold they're not going to be counted, as we've seen through the numbers. We also know that... you know, we recommend doing it over a period of time like we had done. We did three to four weeks. Well, actually it was like five weeks. So we're collaborating with DYCD encouraging that this be done over a period of time. We're talking about spring and summer. We're talking about you know, repetitive times, not just once a year. I think that we really need to do this with young people... young people's participation involved in the planning of this. We can't sort of go in and say well, this is how you count young people without talking to young people. You know, we're always excited about the potential to identify the prevalence because that give us something to say at



2 hearings like this when someone is saying, "How  
3 many are there?" You know, or when we go to State  
4 Senator or Nash, the Federal Senator and tell them  
5 how many there are... they're asking how many there  
6 are, we actually can give them an answer instead of  
7 saying, "Uhm, we don't know." So it gives us the  
8 tools so we're actually very excited about this  
9 hearing and look forward to working with both the  
10 committees as well as DYCD and ACS and any other  
11 agency. We had a meeting with Deputy Mayor  
12 Barrios-Paoli and she... and we had talked about  
13 looking at these different bureaucracies and these  
14 different agencies and talked about something  
15 that's similar to the United States Interagency  
16 Council on Homelessness on a federal level;  
17 something like that in New York City that's cross  
18 systemic and that's something that we really need  
19 where that's focusing on homeless youth, so and she  
20 was... she seemed to think that was a good idea.  
21 So I want to thank you. I want to welcome you. I  
22 want to encourage you to reach out to us if you  
23 have any questions.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
25 much and thank you to all of you. I just have you

2 know, a few more questions, very... Mr. Balos, you  
3 mentioned that we need approximately \$200,000 for  
4 an effective count. Do you... is that in New York  
5 City? Are you talking an effective count in the  
6 city?

7 JAMES BOLAS: The \$200,000?

8 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yeah.

9 JAMES BOLAS: Yeah, that would be in  
10 New York City. I mean that's minimum to do  
11 something in New York 'cause you want to reimburse  
12 young people for their time if you're serving them.  
13 You're going to need to pay the researchers.  
14 You're going to need to pay Scantron to scan the  
15 data. You know, I mean I think you can't... we  
16 did... with our study we did it for I think it was  
17 like \$125,000.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Mm-hm.

19 JAMES BOLAS: And that was with two  
20 staff people, myself and the former Executive  
21 Director.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And you have to  
23 account for inflation.

24 JAMES BOLAS: Sorry?  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And you have to  
3 account for inflation. [laughter]

4 JAMES BOLAS: Yes, exactly.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Everything gets  
6 more expensive.

7 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Let me ask you,  
8 how did you come with this number? What is the  
9 formula that you use to evaluate and to come with  
10 the \$200,000? You say that that could help us do  
11 an effective count.

12 JAMES BOLAS: How did we come up with  
13 that number? Well, we looked at what it cost us to  
14 do, our survey, and then we also spoke with... at  
15 DYCD at the collaborative meeting with DYCD and we  
16 had asked their researcher, the CIDI group or  
17 whatever it's called; I don't know the exact name  
18 of it, but and we said, "How much would it actually  
19 cost?" And they basically concurred and said at  
20 minimum \$200,000.

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I see.

22 JAMES BOLAS: 'Cause you're looking at  
23 staff time. You're looking at keeping programs  
24 open. If you're going to do things late at night,  
25 you're looking at keeping programs open. You want

2 to reimburse staff, right, if you're counting young  
3 people on-site. The last HOPE Count that was done  
4 where they had homeless youth programs saying oh,  
5 open 'til 4:00 in the morning, all of that was done  
6 voluntarily. People did that voluntarily and  
7 that's... I mean it's just it's not... it's not  
8 professional; it's not ethic; it's not fair to  
9 them.

10 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay, thank you  
11 very much. Council Member Levin?

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. I want  
13 to thank this panel for the good work that you do  
14 and for your dedication to the youth of New York  
15 City. I just had one last thing about the HOPE  
16 Count or the way I could describe the HOPE Count or  
17 its effectiveness is maybe it's effective for  
18 showing how many people are outside at 2:00 in the  
19 morning when it's 15 degrees outside, but that's  
20 what it would show you, which is what it's done.  
21 But I just wanted to thank you for... Legal Aid  
22 pointed me in the direction of your 2011 State of  
23 the City's Homeless Youth report, which I would...  
24 I just got a chance to look at this morning  
25 actually and it was so extensive that there was

2 like no way I could possibly digest it all in that  
3 period of time, but it's 171 pages or something  
4 like that, so but it was very extensive. I think  
5 it actually provides a good blueprint for how to  
6 move forward on a lot of these issues. You  
7 mentioned labor trafficking and I know there's a  
8 section on labor trafficking. There's probably 15  
9 sections in it, all with discreet recommendations  
10 and identification of problem areas and gaps of  
11 services and all of that. So I just want to thank  
12 you for that because I'm going to be looking at it  
13 over the next couple of months and you know,  
14 touting it wherever I can so. I want to thank this  
15 panel for your testimony today and for hanging  
16 around all morning and for doing all the good work  
17 you do. Thanks.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you, Council  
19 Member Levin. Let me ask one question to Miss  
20 Sarah Meckler; thank you very much; from Door. You  
21 mentioned that for this past six months, you have  
22 been also providing services toward... you know, to  
23 young people involved in sex trafficking. So what  
24 type of services you have been providing? Could  
25

2 you just briefly mention the services that you have  
3 been providing to those young people?

4 SARAH MECKLER: Specifically with the  
5 Safe harbor money, it's a very small amount through  
6 ACS, we ran a support group for transgender youth  
7 and gender nonconforming youth who are at risk of  
8 sexual exploitation...

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] Mm-  
10 hm.

11 SARAH MECKLER: And then we also had a  
12 part-time job coach who came and did very low  
13 threshold beginning job prep and job training with  
14 the population assisting them with resumes; job  
15 searches; interview skills. So that was  
16 specifically what we did with the Safe Harbor money  
17 and also incentives that we passed out on street  
18 outreach to get them to come into the door to sign  
19 up for services. But those youth could also access  
20 any of the services we have at The Door. Once they  
21 become members, they can join the job training  
22 program, the GED program, get counseling, go to the  
23 health center and also get case management  
24 services.

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Alright, thank  
3 you. I think you mentioned something somewhere...  
4 you... and I love it. I love it because we know  
5 that the prevention is the best measure that we can  
6 take in anything. We have to be preventive. We  
7 have to be proactive. We should not wait when the  
8 situation become worse to act. We have to  
9 strategize and try to figure out how we're going to  
10 prevent that to happen and I love when you say that  
11 we need action now and I do love it and it seems  
12 also that one of the biggest challenges... one of  
13 you know, the challenge, the biggest challenge is  
14 that all of you, you are facing is resources,  
15 funding, among others, absolutely. But I think  
16 that it is very important that we make the effort  
17 to try to seek more funding because when we talk  
18 about; when we think about sex trafficking you  
19 know, among young people, as you mentioned, it is  
20 because of a need; you know, facing you know, by  
21 the young people; the need of providing themselves  
22 with what they need. So I think that we have to  
23 make sure that we work together to secure the  
24 resources and this is what we are trying to do on  
25 this committee. My colleagues and myself, all of

2 us from both committees, we are working very hard  
3 to secure funding from the City and also we are  
4 going to reach out to you because it is very, very  
5 important that we collaborate; that we work  
6 together and one of you mentioned collaboration and  
7 working together. I think this is the... yes, I  
8 think this is one of the best formula, working  
9 together. And to conclude, let me thank you, all  
10 of you, for your presentation, for the wonderful  
11 job that you are doing. Thank you very much and  
12 keep on doing the best that you can you know, for  
13 our young people because they deserve it and it is  
14 our moral obligation as a society, as a city. We  
15 have to do it and I pledge to continue to work  
16 together with you to improve the life of the young  
17 people; to ensure that we provide them with the  
18 best resources that they need to become positive  
19 and proactive citizens. Thank you very much.

20 ALL PANELISTS: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And the meeting is  
22 adjourned. Thank you.

23 [gavel]



C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.



Date: 05/13/2013