

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH
THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES AND THE
COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

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March 15, 2016
Start: 9:42 a.m.
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

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[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good morning
everybody. I am Stephen Levin, Chair of the
Council's General Welfare Committee and thank you for
joining me today for the Fiscal 2017 Preliminary
Budget Hearing for the General Welfare Committee.

Today we will hear from three agencies,
the Human Resources Administration, Department of
Homeless Services and the Administration for Children
Services on each of their proposed Fiscal 2017
Budget.

In the City's proposed budget for Fiscal
2017, for the Preliminary Budget, totals \$82.1
billion of which approximately \$13.8 billion funds
HRA, DHS and ACS or roughly 17 percent of the City's
total expense for Fiscal 2017. With each social
services agency here today we will be asking how new
needs, various funding adjustments, performance
indicators and new policies will impact and enhance
each agency's ability to serve the most vulnerable
populations in the city.

This morning we will begin with testimony
from the Human Resources Administration. As the
largest social services agency in the country, HRA

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4 provides cash assistance, food stamps; HIV/AIDS
5 support services, also referred to as HASA, and many
6 other public assistance programs to aid low-income
7 New Yorkers.

8 Beginning this fiscal year, HRA expanded
9 its services to include the centralization of legal
10 services, anti-eviction services and civil legal
11 services contracts, expedited access to rental
12 arrears benefits, expanded homelessness prevention
13 programs, and the creation of a new rental assistance
14 program for the homeless in partnership with
15 Department of Homeless Services known as Living in
16 Communities or LINC.

17 Since the adoption of the Fiscal 2016
18 budget, HRA's Fiscal 2017 budget has grown by \$21.2
19 million. Overall, HRA's proposed Fiscal 2017
20 Preliminary Budget reflects a vision that shows a
21 continued commitment to helping low-income New
22 Yorkers and providing them meaningful and impactful
23 services. This administration and HRA's
24 Commissioner, Steven Banks continue to tackle some of
25 the city's most complex issues, including
homelessness, support services for the city's most
vulnerable populations and housing.

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HRA's Fiscal 2017 Preliminary Budget

reflects a financial commitment to address these
issues and new needs, total \$139 million in the
agency's budget, including the expansion of HIV/AIDS
Services Administration, otherwise known as HASA, and
to all low-income New Yorkers living with HIV, the
creation of 15,000 new units of supportive housing
over the next 15 years, the expansion of HRA's
domestic violence shelter capacity and LINC for New
York City Housing Authority, otherwise known as
NYCHA, which supports the placement of 750 families
annually into public housing.

Even with these impactful investments,
more can and should be done. Federal cuts to the
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known
as SNAP, remains a concern. Monthly SNAP benefits
allow more than \$250 million in food spending across
the city every month. The federal cuts to SNAP,
which reduced monthly benefits on average by \$18.00,
have created a strain on emergency food pantries
across the city. Pantries have been inundated with
hungry New Yorkers in need of food once monthly SNAP
benefits have run out. HRA's Fiscal 2016 adopted
budget includes \$1.8 million in funding for food in

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4 the Emergency Food Assistance Pantries (EFAP), but
5 unfortunately this funding was one time and not
6 baselined. It is imperative that this funding not
7 only be baselined, but HRA's funding for emergency
8 food assistance needs to be increased for the
9 upcoming fiscal year to accommodate this growing
10 demand. That was \$1.8 million that was not baselined
11 in addition to the baselined.

12 Before I welcome the Commissioner, I
13 would like to thank committee staff for their very
14 hard work -- Dohini Sompura, Unit Head; Nameera
15 Nuzhat, Legislative Financial Analyst; Andrea
16 Vazquez, Senior Counsel for the Committee, and Tonya
17 Cyrus, Senior Policy Analyst for the Committee -- in
18 preparing for today's hearing. I also wanna thank
19 Nicole Abeen [sp?], who's filling in as Counsel to
20 the Committee this morning. I also wanna thank
21 Regina Poreda Ryan and Latonia McKinney, our Finance
22 Director and Deputy Director, for their work
23 preparing for this hearing today. And before we hear
24 from the Commission, I also want to acknowledge my
25 two colleagues who are here today, Council Members
Grodenchik and Salamanca from the Bronx and Queens

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4 and with that I will ask Council of the Committee to
5 swear in the Commissioner.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please raise your
7 right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
8 whole truth and nothing but the truth in your
9 testimony before the committee today and to respond
10 honestly to council member questions? Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I do.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Commissioner, you may
13 begin.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you. Good
15 morning, thank you for having me; I appreciate seeing
16 the full committee and congratulations to Council
17 Member Salamanca, I recall working with him in many
18 contexts and I look forward to seeing him in this
19 context as well.

20 I'd like to thank the Council's Finance
21 and General Welfare Committees and the Chairs, Chair
22 Levin for giving us this opportunity to testify today
23 about HRA's budget and our continuing work to move
24 forward with reforms of our policies and procedures.

25 My name is Steven Banks and I'm the
Commissioner of the New York City Human Resources
Administration; joining me today are HRA's Chief

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Program Planning and Financial Management Officer,
Ellen Levine, Executive Deputy Commission of Finance,
Erin Villari and HRA's Chief of Staff, Jennifer Yeaw.

HRA is the nation's largest social
services agency, assisting over three million New
Yorkers annually through the administration of more
than 12 major public assistance programs. HRA also
administers one of this administration's cornerstone
programs, IDNYC, the country's most successful
municipal identification program.

HRA continues to be at the forefront of
the de Blasio Administration's focus on addressing
poverty and income inequality in New York City.
During the course of FY16 we have testified before
the Council at oversight hearings focused on a number
of our program areas, including HRA's employment
plan, HRA's HIV/AIDS Administration HASA, supportive
housing, homelessness, IDNYC, and hunger. These
hearings provided opportunities to speak in detail
about our major reform efforts within each of these
areas.

Living in an expensive city, one in which
the cost of living continues to rise while wages
remain stagnant, means that low-income workers who

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4 are generally struggling to begin with can be
5 derailed by unexpected emergencies and expenses.
6 Many of these low-income workers, nearly 27,000, earn
7 so little that they still qualify for ongoing public
8 assistance from HRA, a critical reason why this
9 administration has taken a leadership role in
10 advocating for an increase in the state-set minimum
11 wage. Having a job is simply not enough to lift low-
12 income New Yorkers out of poverty, working clients
13 need a living wage.

14 Accordingly, through our December 31st,
15 2014 state-approved employment plan, HRA has been
16 implementing a series of initiatives during the two-
17 year phase-in period in order to help clients
18 permanently transition from public assistance and out
19 of poverty and to reduce the possibility that clients
20 will have to return to public assistance as they
21 often did in the past when they were placed into low-
22 paying short-term employment.

23 In particular, our employment plan
24 implements changes in state law so that our clients
25 are able to obtain necessary training and education
to lift them out of poverty. We are also in the
process of implementing new state legislation signed

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4 **[inaudible]** by the Governor, which reforms the
5 process for sanctioning work-required cash assistance
6 recipients. This reform requires a review of
7 barriers to employment prior to sanction and permits
8 the reengagement of clients upon their willingness to
9 participate rather than after a mandatory durational
10 sanction period.

11 In addition, we continue to work with our
12 state partners in applying for federal waivers to
13 streamline access to SNAP, food stamps so that all
14 eligible clients can receive these federal benefits
15 while still maintaining compliance for all state and
16 federal rules and requirements.

17 Among other assistance, HRA provides the
18 following supports for low-income workers and other
19 children and adults:

20 Medicaid -- 2.2 million New Yorkers
21 receive Medicaid through HRA and over a million more
22 through the State Health Insurance Exchange.

23 SNAP and food assistance -- 1.6 million
24 New Yorkers are receiving SNAP food stamps and
25 millions of meals are served through food pantries
and community kitchens.

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4 HEAP -- 685,000 New Yorkers receive home
5 energy assistance every winter.

6 One-time cash assistance -- 107,000
7 receive one-time cash assistance over the course of a
8 year to prevent evictions and utility shut-offs or
9 provide assistance with other emergencies.

10 These supports are critical to
11 maintaining employment under a housing stability for
12 low-income New Yorkers and as such this
13 administration has made expanding access and
14 enrollment in these programs a priority.

15 Additionally, HRA helps thousands of the
16 most vulnerable New Yorkers by providing shelter and
17 supportive services to families and individuals
18 recovering from the trauma of domestic violence,
19 support for people with HIV, protective services for
20 adults unable to care for themselves and homecare
21 services for seniors and individuals with certain
22 physical or mental disabilities and legal services to
23 address tenant harassment, avert homelessness through
24 eviction prevent, help immigrants and secure federal
25 disability benefits.

HRA's staff consists of 14,301 budgeted
head count in FY17, paid for with a combination of

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4 city, state and federal funds, they're public
5 servants who choose to work at HRA and help New
6 Yorkers in need; many have dedicated their entire
7 careers to public service. It's a diverse workforce,
8 70 percent women, 59 percent African-American, 18
9 percent Hispanic, 15 percent white, 8 percent Asian.
10 It's a unionized workforce with members of 13
11 different unions.

12 HRA's budget: As of the January FY17
13 plan, the HRA FY16 budget is \$7.44 billion city
14 funds, \$9.66 billion total, increasing to \$7.6
15 billion city funds; \$9.8 billion total in FY17.
16 Between Fiscal 2016 and 2017, HRA funds increased by
17 \$174 million and total funds increased by \$146
18 million. The year to year increase in city funds
19 includes fully annualized collective bargaining
20 increases, \$100 million more in the Medicaid FY17
21 budget, which is \$5.4 billion, due to one less weekly
22 state payment in FY16, and year to year increases for
23 rental assistance and new programs, including
24 supportive housing and the End the Epidemic
25 Initiative.

26 While the HRA January plan budget
27 declined by \$186 million in city funds and \$139

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million in total funds in FY16 and \$72 million in
city funds and \$108 million in total funds in FY17
compared to the November plan, this was the net
result of over \$40.8 million in new City-funded
initiatives in FY16, \$46.5 million in total funds,
growing to over \$95 million in FY17, \$137 million
total funds, offset by one-time revenue adjustments
in FY16 as well as the transfer of \$204 million from
HRA to New York City Health and Hospitals for
disproportionate share Medicaid costs that are no
longer eligible for federal Medicaid match.

HRA also received 150 new positions in
FY16 and 327 in FY17 in APP [sic]; however, the
agencywide head count goes down by 303 between FY16
and FY17 due to the cash assistance and SNAP
reengineering reductions under the prior
administration that were projected as a result of
technology and business process improvements. HRA is
working with the City's Office of Management and
Budget to make sure that any reductions are aligned
with a real-time timeline for implementation of
technology and business process enhancements so that
they improve access and streamlined processes without
affecting client services.

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4 The two charts in the PowerPoint
5 presentation here show how HRA's expense budget is
6 currently allocated from year to year.

7 Now I would like to describe HRA's major
8 new initiatives and spending changes; first,
9 expansion of HRA's homelessness prevention and
10 housing reforms. The HRA budget reflects the
11 administration's continuing comprehensive initiatives
12 to prevent and eliminate homelessness within the city
13 which has built up over many years. HRA has always
14 provided some homelessness prevention services, but
15 over the past two years we consolidated all of HRA's
16 homelessness prevention programs into a single unit
17 and expanded it substantially.

18 During the same time, the administration
19 restored rental assistance programs that had been
20 eliminated in 2011 in the state budget in order to
21 increase services to prevent and alleviate
22 homelessness and considerably expanded anti-eviction
23 and anti-harassment legal services, which help to
24 both keep families and individuals in their homes and
25 preserve affordable housing. Over the past two years
the new rental assistance programs and other
permanent housing efforts have enabled 30,129

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children and adults and 10,242 households to avert
entry into or move out of Department of Homeless
Services and HRA shelters. Likewise, since July
2014, 16,745 New Yorkers have received eviction
prevention and anti-harassment legal assistance,
including working families and individuals.

With the ramp-up of the tenfold increase
in these programs that the Mayor authorized, from
\$6.5 million per year in the prior administration to
\$62 million, some 33,000 households a year, including
well over 113,000 people will receive legal
assistance to prevent evictions and harassments.

We've also helped more people with
emergency rent assistance, keeping thousands of New
Yorkers in their homes. In FY13 HRA provided renter
arrears to 42,000 households at a cost of \$124.1
million. In FY15 HRA provided rent arrears to nearly
53,000 households at a cost of \$180.7 million. The
increase in spending of 46 percent resulted from
increased monthly rents that families and individuals
have to pay, additional households being found
eligible due to the increasing gap between rents and
income and enhanced targeting of these services to

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prevent homelessness through partnerships with
community-based organizations.

The increased prevention efforts are
showing concrete results; evictions by City Marshals
have decreased 24 percent since Mayor de Blasio took
office, down from 28,849 in 2013 to 21,980 in 2015.
Our eviction prevention programs are also cost-
effective and generate savings in averted shelter
costs. For example, the average cost of a rent
arrears grant to prevent an eviction is \$3,400 and
the average cost of an anti-eviction or anti-
harassment legal services case is about \$1,800 in
comparison to the \$38,000 average annual cost of
providing shelter.

The second initiative is supportive and
congregate, scattered site housing. For the Mayor's
supportive housing plan, the HRA budget includes
\$13.3 million in FY17, growing to over \$100 million
by FY20 to operate 15,000 new units of supportive,
congregate and scattered site housing to be developed
over the next 15 years. The \$13.3 million includes
funding for the operation and initial rollout of
approximately 500 units in FY17. This new commitment
to supportive housing will house individuals with

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4 severe mental illness, survivors of domestic
5 violence, homeless veterans, and other high-need and
6 vulnerable clients.

7 Housing placement and shelter move-out
8 bonuses -- The HRA budget includes \$18.3 million in
9 FY16 to support community-based organizations that
10 are identifying available housing that can be rented
11 through our rental assistance programs and for
12 shelter move-out assistance to extend funding for
13 bonuses for landlords and brokers to encourage
14 participation in the rental assistance programs
15 through June 2016. The FY17 and the out years,
16 funding is included for these community-based
17 organizations; ongoing funding for bonuses for
18 landlords and brokers will be evaluated along with
19 the other move-out and prevent strategies during the
20 Executive Budget process.

21 The components of this funding include
22 community-based housing placement services, the
23 landlord bonus, the brokers' fees, the veterans move-
24 out bonus, and enhanced furniture grants for rental
25 assistance clients as follows: \$2.5 million for city
CITYFEPS provider payments, \$1 million for veterans
bonuses, \$10.9 million for brokers' fees, \$2.4

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4 million for landlord bonuses; \$1.3 million for
5 enhanced furniture allowance grants.

6 The three-quarter housing project -- In
7 June 2015 the Mayor announced an interagency task
8 force to review the use of three-quarter houses in
9 New York City; HRA is part of this task force, along
10 with other City agencies, including the Mayor's
11 Office of Operations, the Department of Housing
12 Preservation and Development, the Department of
13 Buildings, and the Fire Department. Using HRA's data
14 analytics, the task force has inspected 87 three-
15 quarter houses and taken action to reduce
16 overcrowding and dangerous conditions at 38
17 locations. As a result of HRA's intervention as part
18 of the task force's work, since June 2015, 104 former
19 residents of three-quarter houses have already been
20 placed into permanent affordable housing utilizing
21 the City's funded SEPS program, which is the Special
22 Exit and Prevention Supplement program, as well as
23 other rental assistance programs.

24 The plan includes \$7.9 million in FY16
25 and \$4.5 million in FY17 and the out years for the
three-quarter housing project to continue to
investigate sites and relocate clients to other

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4 temporary and permanent housing. This funding
5 includes security, case management and rapid re-
6 housing contract.

7 Services for veterans -- The HRA budget
8 includes \$2.1 million in FY16, increasing to \$2.9
9 million in FY17 and the out years for veterans
10 initiatives to provide permanent housing and
11 supportive services, including workforce development,
12 to stably house formerly homeless veterans; rental
13 assistance is provided through the City's rental
14 assistance programs, Section 8 and the HUD-VASH
15 program. Another \$560,000 is allocated for 10
16 positions to provide outreach services in the Mayor's
17 Office of Veterans Affairs to veterans throughout the
18 five boroughs.

19 Domestic violence shelter expansion --
20 The January plan includes an additional \$2.9 million
21 in City funds and \$6.2 million in total funds in
22 FY16, increasing its \$4.6 million city funds and
23 \$15.4 million total funds in FY17 for domestic
24 violence shelter and services expansion. The
25 expansion includes 300 emergency shelter beds, 400
Tier II family units added to the 2,228 emergency
beds and 245 Tier II shelter units. Funding is also

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included for staff to increase the No Violence Again
(NoVA) and other DV screening referrals and services
that HRA provides at DHS sites.

Legal services -- The HRA budget includes
additional funding of \$9.2 million in FY17 and \$12
million in FY18 and the out years anti-eviction legal
services to expand in 10 neighborhoods that
contribute about 15 percent of DHS family shelter
eviction-related entrants annually. As noted
earlier, this increases HRA's citywide anti-eviction
and anti-harassment legal services spending to \$62
million to serve some 33,000 households, including
more than 113,000 people by full implementation FY17.
These anti-eviction legal services represent this
administration's commitment to protecting tenants
from displacement, preserving affordable housing,
stabilizing neighborhoods, and averting homelessness.

There are also real neighborhood impacts,
including declines in evictions, reductions in the
loss of subsidized and rent-stabilized housing,
improvements to housing stock, such as addressing
buildings experiencing lack of heat or hot water and
other essential services and lack of repairs and the
preservation of affordable units.

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4 Hotline for shelter-related issues -- The
5 HRA budget also includes \$1.1 million in total in
6 City funds in FY16, increasing to \$2 million in the
7 baseline for expansion of HRA's info line to answer a
8 new hotline for shelter residents who have concerns
9 related to DHS shelter conditions and services.

10 Subsidized jobs for homeless clients --
11 The HRA budget includes \$4.6 million, including \$3.4
12 million transferred from DHS and \$1.2 million in new
13 funding in FY17 for subsidized jobs for homeless
14 clients. This employment strategy funds 500
15 transitional public and private sector jobs program
16 slots for shelter clients who move into permanent
17 housing. The funding is for the Shelter Exit
18 Transition (SET) program which places clients with
19 private employers and to expand transitional jobs
20 slots that will be added in City agencies, including
21 Department of Sanitation.

22 HRA currently funds 1,800 job training
23 program slots in the Parks Department and 70 slots in
24 the Department of Sanitation, with a budget of \$49
25 million. This expansion of subsidized jobs is part
of HRA's two-year phase-out of the Work Experience
Program (WEP) in the State improved employment plan.

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WEP placements have not led to sustained work and
movement off of the HRA caseload; therefore, WEP is
being replaced by work activity permitted under
federal and state law; they'll be more effective in
doing so.

Expansion of HRA programs for vulnerable
populations -- The FY17 budget also includes
substantial enhancements to other major programs.

IDNYC -- In FY14, in partnership with the
Council, the administration created and implemented
the largest municipal identification program in the
country. IDNYC is directly operated by HRA through a
joint initiative with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant
Affairs and the Mayor's Office of Operations, and
while this program will be the focus of a Committee
on Immigration hearing, it is important to report to
this committee that in its first full year of
operation 730,000 New Yorkers obtained an ID and we
now operate 31 locations and five pop-up sites; a new
need of \$7.6 million and 80 positions has been
included in FY17 to support the continued operation
of the IDNYC program. The new need brings the
baseline budget to \$18.7 million and 241 positions in
FY17.

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4 Ending the Epidemic -- HRA has been
5 committed to ending the AIDS epidemic since the 1980s
6 when a then unknown disease was identified among gay
7 men in New York City. This administration was
8 pleased to sign on to the Governor's blueprint and
9 the epidemic and since has made considerable
10 investment to do so.

11 Consistent with the Mayor's World AIDS
12 Day announcement on December 1st, in the January plan
13 the de Blasio Administration included the City's
14 share of the funding necessary to support an
15 expansion of HRA's HASA program to all income-
16 eligible individuals with HIV. In partnership with
17 the state, our plan is to permanently expand HASA
18 services to all low-income New Yorkers with HIV. We
19 are hopeful that the final state budget this year
20 will include the state's full share to expand HASA in
21 this way and thereby make it possible to end the
22 epidemic. The funding in HRA's budget to end the
23 epidemic is as follows: \$26.2 million in City funds
24 in FY17 and \$32.1 million in FY18 expected to be
25 matched equally with state funds for expanded
services, including rental assistance,
transportation, nutrition benefits, and staff to end

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4 the HIV/AIDS epidemic. An estimated 7,300 new
5 clients would be eligible for services over the
6 course of five years if our state partners commit the
7 state's share of the dollars. Unfortunately, the
8 state Executive Budget did not include funding for
9 these services that are necessary to end the
10 epidemic. With the proposed implementation of the
11 ETA and the epidemic plan, the DHS budget includes
12 over \$20 million annually in related shelters savings
13 for homeless adults and families.

14 ADA Compliance -- In March 2015 the
15 parties to the Lovely H class-action lawsuit settled
16 this federal case with an agreement to implement
17 major systemic reforms to enhance assistance and
18 services for clients with disabilities. The lawsuit,
19 filed in 2005, contended that then existing programs
20 for clients with disabilities denied them meaningful
21 access to those programs and related services, in
22 violation of the Americans with Disability Act.

23 Over the course of the past year, HRA, in
24 consultation with an expert consultant, developed
25 tools to assess whether clients need reasonable
26 accommodations as a result of physical and/or mental
27 health limitations or other impairments. HRA then

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provides the appropriate accommodations, including
referrals to HRA's Wellness Comprehensive Assessment
Rehabilitation Employment or WeCARE program, or other
services designed to assess and meet the needs of
clients with disabilities. \$3.3 million in City
funds was added in FY17 to provide reasonable
accommodations for clients with disabilities to
implement the Lovely H settlement, including funding
for WeCARE services and reasonable accommodation
implementation throughout HRA. This is in addition
to \$3.8 million in City funds added in FY17 and the
executive 2016 budget for WeCARE services and
expanded fair hearing services.

In January 2016 there were 52,006 clients
participating in WeCARE, the number of WeCARE program
participants increased by 47 percent between October
2014 and January of this year due to a large number
of clients awaiting assessments that grew in 2015
during the settlement negotiations. The settlements
and the new funding will enable WeCARE vendors to
assess and provide appropriate services over the
course of the fiscal year to clients who are awaiting
assessments. New dedicated supplemental security
income appeal services contracts in 2016 will

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continue improving federal SSI benefit awards for
clients which increased by 3.2 percent from 2014 to
2015.

We also want to report that a huge
milestone for clients was recently reached; more than
6,510 WeCARE clients were placed in employment between
January 2014 and December 2015; with the assistance
of dedicated providers, these clients are focused on
what they can do, not on what they can't do.

Other initiatives include \$2.2 million in
total funds, 51 percent City share, in FY17 for
additional costs for the Community Guardian Program,
contracted services for adults unable to care for
themselves. \$1.6 million in total funds, 51 percent
City share for the Teen Relationship Abuse and
Prevention Program (Teen RAP), a contract program
that directly serves approximately 11,000 students
citywide and indirectly reaches additional students
with positive, healthy relationship and zero
tolerance for school violence messages. Teen RAP
addresses emotional and safety needs, enhances
knowledge of relationship abuse and provides an
introduction to healthy social norms.

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4 Capital funding -- HRA's four-year
5 capital budget of \$151.9 million, including \$105.5
6 million City funds, includes \$85 million for
7 technology to streamline operations and client
8 services, including key investments in client
9 benefits reengineering, \$43.7 million for facilities
10 maintenance, equipment and improvements, \$15.1
11 million for installation of telecommunications
12 equipment and \$1.3 million for vehicles.

13 Finally, I would like to update the
14 Committee on two of the major ongoing reforms at HRA,
15 our employment plan implementation and our benefits
16 reengineering initiative.

17 HRA's employment plan -- Earlier this
18 month we release RFPs for HRA's new employment
19 program that will assess cash assistance applicants
20 and recipients' skills, interests and employment
21 barriers to connect them with the jobs, training,
22 education, or services most likely to help each of
23 them build a career and permanently transition off of
24 cash assistance. HRA's approach is aligned with the
25 recommendations of the Mayor's Career Pathways: One
City Working Together report and is part of the
broader conversion of the City's Workforce

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Development Programs into Career Pathways' model that
emphasizes helping New Yorkers access sustainable
well-paying jobs. As we have testified previously,
these RFPs do not represent the full range of
employment programs and services that we are funding
and operating and which will be available for
contractors to use to leverage their services and the
funding through these RFPs.

For example, HRA also provides education
and training services through arrangements with CUNY.
Additional HRA employment programs that contractors
can make use of include internships related to a
career pathway that meet the State Department of
Labor standards funded through a separate RFP called
the Internship Placement Services RFP, subsidized
transitional job programs, including positions at the
Parks Department and the private sector, for example,
the Parks Opportunity Program, and the Shelter Exit
Transitional Jobs Program, which has been transferred
to HRA from DHS to promote shelter move-outs, and
HireNYC, which leverages the purchasing power of the
City, including HireNYC human services, the
requirement for City human services contractors to
hire HRA cash assistance clients applies to contracts

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4 with HRA, DHS, the Administration for Children
5 Services, the Department for the Aging, the
6 Department for Youth and Community Development, and
7 the Department of Probation and HireNYC development,
8 employment targets related to hiring, retention and
9 advancement for permanent jobs created by businesses
10 at City-supported development projects. We look
11 forward to updating the Committee on our progress in
12 moving our clients to sustainable careers and off the
13 HRA caseload as a result of this new RFP process.

14 WEP phase-out -- As noted earlier, we are
15 implementing a two-year phase-out of the Work
16 Experience Program as part of our state-approved
17 employment plan. WEP placements have not led to
18 sustained work and movement off of the HRA caseload
19 and we are replacing it with work activity permitted
20 under federal and state law that will be more
21 effective in doing so. Compared to April 2014, when
22 I began to serve as the HRA commissioner, the number
23 of clients currently enrolled in WEP assignments at
24 City agencies is less than 2,000, which is a
25 reduction of 1,686 or 46 percent. The number of City
agencies that have WEP assignments has decreased from
19 in April 2014 to 13 in February 2015 and to 8 in

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February 2016. The implementation of additional JTP
slots at the Sanitation Department will further
reduce these numbers in the coming months.

Lastly, benefits reengineering -- Over
the past two years HRA rolled out new features in
technological advances that streamline applying and
recertifying for benefits. The goal is to improve
HRA's flexibility, accuracy and responsiveness,
minimize client wait time for crucial benefits and
address staff workload. As our work to modernize and
optimize HRA's benefits systems continues, we wanna
update you on several of our recent advances,
including the launch of an enhanced ACCESS NYC
website. ACCESS NYC screens eligibility for over 30
city, state and federal benefit programs. We
upgraded the system to make it possible to not only
apply for SNAP food stamps online, but to also submit
a recertification for federal SNAP benefits. This
new and improved website is accessible in English and
the six Local Law 73 languages (Arabic, Chinese,
Haitian-Creole, Korean, Russian, and Spanish). On-
demand SNAP interviews began in January of this year
in Staten Island and were expanded to Washington
Heights earlier this month. Clients no longer have

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to wait for HRA to call during a scheduled
appointment time to complete the interview portion of
their SNAP recertification; after they submit the
SNAP recertification form, clients are able to call
HRA's new call center at any time during business
hours for an on-demand interview. HRA will continue
to add centers to this process throughout the rest of
the year until it is fully implemented.

HRA's document upload makes it easy for
clients to upload important eligibility documents
connected to their SNAP food stamps case by using the
mobile device to photograph and submit documents,
such as pay stubs or utility bills. Mobile document
upload was launched in November 2015 and we've
received over 100,000 SNAP eligibility documents
since then.

As we continue to implement long-term
enhancements this year to improve access to SNAP food
stamps and cash assistance to eligible clients, we
are continuing to explore further short-term forms to
provide more effective access to clients to receive
their benefits to which they're entitled as we
implement the long-term reforms. We also continue to
work with our partners in the state and federal

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4 government concerning our waiver requests to make
5 sure that able-bodied adults without dependents
6 living in Lower Manhattan do not lose federally-
7 funded SNAP benefits after only three months of
8 assistance because they're unable to find sufficient
9 work to meet strict work requirements even though
10 they reside in one of the most expensive areas of the
11 country.

12 The last few slides in our PowerPoint
13 presentation highlight a number of other forms that
14 were implemented over the last fiscal year, some of
15 which have already been discussed at prior hearings.
16 We have accomplished a great deal over the past year
17 and we continue to work to implement our reform
18 initiatives during the coming year. Thank you again
19 for this opportunity to testify and I welcome your
20 questions.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
22 Commissioner. I wanna acknowledge my colleagues who
23 have joined us; Council Members Fernando Cabrera of
24 the Bronx, Annabel Palma of the Bronx.

25 And I wanna actually start Commissioner
by asking about -- following up on that last issue
that you were speaking of with benefits

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4 reengineering. HRA has identified savings in FY17
5 with benefits reengineering for SNAP benefits; what
6 has HRA learned in terms of expanding that to other
7 benefits, Medicaid and public assistance and are
8 there opportunities to achieve additional savings
9 through expanding -- what can be transferred; what
10 can't be transferred over to those benefits and why?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes, there are
12 opportunities for both streamlining client services
13 and achieving efficiencies and savings; when I first
14 came to HRA we looked at the benefits reengineering
15 business process changes that had begun in the prior
16 administration; I certainly give credit for the
17 vision that with technology changes that services
18 could be improved and savings could be achieved; the
19 initial phase that the prior administration had begun
20 was to focus on federal SNAP food stamps; we added to
21 the planning process and are beginning -- over the
22 course of the next year we'll begin to have a rollout
23 reengineering affecting cash assistance in order to
24 expedite for example the provision of rental
25 assistance and other key benefits; we think that
there are efficiencies and cost savings that will be
available there and obviously benefit the clients.

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4 As you know, one of our first reforms
5 that's detailed in the PowerPoint was to consolidate
6 the provision of renters' payments instead of having
7 them paid in multiple locations throughout the city
8 by paper check more often than not; we consolidated
9 all of that in a central [inaudible] unit, began to
10 pay emergency rent payments to NYCHA via electronic
11 benefits transfer and so the benefits reengineering
12 approach that we're taking to cash assistance is
13 frankly an extension of that, which is that by
14 consolidating certain services and by using
15 technology we can improve service delivery and affect
16 efficiencies and some of those efficiencies that we
17 affected already have been what's allowed us to
18 repurpose certain positions for various of our
19 initiatives, include the HRA Homelessness Prevention
20 Initiative. So you're absolutely right, there are
21 opportunities there and we will be pursuing them. In
22 terms of Medicaid, of course the Medicaid program is
23 transitioning to a state takeover and as we work
24 going forward, we will look forward to opportunities
25 for more streamlined application for all three
benefits -- Medicaid, federal food stamps and cash
assistance, which will both benefit clients and

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4 address staff workload at our agency and ultimately
5 promote savings and efficiencies.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, thank you. And
7 you've identified savings within SNAP benefits due to
8 benefits reengineering already, right?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah, the budget
10 incorporates projected savings from the prior
11 administration's plan and of course as the services
12 are being implemented during the course of the year,
13 we and OMB wanna be certain that the implementation
14 and the service improvements are aligned with the
15 staffing at that particular moment, so there are
16 proposed efficiencies and savings there, but we wanna
17 make sure as we implement it that we're in constant
18 conversation with OMB about any issues that may arise
19 during the implementation.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I wanna ask about
21 Medicaid, obviously as you said in your testimony,
22 Medicaid represents the largest share of HRA's total
23 budget, \$6.3 billion, 63.7 percent of HRA's total
24 budget is in Medicaid; how does HRA determine its
25 share of Medicaid costs and what portion of the
26 Medicaid budget goes towards paying the state for
27 reimbursement and what portion goes towards

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4 supplemental payments? And in the context of the
5 state Medicaid action that they're proposing to take
6 right now, the Governor proposed, if you could just
7 break down exactly what share of Medicaid costs are
8 borne by the City and what share are borne by the
9 state; I think that that's important to have on the
10 record. And then in addition to that, if you could
11 explain for us here at the committee and also for the
12 public exactly what the state's proposed Medicaid
13 action is and how that would impact New York City.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well let me...

15 [crosstalk]

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So three questions.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: focus on that last
18 part first. It's \$5 billion city funds, \$21 billion
19 state and federal funds; there's a proposed \$300
20 million cut in FY17 and growing as the years proceed
21 to nearly a billion dollars in 2021; it would have
22 serious negative consequences for the clients that
23 the Medicaid program serves. The New York City
24 Health and Hospitals is struggling with Medicaid
25 costs that already don't cover the cost of care; in
addition, Health and Hospitals has a large uninsured
population, leaving the City to fill the gap. New

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4 York City's Medicaid costs are growing within the
5 state's global cap, unlike other local government
6 regions in the rest of the state. We do not control
7 the Medicaid rates, regulations or the administration
8 of the program; state takeover was a positive and
9 effective move and consistent with how most states
10 administer Medicaid; we understand, from comments by
11 the Governor, that this won't cost the City a penny
12 and the Assembly has rejected these actions in its
13 budget and we're looking forward to completing the
14 legislative process and preserving these important
15 sources of funding for New York City residents.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So going back to the
17 first point, the state portion of Medicaid funding in
18 New York City is how much?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well we have \$5
20 billion in city funds and then it's a combination of
21 federal and state funds for \$21 billion.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: For \$21 billion?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

25 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But note, we're
administering the Medicaid program in the city, but

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4 not all that passes through our actual budget, 'cause
5 it... [crosstalk]

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay; some of it's
7 directly from the state then?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, some of it is --
9 because it's passed through funds, it doesn't show up
10 directly in our budget because of just the way the
11 program operates... [crosstalk]

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: but you can see the
14 amounts in our budget, which is approximately \$6.4
15 billion directly in the HRA budget.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. And how does
17 the City determine how much of the Medicaid budget
18 goes towards paying the state for reimbursements and
19 what portion goes towards supplement payment?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean it's a one
21 lump sum payment given to us as part of a capped
22 allocation.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And do you think that
24 it's unsustainable for the City to bear the financial
25 burden that the Governor's plan for Medicaid growth
is laying our in this budget?

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, we've been
5 assured that it won't cost the City a penny; if it
6 were to go in effect, there would be serious negative
7 consequences.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. It's showing
9 about \$300 million a year?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: \$300 million
11 beginning in FY17, growing every year up to a billion
12 dollars in 2021.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So \$300 million
14 starting FY17 and up to a billion dollars in FY 2021?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It moves up fully to
16 \$300 million by the time you get to FY18; it sort of
17 begins in a trajectory up to that point, but
18 ultimately by 2021 it's a billion dollars.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, we've been
21 assured that it won't cost us a penny and we're
22 hopeful with the outcome of the legislative process.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I want to ask
24 for just a moment here about -- and we may come back
25 to it -- about HASA and the City's commitment under
local law to provide for HASA for all; my
understanding is that no proposed state budget,

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4 either in the Assembly, Senate or the Governor is
5 proposing to expand that; how would that impact HRA's
6 FY17 budget?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Our proposal to
8 implement the state ending the epidemic plan and
9 expand HASA services projects that we'll do some
10 partnership with the state and there is not funding
11 currently in the Executive Budget, there are some
12 funds put in the Assembly budget, but again, we
13 understand the legislative process; we're hopeful
14 that by the time we reach a conclusion of that
15 process that we'll be able to implement the expansion
16 of benefits to and the epidemic; we think it's an
17 important priority and... [interpose]

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And you've budgeted
19 for it...

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: we've budgeted the
21 City's share of the program.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Bit right now the
23 amount that's proposed in the Assembly one-house bill
24 is not adequate to expand to HASA for all, right, for
25 every...

COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean right now we
really need a state share to be added in order to be

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4 able to implement the plan that's provided for in the
5 Preliminary Budget.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm gonna turn it
7 over to my colleagues for some questions. First up
8 is Council Member Barry Grodenchik, Queens.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you
10 Mr. Chairman. Commissioner, it was a few -- I've
11 only been here three months, so it couldn't have been
12 that long ago, but we had a hearing on hunger and at
13 that time I was frankly dismayed, to put it lightly,
14 to see how little money the City is spending on
15 emergency food and I asked for a breakout, my chief
16 of staff asked for a breakout, the chairman asked for
17 a breakout, my counsel -- we haven't gotten a
18 breakout yet from your office as to how the money is
19 being allocated and I'm asking you personally to
20 follow up on that, because I'd like to see where the
21 food money is going and secondly, I would also ask --
22 when it was my turn to ask a question of the Mayor at
23 the briefing on the budget, I asked him, and I know
24 the Mayor a long time and I know where his heart is;
25 I asked him to increase the emergency food
allocations because it just doesn't seem like we're
doing enough in this city.

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: First of all, I'm
3 sorry that we haven't gotten you what you need; we
4 pride ourselves on a great deal of transparency, as
5 you could tell from the testimony, [background
6 comment] so I will certainly address your question;
7 it may well be on its way, but we'll make sure that
8 you get exactly the information that you want. The
9 funding for food assistance is certainly something
10 that we'll be looking at, what the right level is as
11 we get to the Executive Budget process, but I
12 appreciate your concern and comments.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Well I would
14 appreciate your advocacy because nobody in this city
15 should be going hungry and we spend over \$80 billion
16 a year; your budget, as you noted, is the largest
17 social service budget in the nation, probably one of
18 the largest in the world and it just seems at about
19 \$1.34 a New Yorker just doesn't seem like enough a
20 year, so I would appreciate your advocacy there.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We'll certainly take
22 a look; I have to note of course that cuts in the
23 federal food stamp program contribute to the numbers
24 of New Yorkers who are turning to the food kitchens
25 and food pantries for services and again, that's

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4 become something else that had been traditionally a
5 federal obligation to address hunger that now New
6 York City has to address and nonetheless, we will
7 review this for the Executive Budget and I understand
8 what your concern is.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay, thank
10 you, Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
11 Mr. Chairman is not here; he expected me to talk
12 longer; I caught him by surprise, I'm sorry,
13 Mr. Chairman.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
15 Council Member Grodenchik. Council Member Salamanca.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Good morning
17 Commissioner. First I wanna thank you; when I was
18 district manager and HRA moved into the Hunts Point
19 community, one of the issues we had; we wanted to
20 ensure that all the ZIP codes within our community
21 board were being serviced there and you were very
22 instrumental in ensuring that, so thank you very much
23 for that.

24 I have... [crosstalk]

25 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I was a brand new
commissioner then and I appreciated your input.

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COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I have two
questions; first, the hotline for shelters; as I walk
through my district and I see the amount of shelters
and I speak to some of the clients, they are living
in certain conditions in which there's concerns in
terms of there not adequate heating, in terms of
security issues and normally we get these complaints,
we'll call DHS directly; at times we -- they said
that they've called 311, but I see that there is a
hotline now for these shelters. Now the concern is,
how are these issues being addressed when a client
calls the hotline and how do we ensure that these
clients are not being penalized, harassed or removed
by the provider because they filed a complaint
through the hotline?

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, those are all
important questions; just to summarize, as part of
the 90-day review that we'll certainly be talking
about at the DHS hearing, we wanted to implement new
programs even before we got to the conclusion of it
and so part of the shelter repair effort, we wanted
to make sure that individual clients had a way to
make a complaint and so last month HRA set up a
hotline at the Mayor's request to begin to take

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4 calls; information was given to residents about how
5 they could make complaints about conditions and those
6 complaints have been relayed to the City staff and
7 contractors that were clearing violations during the
8 month of February and continue to do so during the
9 month of March; nearly 12,000 violations were cleared
10 during that period of time through the end of
11 February, and we will continue to be looking at ways
12 to address shelter conditions as we conclude the 90-
13 day review period and make our recommendations to the
14 Mayor and the concern you raise in terms of how
15 residents interact with shelter operators is clearly
16 part of things that we'll be looking at as we make
17 our recommendations to the Mayor regarding the
18 provision of homeless services in the City, but I
19 appreciate you highlighting that concern.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Now these
21 complaints through the hotline; are they tracked and
22 do we, the Council or community boards, have access
23 to these complaints by district; by provider?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well mind you, this
25 was a new initiative just begun last month and so we
are evaluating the utility of it, what it shows you;
what it doesn't show you, and like all of the

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4 complaint systems that HRA has had in the past in
5 terms of complaints, [bell] we will be putting in
6 place the proper systems to track client concerns and
7 reporting on them.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay, thank
9 you. My other question; in terms of the IDNYC, I
10 know Immigrant Affairs is coming as well, but you did
11 speak on it; we're big fans of it, in my household,
12 my friends, we all have the IDNYC, but one of the
13 concerns that we have is that it's not recognized in
14 most banks when we try to open up a bank account;
15 what is the City doing in terms of working with these
16 banks so that this form of ID can be an acceptable
17 form of ID?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, this is
19 certainly a priority for the Mayor and efforts have
20 been made, are being made and will continue to be
21 made to expand the number of banks; there is some
22 banking institutions that do honor it, but we
23 understand the issue; we wanna reach a resolution of
24 it; we're gonna keep working on it till we get a
25 resolution of this.

26 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright.
27 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. If you
5 have any further questions, we have a little bit of
6 time here, so you can ask them. Council Member
7 Palma. And we've also been joined by Council Member
8 Inez Barron and Ben Kallos.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Thank you,
10 Mr. Chair. Commissioner, I have a quick inquiry. I
11 have been working with one of the HASA providers
12 around an issue that pertains to permits and some
13 violations that they receive from HPD now; you know,
14 they get the contracts from HRA, are asked to meet
15 certain goals and to structure their living
16 conditions for the HASA clients in a certain way and
17 then HPD comes in and gives violations in terms of
18 having locks on their doors or operating illegal
19 SROs, so I wanted to ask from you; I know your office
20 has been extremely helpful at releasing some the
21 contracts that were being held up or basically
22 stating that contracts were not being held up and
23 that HPD should not have been given violations, but
24 has there been any communication with HPD and HRA in
25 terms of these providers that are facing these
issues?

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I appreciate your
5 question and I will certainly look into the situation
6 and when we're off the record I wanna know more
7 information about that particular provider. But as a
8 general matter, HRA and HPD work very closely along
9 with the Department of Buildings to make sure that
10 conditions are appropriate in HASA locations and if
11 that results in a situation in which one of the
12 enforcement agencies determines that changes need to
13 be made, we wanna work very closely with those
14 enforcement agencies to make sure that they are. I
15 can understand from a provider's point of view that
16 that may raise some issues of course from the
17 client's point of view; we wanna make sure that the
18 conditions are in accordance with what the
19 enforcement agencies say, but we'll look into the
20 specific situation you're talking about and see if we
21 can expedite a resolution so that the clients can get
22 the services and the provider can do what their
23 mission is to do.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: I really
25 appreciate that; I think that you know the providers
that we have in terms of providing those kind of
services want to be as compliant as they can be and

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4 are definitely looking for some leadership to make
5 sure that all agencies are on the same page when it
6 comes to providing those services for those clients.

7 And there was an issue also raised by the
8 providers in terms of, are the HASA clients or the
9 providers going to be seeing anytime soon some
10 increases to be able to provide some mental health
11 services on-site for that type of population?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You know we continue
13 to look at the nature of the services that the HASA
14 providers are providing; as we hopefully move forward
15 with the implementation of the End the Epidemic Plan
16 we'll be looking at all the kind of services that
17 clients need and want; we'll be serving clients that
18 have differing levels of needs and that will be a
19 good opportunity to take a look at what's gonna be
20 best for those contracts.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Thank you
22 Commissioner; as always, I look forward to working
23 with you. Thank you, Council Member Levin.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
25 Council Member Palma. Council Member Cabrera.

26 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Thank you
27 Mr. Chairman. Commissioner, thank you for all that

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4 you do in light of the fact that you've been given
5 more responsibility, a plethora of responsibilities
6 that are huge and that speaks loudly of how highly
7 the Mayor thinks of you in terms of the work that
8 you're doing.

9 There was an interesting article this
10 morning in the *Daily News*; I don't know if you had an
11 opportunity to read it, regarding violence in the
12 shelters and the case that was being made is that
13 there seems to be that the rate of violence that is
14 growing with the rate, the same rate of growth in the
15 shelters and I know, based on this article, that the
16 number of these cases jumped to 1,600 in the calendar
17 year 2015 after DHS reclassified and expanded
18 categories of critical incidents to better analyze
19 safety; first, let me commend you on this
20 reclassification system so you could better know what
21 you're dealing with. My question is to -- in this
22 reclassification, have you been able to determine --
23 what's the root cause of this, because when I talk to
24 people in the streets and I say, look, you're living
25 under tough conditions in the street; why don't you
go to a shelter; the overwhelming response that I
get, which is a tough one for me to hear, is, "I feel

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4 safer in the street," and I have to confess to you,
5 that when I first heard that, I had my doubts, but
6 it's so recurring that it seems to be like the
7 overall and the norm in terms of the culture; there's
8 some kind of a culture that has this kind of belief.
9 Can you help me understand what's the state of
10 affairs regarding... [interpose]

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. I mean I
12 wanna answer your question now; we'll talk more about
13 this at the DHS hearing, which will be after this
14 one. But there are a number of things going on at
15 once; first and foremost, there's the 90-day review
16 that is coming to a conclusion that provide an
17 opportunity to take a fresh look at all of homeless
18 services during that period of time; certainly
19 January and February in the cold weather, a
20 substantial numbers of New Yorkers were brought in
21 from the streets and that was a positive thing; we
22 also wanted to take a fresh look at how so-called
23 critical incidents were characterized; one of the
24 things that we found is the prevalence of domestic
25 violence in these instances and these are, you know
26 families that came in with two adults in them and so
27 in both the adult family shelter system and the

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system for families with children, there were
substantial levels of domestic violence, 60 percent
of the critical incidents in the system of families
with children involved in domestic violence and 80
percent of the critical instance for the adult
families involved domestic violence, so that
certainly is leading us to propose additional reforms
to enhance domestic violence services; again, these
are not issues of screening before coming into the
system, these are problems that are developing once
in the system. Clearly there's a need to enhance
security and again, we'll be talking about the steps
we're taking more at the DHS hearing, but I think
that the *Daily News* analysis highlighted, as you
said, that there's a relationship between numbers of
people and numbers of incidences and then noted that
the incidences were actually coming down over the
last year, but we did recategorize how things had
been labeled previously because we wanted to ensure
that we had a full picture of everything that was
going on and makes sure that we could identify gaps
in services and that's how we identified the need for
additional domestic violence services.

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4 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: And Commissioner,
5 again, I commend you for the courage of really
6 reclassifying, 'cause it's easy to be very broad and
7 as a matter of fact, categories be missing and
8 therefore not recording so we could get to the root
9 of the problem.

10 I note that I believe there's about 700
11 beds you're about to add for the domestic violence
12 victims and how many more you estimate that we need
13 in order to remediate this problem?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That was about a 50
15 percent increase in the numbers of domestic violence
16 slots that we have and that's [bell] almost as many
17 beds as were added during the entire prior
18 administration, from 2002-2010 and we think that that
19 number of slots is calibrated to what the need is,
20 but obviously if we see greater needs we'll make
21 adjustments accordingly and I appreciate your kind
22 words about taking a look at critical instances in
23 the shelter system; the Mayor wanted a top to bottom
24 review and we have been looking underneath every lock
25 and leaving no stone unturned and doing that process.

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4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Well thank you
5 so much, Commissioner and to all your staff for all
6 that you do.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Mr. Chairman.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
10 Council Member Cabrera and I wanna acknowledge
11 Council Member Vanessa Gibson of the Bronx. Next for
12 questions, Ben Kallos, Council Member from Manhattan.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Good to see you
14 Commissioner Banks; how are you doing?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Good so see you; how
16 are you?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Great. I just
18 want to thank you for all that you're doing with
19 regard to dealing with the homeless crisis; thank you
20 for helping us launch the Eastside Task Force for
21 Homeless Outreach and Services and really working
22 with us to make sure that DHS is there and present
23 and working with stakeholders to ensure that the
24 various programs that are being rolled out are
25 available to folks; along those lines, I would really
love to have any guidance you can provide on how to
get supportive housing built now that we have the

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billions of dollars set aside; that might be for
another hearing, but I did wanna make sure that --
I've got lots of empty lots, I've got lots of empty
buildings and would love to build as much supportive
housing, 'cause I need to get the people off the
streets and into shelter and into support; support
preference to shelter. Along the same lines, I'd
like to get everyone the benefits they need
automatically, which is I know something we've been
working closely on, and along those lines, how soon
we can roll out on-demand SNAP to everybody so that
nobody's ever left waiting by the phone and whether
or not we can use the staff information or other
information we get from the different 30 services
integrated into ACCESS NYC and make sure that any
time somebody interacts with the City of New York we
are screening them for everything so that, as you
testified, we have 2.2 million people on Medicaid;
there is express lane eligibility that would allow us
to get those folks from Medicaid onto SNAP and then
that would get us hopefully another 400-500,000
people on SNAP and then with that we have 685,000
people on HEAP and if they're eligible for Medicaid
and SNAP it's likely they may also be eligible for

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HEAP and I'd love to get that number also up to \$2.2
million, sorry, 2.2 million people and then cash
assistance and other pieces, being comprehensive in
our approach so that people who aren't currently in a
place where they're sustainable can be sustained
through the wraparound different programs that we
have.

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you very much
for your words. Two things; first of all, the offer
of developing supporting housing in your district is
an offer that I know not to refuse, so we look
forward to working with you there; just to a level
set where we're at, we expect to be out with the
concept paper and then the RFP for developing the
first units under the Mayor's 15,000 unit plan and
we'll be looking to partner with not-for-profits who
have excellent track record of providing the services
and obviously we hope that when they're looking for
sites that we can work with you to identify sites
that would be there; you're absolutely correct to
identify the important connection between the Mayor's
plan to provide 15,000 units of supportive housing
and our ability to get people off the streets and our
ability to move people out of the shelters; this

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problem didn't happen overnight and by providing
supportive housing, which has a proven track record
of keeping people housed, with a combination of a
roof over your head plus services is really an
important step forward for the city in addressing
both street homelessness and the numbers of people in
the shelter system. As we see increasing numbers of
clients with mental health needs in the shelter
system, the urgency of providing supportive housing
is very clear. In terms of benefits access, you know
as you know, we've had to implement a number of
different processes to address the lack of access
across different programs. So for example, the Robin
Hood Foundation funded an organization called
Benefits Data Trust to work with us to help seniors
who are receiving Medicaid but not receiving federal
food stamp benefits be connected to the benefits
because under the current systems operations there's
an inability to determine eligibility for Medicaid
and food stamps at the same time. There are a lot of
processes, many of which are being led by you and
others involved, state and the city and federal
officials, to try to streamline access and we applaud
your efforts and look forward to continuing to work

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4 with you on this, but as those efforts are
5 proceeding, we're trying to jury-rig things we can
6 do, like the Robin Hood initiative to expand access
7 for seniors receiving Medicaid to food stamps, but
8 clearly what you're suggesting is a more efficient
9 and comprehensive way of doing it in terms of
10 linkages of different applications; the state is
11 looking at its own systems for applications processes
12 and we look forward to continuing to work with them
13 to get to the place that you would like us to be at.
14 In terms of on-demand... [crosstalk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Before I run out
16 of time...

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Sure.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I just wanna slip
19 one other piece in, which is just...

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Does my time count
21 for you too? Sorry.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: It does; it's
23 fine. The Federal HHS has made a grant available for
24 up to \$156 million to help build these
25 infrastructures, as long as we couple a hospital
provider, like H+H along with a nonprofit provider or
even another City agency around determining outcomes

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4 of just typical discharge planning or discharge plus
5 wraparound of comprehensive services; I don't believe
6 the City submitted a letter of intent on February
7 8th, which doesn't disqualify it from applying when
8 the RFP is put out, but I did wanna find out whether
9 or not -- I come bearing gifts -- whether or not the
10 City will be availing itself to any piece of that
11 \$156 million.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're certainly
13 focused on a proposal and again, we'll keep in touch
14 with you about how we proceed.

15 Just one last thing, that on benefits
16 reengineering or on-demand, again this is -- it's
17 important to understand the concept; the prior
18 administration created a telephone access system to
19 avoid people having to come to the centers; on the
20 other hand, that's led to difficulties in negotiating
21 the telephone access system and so we wanted to
22 reform the process and instead of having to make
23 appointments for telephone calls, to create an on-
24 demand telephone system to be able to get interviews
25 scheduled at the client's convenience; that's been
implemented in other parts of the country and we
thought that that served a good model; we've already

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4 been able to implement that in Staten Island, we
5 implemented it very recently in Washington Heights
6 and over the course of the year we'll be getting it
7 up and running everywhere; we've seen good results so
8 far, but as you can imagine, we don't wanna convert
9 to a systemwide change until we can go center by
10 center; make sure it's working in every community.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council
13 Member Kallos; Council Member Barron.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you
15 Mr. Chair; thank you to the panel for coming and
16 sharing your testimony with us.

17 As we talk about the shelter situation, I
18 represent East New York and I think we must have the
19 highest or second highest concentration of shelters
20 in our community, so we believe that we are
21 oversaturated; we sent a letter to the previous
22 administration talking about the fact that the plan
23 that they have and the formula that they have for
24 fairness and distribution of the location of these
25 shelters is not being adhered to. Communities, as
you know, are not involved in the determination to
have a siting of a shelter and are oftentimes not

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4 even told beforetime that a shelter is coming. So
5 what is this administration's position on that and
6 we've been told that the state is looking to have a
7 shelter on property that was formerly the site of the
8 Brooklyn Developmental Center; we wanna know have you
9 heard that and what coordination exists of the siting
10 of shelters between the state and the city?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well let me start
12 first with the issues that you're raising around
13 existing shelters. So one of the things that we've
14 been looking at as part of this 90-day review that
15 the Mayor asked us to undertake with respect to the
16 operations of the Department of Homeless Services was
17 to look at how we might begin to eliminate certain
18 kinds of shelters, and I know in your district, for
19 example, there're in clusters...

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yeah.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: in which permanent
22 housing was rented as shelters, so essentially
23 permanent housing was taken off the market; those
24 also are buildings in which we found during the
25 review process that a disproportionate percentage of
the poor conditions for families are in those
particular buildings. So one of the things we've

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done is announce a plan to phase out the use of that
kind of shelter, which we think will help...

[crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Do you have a
timeline and a date for that happen?

COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's a three-year
plan; however, I wanna highlight that in the...

[crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: It's gonna take
three years to close those...

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Let me give you the
steps that are needed... [crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Please.

COMMISSIONER BANKS: So in the current
fiscal year we've designated 260 of them to be
closed; we've laid out a three-year timetable because
there are a lot of factors in the change. So the 260
we designated for closure because we don't think that
those units can be retained in any way, but a lot of
the other units we wanna be able to convert so that
the family in place can remain there as a tenant and
we believe that the process of converting shelter
units to permanent housing units will take some time
in working through the landlords, but we're happy to

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work with you and any elected official -- I know I
recently have met with certain officials to work with
some of the local landlords who may be involved in
this program to convert the units back to permanent
housing and I... [crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: How many of those
units are you talking about converting to having
families remain there?

COMMISSIONER BANKS: There's a total
universe that is approximately 3,000 units and we
would convert as many as we could to permanent
housing. The 260 that we identified for closure are
ones we just did not believe that the landlord would
be interested and we didn't think the conditions were
appropriate, but for example in your district, if
there were buildings where you thought that it would
be appropriate for the families to remain, we'd be
happy to work with you or alternatively thought there
are buildings that we should move more expeditiously
to close, I'd be happy to work with you as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Part of the
problem is that the owners of those buildings have
not maintained them in a manner that's safe or
sanitary and they are an eyesore and people are

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4 hanging out and the community has lots of objections
5 to there being there. So as we talk about
6 identifying which ones could possibly remain, there's
7 a lot of interaction that would have to go on with
8 the community, with the community board and things of
9 that nature. Have you had any interaction with the
10 state in regards to the closing of the Brooklyn
11 Developmental Center where there are people who had
12 been housed there in a residential capacity because
13 of their mental health needs and who are now being
14 placed in the community?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I've heard the same
16 that you learned about the potential plan there and
17 like you; I look forward to hearing more about it.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. And in
19 terms of what I've read here, it says that
20 approximately 7 percent of your budget comes from the
21 state; I don't know if you have those figures, but
22 how can you feel the state can be of greater
23 assistance; we know they are putting in the \$20
24 billion that they say they're going to giving us over
25 the next couple of years; how can that money be
utilized to ensure that not only do people have an
opportunity to have permanent housing, but perhaps

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4 through the plan that existed previously have an
5 opportunity to actually purchase a home so that they
6 build some equity and have a place where they can
7 have their family, house their children [bell] and
8 perhaps even acquire some greater assets for their
9 families?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think that's a
11 very good point; if I could highlight one provision
12 in the Assembly's budget proposal that will be very
13 helpful to us. The Assembly included in their budget
14 proposal language that would enable us to pay
15 additional funds to prevent people from being evicted
16 in the first place and to help domestic violence
17 survivors obtain housing. There's a program called
18 FEPS or the Family Eviction Prevention Supplement;
19 the City created its own program in order to expand
20 it, but really it was a state program and the
21 Assembly's budget plan would enable us to pay the
22 levels of rent that the Federal Department of Housing
23 and Urban Development (HUD) says you need to actually
24 pay in the neighborhood. The current level of the
25 FEPS program is just over \$1,000 in monthly rent and
HUD says that the monthly rent should be around
\$1,500 and so the Assembly proposal would enable us

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4 to be able to pay the HUD set level. In addition,
5 the Assembly proposal would enable survivors of
6 domestic violence, who after all are constructively
7 evicted from their housing, to participate in this
8 program. Since it's been in place, domestic violence
9 survivors have not been able to participate in the
10 program because of a very narrow reading of the word
11 eviction. Certainly, I remember back in law school
12 we talked about constructive evictions and survivors
13 of domestic violence are fleeing to safety are
14 clearly, constructively evicted from where they were
15 residing. So we certainly welcome that proposal from
16 the Assembly to really making a significant
17 contribution to reducing homelessness in the city and
18 helping very vulnerable clients, so we're hopeful
19 that in working with our state partners that will
20 become part of the final budget.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. Thank
22 you, Mr. Chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
24 Council Member Barron; Council Member Gibson.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very
much, Chair Levin. Good morning Commissioner, to you
and your team, thank you for being here and certainly

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4 for all of the work that HRA continues to do; I've
5 had a lot of conversation with your staff; as you
6 know, I have a job center next to my district office,
7 so there are many occasions where I talk to the
8 clients to find out their level of service and what
9 they're receiving, so I have been extremely
10 satisfied; we've done a lot in my district to really
11 expedite a lot of the cases to make sure the clients
12 are in and out, so I appreciate that.

13 I was just going through your testimony
14 and first I obviously want to acknowledge the work
15 and the commitment of providing services for
16 veterans; in light of our new legislation that would
17 create an office of Veterans Affairs, I think this
18 absolutely goes in line with making sure that there
19 is housing permanent and supportive housing for
20 disabled veterans that are coming home that really
21 deserve the services. I wanted to ask a quick
22 question about civil legal services and I'm extremely
23 proud of the investment of \$62 million and growing;
24 you know that myself and Council Member Mark Levine
25 are looking at a universal right to counsel to make
sure that no tenant goes to housing court without
legal representation, so I see that we're moving in

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4 that direction without getting to a universal
5 approach. In the Bronx we've seen a reduction of
6 evictions in housing court, but we have not seen a
7 reduction in the number of cases going to housing
8 court, so I wanted to find out what the 10
9 neighborhoods that the civil legal services is
10 currently in. Looking at the neighborhoods where
11 there has been the highest number of evictions, is
12 there any targeted approach that HRA is embarking on
13 that would focus on making sure that tenants are not
14 victims of harassment from landlords and other
15 efforts, because we know the neighborhoods where
16 evictions are the greatest, so what is our message;
17 while we're saving them from being evicted, but what
18 is the long-term plan that we're also doing to make
19 sure that these families can stay in their homes?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you very much.

21 The focus of the legal services, homelessness
22 prevention efforts through HRA that the Mayor has
23 supported are really threefold. First of all, there
24 are available services citywide, second of all, there
25 are particular targeted services in the rezoning
communities in order to enable people to remain in
place and defend themselves against harassment and

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then there is particular targeted funding in the ZIP
codes in the neighborhoods that are historically from
which the highest numbers of families have entered
the shelter system, as well as single adults too can
be served in those neighborhoods. The increase from
\$6.5 million to \$62 million over the last two years
has been targeted in that way and it's already had
the impact, as you highlighted, in reducing citywide
the numbers of actual evictions; when the programs
are fully ramped up over the course of FY17, we'll be
looking very closely to see what if any impact there
is on numbers of cases filed and as part of the
legislation that Council Member Levine and you and
the Speaker, of course championing, our Civil Justice
office will be doing our first annual report and one
of the things we're gonna be taking a preliminary
look at is the remaining gap between need and
services for low-income tenants in housing court;
Chief Judge Lippman and the current Chief Judge
DiFiore made significant commitments for legal
services in New York City and now the Mayor has made
a significant commitment as well over the last two
years and we wanna see the impact now in terms of the
representation that is being provided, but we fully

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4 expect that there'll be a further impact over the
5 course of the next year when these programs are fully
6 implemented; we'll stay in close touch with the
7 Council when we have those results and that will help
8 us determine where gaps in services may be to ensure
9 that we can prevent avoidable evictions and therefore
10 prevent avoidable homelessness.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. And I also
12 wanted to ask a question about three-quarter housing;
13 I know there was a task force that was established I
14 believe last year; I wanted to find out where we are
15 that; do we know how many individuals are living in
16 three-quarter housing and what types of case
17 management and social services are we offering for
18 these individuals in three-quarter housing?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, we identified
20 almost, just shy of 40 buildings where there were
21 overcrowded conditions; the multiagency task force
22 inspected a number of buildings and found that -- the
23 number that I gave a little earlier -- that there
24 were overcrowded conditions and we relocated about
25 350 [bell] people from those locations to temporary
housing and we've already been able permanently house
almost a third of them, 104 of them into permanent

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4 housing, using the rental assistance programs. So
5 it's a multistep process; HRA has been using data
6 analytics tools to try to identify locations that
7 would be viewed as three-quarter housing; the
8 multiagency effort, including HRA and HPD and
9 Buildings and Fire and the Mayor's Office of
10 Operations and the Health Department, we've been
11 looking at -- then we've been doing multiagency
12 inspections and then when we find overcrowded
13 conditions we've been relocating individuals from
14 those buildings, providing case management services and
15 then more importantly, providing rehousing services
16 through a contract to get the people that we've taken
17 out of three-quarters houses into permanent housing..
18 [interpose]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So the numbers right
21 now are showing that based upon the ongoing effort,
22 about 350 people had to be relocated and about a
23 third of them have already been connected to
24 permanent housing during this effort over the last...
25 less than year now.

26 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. Thank you
27 very much. Thank you, Chair.

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4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council
5 Member Gibson. Commissioner, I just have a few more
6 questions...

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Sure.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: for this hearing.
9 With regard to... [background comments] With regard to
10 EFAP, can you explain really quickly why in FY16 the
11 \$1.8 million wasn't baselined that was included in
12 the 16 budget, but not moving forward?

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, I wanna just
14 assure you that we're looking at all aspects of what
15 the funding should be; this is the preliminary
16 budget, and when we get to the Executive Budget we'll
17 have a conclusion of that review and be able to
18 explain to you why we got to the place we got to.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Would HRA be in
20 support of expanding the overall EFAP budget for food
21 to help meet the obviously demonstrated need out
22 there in New York City?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean as you know,
24 I've been an advocate at these hearings to add money
25 to the budget before I was the HRA commissioner, when
I ran the Legal Aid Society and I've had the
experience of being a commissioner for the last

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4 several budget processes and I've learned over time
5 and in participating in the budget process to simply
6 leave it as we're gonna continue to look at the
7 situation and work with you closely.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. 'Cause
9 obviously in an almost \$10 billion budget, you know,
10 a few extra million bucks for emergency food would
11 hardly be a drop in the bucket.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're gonna keep
13 evaluating the situation and have further discussion
14 with you in the Executive Budget process.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Just a quick question
16 while we're on food, the PMMR has indication around
17 SNAP benefits that the application timeliness rate
18 has gone down since FY13 -- I don't know if you have
19 that in front of you.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes, I'm familiar
21 with that. We think that that is associated with --
22 let me take a step back. The original projection to
23 implement the benefits reengineering process, the
24 prior administration projected that to happen earlier
25 than it was feasible to occur under both
administrations and so that's one of the urgencies of
implementing the on-demand system that we began to

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4 implement right now; we've been working with OMB and
5 been provided with additional staffing in this
6 transitional period to address that and the
7 timeliness has come down. I'm sorry, the timeliness
8 challenge has been addressed and the numbers have
9 moved in the right direction, but more importantly,
10 we're moving very expeditiously to implement the on-
11 demand system, which is ultimately the solution for
12 clients and for our staff, 'cause it's meant to
13 address streamlining access for clients and
14 addressing workload for our HRA staff.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And I apologize in
16 advance; I'm gonna be jumping around a little bit,
17 so.

18 Can you explain how -- there's been an
19 increase in the state share of safety net assistance,
20 so that's accounting for some revenue to your budget;
21 can you explain how the City is increasing the state
22 share, given the state share of taking that
23 assistance to increase?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You're referring to
25 the state share in TANF?

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry?

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Are you referring to
5 the state share in TANF?

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yes; it was SNA
7 [sic], yeah.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well it has to do
9 with it maximizing our ability to claim services; one
10 of the things that HRA has **[inaudible]** been effective
11 at is maximizing the ability to claim federal
12 reimbursement, state reimbursement where it's
13 available... [crosstalk]

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: but of course the
16 reimbursement rate for TANF families, for family
17 assistance families, under the state program..
18 [crosstalk]

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: is richer than the
21 reimbursement rate for safety net and so by
22 maximizing claiming through the family assistance
23 program rather than safety net, we've been able to
24 generate some additional revenues.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And how are you able
to do that? What's been the process?

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Improved data
5 management. I mean one of the things -- you know, we
6 talked about the 90-day review at DHS, but as you
7 know from prior hearings, we've been conducting
8 reform processes at HRA, which began in April 2014
9 and are ongoing and so we continually look at every
10 aspect of our operations to see where improvements
11 can be made and one of the improvements that we found
12 that could be made was enhancing our claiming
13 capabilities through data analytics.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And you expect that
15 that'll be able to continue through the out years?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're gonna keep
17 being very focused on it.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uhm-hm. I wanna ask
19 about the adjusted federal fringe reimbursement rate;
20 HRA is able to claim some revenue there this year, a
21 significant amount, \$70.3 million, due to a
22 renegotiated fringe reimbursement rate of 48.1
23 percent; can you explain a little bit of how that
24 came about and whether that is going to apply to
25 future years as well or whether it's a one-time
thing?

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It is a one-time
5 issue; it's an annual process that we look at and
6 negotiated by OMB and again, like with the claiming
7 process, we're gonna look at it every year, but this
8 is, as I said, as we site here today, a one-time
9 event, but we'll continue to try to look at it every
10 year as we have been.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Around domestic
12 violence funding, the HRA budget on DV is increasing
13 in 17 by \$19.2 million; can you -- I know that you
14 spoke a little bit about expanding the HRA DV shelter
15 system; can you explain a little bit more of where
16 some of the additional increases are coming from and
17 what the timeline is for those beds in the DV system?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, I mean there
19 are several reforms happening at once there; part of
20 it is the adding of 300 additional emergency beds and
21 400 Tier II DV beds and -- I'm sorry, 300 emergency
22 DV beds and 400 Tier II units; we did an expedited
23 procurement process, with the approval of the
24 Comptroller; we appreciated his approval of that to
25 bring on additional emergency beds for DV survivors
and some of them have already been brought on of the
300 and others are in the state approval process and

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4 we're optimistic that we can complete the state
5 approval process very soon, and then we will be
6 issuing an RFP in approximately a month for the 400
7 additional DV Tier II units and further to that,
8 we've added additional funding for the Teen RAP
9 program, which we think is a successful program and
10 there was an enhancement there.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm going to save
12 most of my questions related to homelessness for the
13 other portion of the hearing, but I just wanna ask,
14 in the HRA budget, what the total funding for
15 landlord bonuses and enhanced broker fees was in FY16
16 or what it's been in FY16 and how much of that
17 funding has been spent out?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [background
19 comments] We just wanna get the number.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You're asking for
22 landlord bonuses?

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yes, landlord bonuses
24 and enhanced broker fees.

25 COMMISSIONER BANKS: \$2.4 million for
landlord bonuses; \$10.9 million for the enhanced
broker's fees. Given sort of the place that we're at

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4 mid-year in the utilizing programs, like -- I'll give
5 you an example -- CITYFEPS, that was a program that
6 was budgeted to be for 1,000 families and in fact 1,400
7 families have received it, obviously more bonuses and
8 more brokers fees are associated with that program
9 versus for example, you know one of the LINC programs
10 where there's been less than the full take-up at this
11 point. So part of our analysis, as we're completing
12 our projections for the Executive Budget, is going to
13 be how were these programs associated with the actual
14 rental assistance programs and which ones benefited
15 from it; right now, given the substantial numbers of
16 people that have actually been moved out, we're on a
17 pace to spend what we have allocated, but we wanna
18 keep evaluating that and see whether or not different
19 programs are more effective in using these particular
20 amounts of money. And there are different views on
21 whether or not they're needed.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, I'm sorry, but
23 the -- so the -- I'm sorry, the total number... the
24 total amount of funding for the bonuses and the
25 enhanced broker fees were...

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: \$10.9 million for
5 the enhanced brokers fees and \$2.4 million for the
6 landlord bonuses.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Okay and then
8 -- and we'll go back and talk more about the...
9 [crosstalk]

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: rental assistance
12 programs in the next portion of the hearing. Last
13 question for this portion; with regard to supportive
14 housing, obviously the City has announced its
15 portion, state has announced its portion; heretofore
16 there's been a New York/New York agreement, going
17 back, you know, couple decades; do you see potential
18 inefficiencies in the system moving forward if it
19 remains on two separate tracks?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well you know I'm a
21 glass half full person...

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: so I see potential
24 efficiencies moving forward, but actually given the
25 need, the Mayor wanted to move forward as rapidly as
possible and so we made our announcement and
appreciated that in the State of the State the

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4 Governor made his announcement as well and as the
5 state budget proceeds over the course of this month
6 we're hopeful we'll have more information about what
7 the pacing will be and what the actual allocations
8 will be so that the implementation can in fact be
9 coordinated, which is in the best interest of clients
10 and the providers as well.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I too am a glass half
12 full and I hope that and I expect that there will be
13 a coordinated New York/New York for announcement at
14 some point that will allow for an increase in
15 efficiency, both on the state and city level.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But we do appreciate
17 your support for the 15,000 unit announcement that we
18 made and we really appreciate that you were there for
19 it and we do appreciate your support for these
20 initiatives, which is really important to us.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great. Thank you,
22 Commissioner. Do any of my colleagues have any
23 additional questions? [background comments] Okay.
24 Seeing none, we will adjourn this portion of our
25 budget hearing; we'll reconvene in about 15 minutes
or so, 15-20 minutes for the DHS portion; the HRA
Preliminary Budget Hearing is adjourned.

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4 [gavel]

5 [pause]

6 [gavel]

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good morning

8 everybody. I am Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair
9 of the General Welfare Committee in the New York City
10 Council; this is our second Preliminary Budget
11 Hearing for the General Welfare Committee today.

12 At this point we will hear testimony from
13 the Department of Homeless Services, also referred to
14 as DHS, regarding its preliminary budget and general
15 agency operations within the proposed \$1.1 billion
16 budget, as well as performance indicators for
17 homeless services within the Fiscal 16 Preliminary
18 Mayor's Management Report. In addition we'll be
19 talking about budgetary issues that are related to
20 homeless services in the HRA budget; that was our
21 previous hearing; there are services that apply to
22 homeless services within HRA's budget and we're going
23 to be able to reflect on those issues; ask about
24 those issues in our DHS hearing.

25 DHS provides emergency shelter, rehousing
support and services to single adults and families
with little to no alternative housing options here in

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New York City. As the homeless population continues
to grow to unprecedented levels in New York City, so
does the demand for financial resources required to
meet the needs for this vulnerable population. The
proposed Fiscal 17 Preliminary Budget for DHS
increased by \$17.7 million when compared to the
Fiscal 16 Adopted Budget. This increase in funding
can be largely attributed to new needs totaling \$37
million and some of these new needs include
additional adult shelter costs to accommodate the
current shelter census, increased investments in
shelter security, enhanced adult shelter programming,
a continuation of financial support for shelter
repairs and maintenance, and homeless preventing
programming.

It is important to note that in December
of 2015 Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that he will
be restructuring the agency and appointed Human
Resources Administration Commissioner Steven Banks,
who's with us today, as interim Commissioner of that
agency. Under the guidance of Commissioner Banks,
DHS has been undergoing a 90-day review period to
assess how DHS can address the current homelessness
crisis more effectively. It is clear that we need a

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4 better understanding of why the adult and family-
5 adult shelter population have not significantly
6 decreased, given the large investment that this
7 administration has put forward in the Living in
8 Communities Homeless Rental Assistance Program and
9 prevention services as well as other rental
10 assistance programs where over 30,000 New Yorkers are
11 living in permanent housing and avoided... sorry,
12 excuse me -- that the administration has put funds
13 into... a large investment to LINC Homeless Rental
14 Assistance Program and prevention services where over
15 30,000 New Yorkers are living in permanent housing
16 and avoided or exited the shelter system and
17 evictions have decreased by 18 percent in 2015. DHS
18 continues to increase funding to support adult and
19 family shelter operations in Fiscal 16.

20 In the agency's November plan, \$88
21 million was added for adult and family shelter
22 operations and DHS' Fiscal 2017 Preliminary Budget
23 includes an additional \$32.4 million for adult
24 shelter operations for the remainder of this fiscal
25 year, between now and the end of June. This pattern
of increased shelter spending causes concern; while
we support the revision of shelter services and

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4 making sure capacity is adequate enough to
5 accommodate everybody who needs it on any given
6 night, we are anxious to see at what point the new
7 LINC programs and other rental assistance programs as
8 well as increased funding for homelessness prevention
9 and legal services will have a visible impact on the
10 homeless shelter population.

11 Before I welcome Commissioner Banks, I
12 would like to thank the Committee staff for their
13 very hard in preparing for today's hearing -- Dohini
14 Sompura, Unit Head; Nameera Nuzhat, Legislative
15 Financial Analyst, our Finance Chief, Latonia
16 McKinney, and Deputy Regina Poreda Ryan; Andrea
17 Vazquez, Senior Counsel for the Committee, and Tonya
18 Cyrus, Senior Policy Analyst for the Committee and we
19 are also joined, as temporary counsel to the
20 Committee, by Nicole Abeen as well today.

21 I would now like to welcome the DHS
22 Interim Commissioner, Steven Banks and welcome his
23 testimony and before you testify, I would ask you all
24 to raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the
25 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and
to respond honestly to council members' questions
today?

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much
6 and Commissioner, you may begin.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'd like to thank
8 the Council; Committee Chair Levin for this
9 opportunity to testify about the opportunity to
10 testify about the Department of Homeless Services
11 budget and efforts to address homelessness in our
12 city, particularly those reforms that we have
13 implemented over the past few months as part of the
14 90-day review of homeless services.

15 My name is Steven Banks and I am the
16 Commissioner of the New York City Human Resources
17 Administration/Department of Social Services; I know
18 you gave me an additional title, but I have only the
19 title of Commissioner of Human Resources
20 Administration, The Department of Homeless Services.

21 On December 15th, 2015, the Mayor ordered
22 a 90-day review of Homeless Services and asked the
23 First Deputy Mayor Tony Shorris, the Director of the
24 Mayor's Office of Operations, Mindy Tarlow and I to
25 conduct the review; following her appointment, Deputy
Mayor for the Health and Human Services, Herminia
Palacio has joined in this effort.

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4 During the review I have been overseeing
5 the operations of the Department of Homeless Services
6 in my capacity as the Administrator and Commissioner
7 of the local Social Services District here in New
8 York City. Joining me today are DHS' First Deputy
9 Commissioner Lorraine Stephens; Deputy Commissioner,
10 Fiscal and Procurement, Lula Urquhart and HRA's Chief
11 of Staff, Jennifer Yeaw.

12 New York City is facing increasing
13 economic inequality as a result of low wages, the
14 lack of affordable housing; increased cost of living.
15 Today approximately 46 percent of New Yorkers live
16 near poverty and approximately 22 percent live below
17 the poverty line. This income inequality, combined
18 with other causes of homelessness, such as domestic
19 violence, overcrowding and eviction, are what bring
20 people to our shelter system in New York City. We
21 did not arrive at this crisis overnight and it will
22 take some time to address the multifaceted drivers of
23 homelessness.

24 As part of the 90-day review process that
25 the Mayor directed, we have been conducting a
26 comprehensive review of the City's homeless services
27 policies and practices. We have met with homeless

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4 people in shelters, on the streets and in focus
5 groups, advocates, shelter and homeless services
6 providers, other not-for-profit organizations,
7 national experts and researchers, former DHS
8 commissioners and elected officials, and staff at
9 DHS, HRA and other City agencies. We have also
10 surveyed best practices in other jurisdictions and we
11 received feedback and assistance from the United
12 States Department of Housing and Urban Development.
13 The resulting review is being presented to the Mayor
14 with draft recommendations for his consideration;
15 when he has reached his decisions, the administration
16 will present the next steps to the Council and the
17 public.

18 Because of the urgency of the problem, we
19 have not waited for the completion of the review to
20 start implementing substantial reforms and I would
21 like to begin my testimony today by reviewing those
22 reforms.

23 First -- implementing HOME-STAT to
24 address street homelessness.

25 One of the first reforms was the creation
of HOME-STAT, the Homeless Outreach and Mobile
Engagement Street Action Teams. Partnering with

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4 existing homeless response and prevention programs,

5 HOME-STAT is the most comprehensive street

6 homelessness outreach effort ever deployed in a major

7 U.S. city. Starting this month, canvassing by the

8 Mayor's Office of Operations will increase our

9 ability to identify homeless individuals on the

10 street, from Canal Street to 145th Street in other

11 hot spots in the City and deploy outreach resources

12 where they are needed most. This canvas will involve

13 60 field and analytic staff who will gather and

14 report real-time data and track outcomes, dashboards

15 will report on aggregate outcomes, conditions of

16 performance and as long-requested by this body, as

17 part of HOME-STAT we'll be conducting comprehensive

18 quarterly nighttime counts to provide a more complete

19 and real-time understanding of our street homeless

20 population in the city.

21 The rapid response capacity built into

22 this initiative will ensure more timely responses to

23 311 calls and information gathered from our canvases.

24 With HOME-STAT, the contracted Homeless Outreach

25 staff will grow from 195 to approximately 385;

additionally, the NYPD is deploying 40 officers to

its 70-officer Homeless Outreach Unit to respond to

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calls concerning street homeless persons,
encampments, large hot spots and those individuals
experiencing emotional disturbances or exhibiting
erratic behavior.

Finally, the creation of a citywide case
management tool will provide case managers with
information to ensure city service integration,
continuous monitoring and outreach and rapid response
to individual problems. All HOME-STAT agencies will
play a role in this effort, including DHS, NYPD and
other human services agencies and NYC Safe.

Next -- ending the use of clusters.

An essential tool for reducing
homelessness in New York City is maintaining and
increasing the City's affordable housing stock, as
well as ensuring that New Yorkers have access to
rental subsidies, transitional programming and
aftercare.

For 16 years, through multiple
administrations, this city has utilized clusters as
homeless shelters, a failed approach to housing our
homeless population that is expensive, lacks real
services to transition homeless families and
individuals to stable housing and includes some of

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4 the worst shelter conditions. Further, utilizing
5 these units removes them from the affordable rental
6 market. In January 2016, the Mayor announced a
7 three-year plan for ending utilization cluster
8 shelter units for families; at the time there were
9 more than 3,000 units being used; as the first step
10 in the plan we are on target to close approximately
11 260 cluster units by June 30th, 2016; the remaining
12 units will be closed by December 2018, with those
13 that are appropriate returned to the permanent
14 housing stock, including through rental assistance
15 programs for homeless families and adults. In
16 addition, where needed, the City will replace shelter
17 capacity, using a revised open-ended RFP process to
18 include new models which combines affordable
19 permanent housing, flexible shelter space and
20 community space in the same building. Under this
21 model, shelter residents will receive essential
22 support services, including rapid rehousing help.

23 From experience we know that households
24 with subsidized rental assistance are more successful
25 in finding housing if they have support in their
search; we all know the difficulty of finding housing
in New York; by working with providers to navigate a

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challenging rental market, we are able to move more
quickly more clients to permanent affordable housing.

Implementing the Shelter Repair Scorecard
and Squad to address conditions.

The administration is committed to being
transparent about the problems in shelters and
accountable for efforts to improve them; that's why
we created the Shelter Repair Scorecard, which lists
every building violation and condition in every
shelter and the Shelter Repair Squad in order to fix
the problems.

The Scorecard was released on February 1
with data as of December 31st, 2015; it showed that
the clusters had most of the violations and that many
of the shelters operated by not-for-profit providers
were in relatively good condition; meanwhile
literally, on January 1st, New Year's Day, the
Enhanced Shelter Repair Squad began a new round of
thorough inspections of the non-cluster shelters and
a new round of repairs, including staff from HRA,
DHS, DOB, HPD, DOHMH, DDC, DCAS, Parks, and FDNY. In
just two months, working under the direction of the
Mayor's Office of Operations and HRA, they achieved
an amazing amount of work. Earlier this month we

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4 issued the second Scorecard with data through
5 February 29th; it showed that the Squad conducted
6 2,660 inspections, almost a third of 8,665 conducted
7 in all of 2015; those inspections identified 11,125
8 new violations and conditions in order to set an
9 appropriate baseline. During those same two months,
10 the City and shelter providers themselves made 12,026
11 repairs at the homeless shelters, almost as many as
12 the 12,934 repairs made in all of 2015; we still have
13 more work to do. At the end of February, even after
14 the new round of inspections, there were 6,486
15 outstanding violations in non-cluster shelters
16 compared to 6,983 violations on December 31, and
17 working with our not-for-profit shelter providers
18 we're determined to keep pushing that number down.

19 While no substandard conditions are
20 acceptable, many shelters have relatively few
21 violations; family shelters, excluding clusters, have
22 an average of about a half a violation per apartment,
23 the same as the average for all buildings in New York
24 City. It's important to recognize that many of those
25 conditions are the result of years of insufficient
investment and some of the problems will require
capital projects to fix, which is why as part of this

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4 review we're looking at ensuring that going forward
5 the resources are provided for both maintenance and
6 capital repairs.

7 To address this critical need, \$6.5
8 million in FY16, growing to \$7.6 million in FY 17
9 will be used improve the maintenance of directly-run
10 shelters through facilities managers, on-site
11 painters and fire safety directors. In addition, the
12 FY16 September Capital Plan added \$54.2 million to
13 the four-year period of Fiscal Year 2016 through
14 Fiscal Year 2019 to address more significant facility
15 needs, bringing the total FY16 plan for facilities
16 projects to \$32.1 million. Overall, the four-year
17 capital plan for shelters allocates \$119.5 million;
18 likewise, the Fiscal Year 2016 shelter maintenance or
19 repair budget totals \$54 million, of which \$17
20 million has been added in the baseline since the
21 beginning of the de Blasio Administration.

22 The Scorecard is also a way to follow up
23 on the City's commitment to stop using clusters over
24 three years. The Scorecard currently lists units
25 within 27 cluster buildings designated for
elimination as DHS units in this fiscal year; also,

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12 cluster buildings with 15 units have already been
eliminated from DHS utilization.

Launching a new program to reduce
violence in shelters.

As many of you know from the announcement
yesterday and the further elaboration this morning,
the Mayor announced a three-pronged program to reduce
violence in homeless shelters. First, the NYPD will
retrain all DHS security staff and a team from NYPD
will be placed at DHS to develop an action plan to
upgrade security at all shelters. Second, we are
restoring a domestic violence program at family
shelters that was cut in 2010. And third, we are
implementing a new, more extensive reporting system
for incidents that occur in shelters. The reforms
respond to new data on violence in shelters that we
developed as part of the 90-day review.

For many years DHS mainly focused on
incidents involving death or life-threatening injury
and the individual staff exercised discretion to
report as a priority individual incidents not rising
to this level on a case by case basis. This resulted
in lost opportunities to target services because
cases not involving death or life-threatening

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4 injuries were inconsistently categorized, based on
5 individual determinations. The review also showed
6 that incidents that occurred off-site were also
7 reported as critical incidents even though the
8 incident did not occur at the shelter. We're
9 reforming the process to broaden the criteria for
10 critical incidents and we will focus attention on the
11 incidents that actually occur in the shelters so that
12 we can have a more complete picture of client service
13 needs.

14 For example, our review showed that more
15 needs to be done to address domestic violence for
16 families that have been placed and sheltered
17 together, so the Mayor has authorized a new in-reach
18 program for family shelters that we'll be including
19 in the Executive Budget.

20 Retraining and Security Action Plan.

21 The NYPD will assign a team to be placed
22 at DHS to develop an action plan to upgrade security
23 at all shelters. The NYPD will also be retraining
24 all DHS security staff. Currently all non-cluster
25 shelters have some level of security provided by
either DHS peace officers or by private security
guards; as part of the 90-day review, security has

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4 already been increased at mental health shelters and
5 at commercial hotels. The de Blasio Administration
6 has already substantially increased spending for
7 security at homeless shelters, direct spending by DHS
8 on DHS peace officers and FJC security guards has
9 increased 63 percent from \$48 million in FY13 to \$78
10 million in FY 2016. In addition, DHS reimburses
11 shelter providers for security costs; that was \$62
12 million in FY16, for a total of \$140 million in
13 security costs. But again, the NYPD management team
14 will be looking at how to upgrade security at all
15 shelters as part of this process.

16 Domestic Violence Programming in
17 Shelters.

18 The City will be reestablishing a
19 domestic violence in DHS shelters that was ended in
20 2010. The new analysis of critical incident data
21 found that violence within families is the most
22 common form of violent incidents in family shelters.
23 In families with children shelters, domestic violence
24 was 60 percent of the violent incidents, while it was
25 80 percent in adult family shelters.

HRA's No Violence Again (NoVA) out-
stationed [sic] domestic violence services will be

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expanded to DHS Tier II family shelters to provide families with access to domestic violence services. Trained staff from HRA will go to a number of Tier II shelters to provide these services; existing social services staff in Tier II shelters will participate in enhanced training that will provide them with the tools to identify and refer families and individuals to the NoVA team, an NYC Family Justice Center or other community-based domestic violence providers.

Families experiencing unhealthy relationships and conflict will be offered conflict-resolution mediation services to establish safe resolutions and teach family members effective tools to resolve conflict.

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence will commit the resources necessary to implement systemwide training for DHS staff; a senior DHS official will be in charge of coordinating the delivery of domestic violence services.

Additional transparency and critical incident reporting.

Based on the findings of the 90-day review, the administration has also instituted new, more comprehensive and accurate reporting of critical

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4 incidents in shelters, including for the first time
5 separately reporting violent incidents. For many
6 hears DHS reported critical incidents in the Mayor's
7 Management Report which included some but not all
8 violent incident. In addition, data was not
9 systemically collected to identify problems.
10 Critical incident definitions were unclear and
11 inconsistently reported across agency divisions.
12 Overly broad categories limit the agency's ability to
13 identify trends and quantify specific types of
14 incidents.

15 Existing categories include both violent
16 and nonviolent incidents within the same category,
17 limiting the ability to quantify the volume of
18 violent incidents. The problem was not the level
19 that shelter staff has been reporting incidents to
20 DHS; the problem was in the way these reports were
21 categorized.

22 New reporting categories have been
23 created and applied retroactively to all 2015
24 incidences reported to DHS by the shelters. Under
25 the old definitions there 620 critical incidents; the
new analysis defined 1,687 incidents as critical, of
which 826 were characterized as violent.

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4 To ensure that problems are identified,
5 violence is now defined much more broadly than for
6 example the FBI Crime Reports. For the shelter
7 critical incidents, violent incidents include broad
8 definitions of domestic violence, assault and both
9 child abuse and neglect, even if there was no
10 violence against the child.

11 The administration is implementing
12 through reforms to ensure that all critical incidents
13 and especially violent incidences are appropriately
14 categorized and that there is appropriate follow-up.

15 NYC Safe.

16 The announcement of these new initiatives
17 today builds on prior security enhancements in the
18 shelters. Since NYC Safe's launch, DHS has increased
19 security at 11 single adult mental health shelters,
20 enhanced security at 12 of the adult shelters
21 considered high needs; this includes \$10.5 million
22 FY16 to hire 175 staff and \$7.4 million in FY17 added
23 to the January plan.

24 Subsequent to this and in the wake of
25 recent tragedies, additional security measures were
put in place and we added more mental health
professionals to increase safety at shelters and

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4 support homeless New Yorkers with mental health
5 needs.

6 For example, we implemented a 24/7
7 communication process between NYC Health and
8 Hospitals and DHS, ensuring better case management
9 and allowing shelter operators to better support
10 clients; we deployed new mental health teams to DHS
11 shelter intake centers; we completed a security
12 assessment of 29 mental health shelters; we deployed
13 additional peace officers to provide 24/7 coverage at
14 all mental health shelters; we deployed
15 DHS-contracted security guards to provide additional
16 security at commercial hotels used by DHS.

17 Enhancing adult shelter programming.

18 DHS recognizes that its responsibility to
19 clients goes further than simply providing shelter;
20 to truly engage clients and move them to stable
21 housing and self-sufficiency we assist them during
22 the day in attaining additional skills and training.
23 Not only have we affirmatively reiterated a long-
24 standing policy concerning permitting daytime shelter
25 access, but have also expanded funding for daytime
programming. We have committed to expanding daytime
jobs training and vocational program at shelters to

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4 serve almost 20,000 individuals; we added \$8.9
5 million in FY16, growing to \$16.9 million in FY17 in
6 the January plan to provide on-site shelter
7 programming at 40 single adult shelter locations;
8 these locations are at our shelters where there have
9 been limited on-site activities. Contract providers
10 have submitted plans that were approved for services,
11 including literacy, recreation, employment and other
12 supports; directly-operated shelter program plans
13 also being developed.

14 Implementing Veterans Initiatives.

15 The de Blasio Administration is extremely
16 proud to have been recognized by the federal
17 government for our successful effort in ending
18 chronic veterans' homelessness. In addition, we have
19 also significantly reduced the number of homeless
20 veterans in our system and the Veterans
21 Administration's system from 4,677 in 2011 to 467 as
22 of March 14, 2016.

23 For example, in December and January
24 alone we moved 527 veterans from shelter to permanent
25 housing and we are well on our way to meeting the
level of veterans homelessness considered to be

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4 functionally zero, by the federal government's
5 definition.

6 To support these efforts, in FY16 the
7 January plan added \$1.6 million for staff, rapid
8 rehousing services and a bonus for shelter providers
9 that increased permanent housing placements for
10 veterans. In FY17 we will allocate \$700,000 to
11 continue this work and to make sure that any veteran
12 that enters our system can be rapidly rehoused and
13 connected to services and supports as needed.

14 Created task force to implement the plan
15 for 15,000 units of supportive housing.

16 In January, Mayor de Blasio announced the
17 formation of a Supportive Housing Task Force to help
18 the City implement its plan to raise 15,000 units of
19 supportive housing to prevent and alleviate
20 homelessness. Supportive housing is affordable
21 permanent housing with services, including case
22 management, mental health and substance use disorder
23 services, access to medical care and other social and
24 supportive services. Supportive housing has a proven
25 track record of helping stabilize people's lives and
reducing reliance on homeless shelters, hospitals,
mental health institutions and jail. For example,

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according to a 2014 study by the Urban Institute, 85
percent of people provided with supportive housing
remained housed a year later.

The new Supportive Housing Task Force
includes the leaders and advocates; they will serve
as an expert panel of advisors to the City, offering
innovative ways to develop and deliver supportive
housing by leveraging lessons learned from past
supportive housing agreements and finding new
creative approaches for both development and service
delivery, help streamline processes for supportive
housing to maximize efficiencies and eliminating
bottlenecks among City agencies, develop [inaudible]
service providers and clients, develop strategies to
better tailor services to the needs of various
supportive housing populations, act as an ongoing
partner and counterweight, supporting and challenging
the City to realize a higher-quality, better
coordinated supportive housing system.

To implement our plan to provide an
unprecedented 15,000 new supportive housing units, we
are bringing together people with expertise and
commitment to help us put together the most effective
and cost-efficient supportive housing program

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possible; the better the program, the more people we
can help.

The committing to doubling drop-in
centers.

Mayor de Blasio also committed to
doubling the number of City-funded drop-in centers
designed to help bring homeless people off the
streets and provide them with services that can help
keep them off the streets permanently.

Drop-in centers an essential part of the
continuum of care to address street homelessness that
starts with HOME-STAT outreach workers connecting
with New Yorkers on the streets, gaining their trust,
bringing them to a drop-in center for food, showers,
case management services and medical care, taking
them to a safe haven to spend the night and moving
them into supportive housing where they can receive
help to rebuild their lives.

Drop-in centers provide an alternative to
traditional shelter for street homeless individuals,
they offer temporary respite where individuals can
shower, eat a meal and see a doctor and rest. Case
management housing placement services are also
available to clients who wish to receive them; the

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4 centers also offer a limited number of off-site
5 overnight respite beds, but ultimately seek to place
6 people in permanent housing.

7 The City has announced a new \$8.5 million
8 annual commitment to double the number of drop-in
9 centers it currently operates; the City will open
10 three new drop-in centers and take over funding of
11 the current HUD-funded drop-in center in the Bronx
12 run by BronxWorks, as HUD looks to reinvest those
13 dollars in permanent housing. These four locations
14 will be added to the four existing City-funded drop-
15 ins; two in Manhattan, one in Staten Island and one
16 in Brooklyn. In the past two fiscal years, FY14 and
17 15, these drop-in centers served an average of 454
18 clients during the day, saw an average of 128 clients
19 overnight and made 1,238 housing placements. The
20 City previously had nine City-funded drop-in centers,
21 but five were closed between 2008 and 2010.

22 New centers will open in Manhattan,
23 Brooklyn and Queens; these drop-in centers will be
24 expected to each serve approximately 75 clients at
25 any given time.

Drop-in centers will continue to focus on
working collaboratively with the City's outreach

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teams on the placement of chronically street homeless
individuals into housing and provide housing
placement services to non-chronically street homeless
individuals; this includes working with clients to
obtain identification, entitlements in housing; drop-
in centers will also set up the front door of their
programs to rapidly connect individuals to more
appropriate systems of care, such as the emergency
shelter system, residential drug treatment programs,
family reunification, travel assistance, and other
resources.

In addition, the City has reformed its
policies to allow for individuals who recently stayed
in city shelters to use the drop-in center services,
reversing a policy preventing such use that had been
put in place in 2012.

Committing to triple the number of beds
for runaway homeless youth.

Also in January, the Mayor announced
enhanced services including the additional of 300
beds for homeless youth over the next three years,
deployment of additional staff to coordinate services
for youth entering Department of Homeless Services
shelters and a pledge to work with the state to

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4 extend the length of stay for those in existing
5 crisis beds regulated by the state.

6 From counseling to high school
7 equivalency support, to youth-specific employment and
8 training programs, youth shelters have the right
9 services and environment for young people to
10 stabilize their lives. This major investment will
11 triple the total of number of youth beds and ensure
12 even more young people are connected to the resources
13 they deserve to rebuild their lives.

14 Enhanced services provide for 100 new
15 beds a year for the next three years, total 300 by
16 FY19, with a \$14.7 million annual investment at full
17 ramp-up, deployment of City staff at the entry points
18 at the DHS shelter system to offer placements in
19 youth beds for individuals between the ages of 16 and
20 21 and a pledge to work with the state to extend the
21 length of stay in crisis beds. The addition of 100
22 beds a year over the next three years builds on the
23 200 beds already added under Mayor de Blasio for
24 homeless youth through the Department of Youth and
25 Community Development. In 2014, the City of New York
requested that the state allow initial stays in
crisis shelters to be extended from 30 days to 45

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4 days and that extensions be allowed up to 90 days.

5 The City is now renewing this request in order to
6 provide additional time for services to young people
7 who may need them.

8 Now I wanna provide an overview of the
9 New York City Department of Homeless Services.

10 DHS is the city agency responsible for
11 providing services to all homeless New Yorkers,
12 including both those who are street homeless and
13 those seeking shelter. In addition, DHS works
14 closely with HRA to prevent homelessness. With the
15 Mayor's reintroduction of rental assistance in 2014,
16 after the elimination of the Advantage Rental
17 Assistance Program in the 2011 state budget, the two
18 agencies worked together in providing rental
19 assistance so that those in shelters can return to
20 their communities and those at risk of homelessness
21 can be kept in the community.

22 I discussed the rental assistance and
23 other prevention efforts in the HRA testimony, so
24 I'll not repeat that discussion here.

25 As of March 13, 2016 in the DHS system,
there were 57,705 individuals in the system comprised
of 22,841 children and 34,864 adults. To provide

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prevention outreach, shelter and rehousing services,
the Department of Homeless Services has a 2,639
budgeted head count in FY17 as the January plan paid
for with a combination of city, state and federal
funds from the FY16 adopted budget to the FY17
January plan the DHS agency has a head count increase
by 323; this is due to direct personnel and new
programmatic initiatives, such as NYC Safe, to
increase security, to treatment for those facing
mental illness and HOME-STAT, the nation's most
comprehensive street homelessness outreach effort.

DHS staff members are dedicated public
servants who want to help New Yorkers in need. The
diverse workforce is comprised of 41 percent women,
59 percent men and 64 percent black, 17 percent
Hispanic, 13 percent white, and 6 percent Asian.
This unionized workforce includes members of 18
different unions.

Here is the DHS budget overview. DHS'
FY17 operating budget is \$1.1 billion of which \$578
million are City funds. This \$1.1 billion budget
allocates \$548 million to services for families, \$364
million to services for single adults, \$30 million
for support of administrative services, and \$166

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4 million to agencywide personnel services including
5 staff for directly-operated shelters and intake for
6 homeless families and adults.

7 We continue to evaluate the impact of the
8 new rental assistance and prevention efforts on the
9 census and will revisit the forecast and funding
10 levels that we have typically done in the past.

11 Additionally, \$25 million of the variance
12 is due to grant funds in FY16 that will be added
13 throughout the FY17 fiscal year and projected savings
14 that have been in FY17 including those related to
15 supportive housing and the epidemic initiative.

16 In the January plan, DHS also received
17 another \$31.6 million in FY16, \$31.6 million City
18 funds and in FY17 there is an addition of \$37.1
19 million City funds for non-capacity costs, including
20 shelter repair squad, cleaning and maintenance, \$7.7
21 million total funding FY17, NYC Safe and provider
22 security, \$7.4 million total funding in FY17, adult
23 shelter programming, \$6.9 million total funding in
24 FY17, homeless prevention for single adults, \$4.4
25 million total funding in FY17, veterans initiatives,
\$700,000 total funding; the total budget head count
in FY16 increased to 2,639, with the addition of 279

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in the January plan; the January plan additions
include 81 head count for adult shelter programming,
175 head count for New York City Safe and provider
security, 20 head count for shelter repair and
maintenance, 3 head count for supporting homeless
veterans, 171 positions were added in FY17 for a
total of 2,427; this year to year decline in head
count of 212 is primarily due to the fact that some
positions were funded only in 2016, pending
subsequent evaluations. Further, certain grant-
funded staff lines are added on an annual basis.
Subject to review, the FY16-only positions includes
59 grant-funded positions, 10 NoVA staff, 16 housing
specialists, 19 fraud investigators, and 108 for the
NYC Safe initiative.

The DHS January capital plan for the
four-year period of FY16-FY19 is currently \$161.2
million; this amount is comprised of \$76.2 million
for capital projects for single adults, \$43.3 million
for capital projects for homeless families, \$32.1
million for administrative supportive services; \$9.6
million is designated for City Council-funded
projects.

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4 The two pie charts in the PowerPoint
5 provided show the current source of funds for the
6 expense budget and a breakdown of the budget
7 allocation of these funds in FY17. Please keep in
8 mind that there are still some issues that will not
9 be resolved [sic] into the Executive Budget.

10 In addition to funding for shelter, as
11 described in the HRA testimony, this administration
12 invested over \$1 billion for new initiatives to
13 prevent and reduce homelessness over the life of the
14 four-year financial plan; this includes rental
15 assistance, housing inspections, legal services;
16 home-based aftercare supportive services.

17 Shelter provider bonus.

18 \$1.6 million is included in the FY16
19 budget for providing financial incentives to shelter
20 providers to move families and individuals out of
21 shelter and into permanent housing. Incentives will
22 be awarded to providers who exceed existing housing
23 targets.

24 Homeless prevention for single adults.

25 Homebase is the cornerstone of DHS'
prevention efforts. Through our Homebase offices and
in close partnership with HRA, we assisted more than

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100,000 individuals since we expanded the program in
July 2014. The preliminary plan includes an
additional \$4.4 million to further enhance Homebase
services, bringing the total FY17 Homebase budget to
\$46.1 million. This budget represents an 80 percent
increase over our 2014 funding; the preliminary plan
funding will double the number of at-risk single
adults served in 23 Homebase locations across the
five boroughs from 4,000 to close to 8,500. Funding
will also be made available to continue to provide
one-time and short-time grants to about 600 single
adults seeking shelter to help make alternative
arrangements viable; since July 2015, 167 clients
have received grants and just 5 for the entered
shelter [sic]. The total Homebase budget in FY17
will be \$46.1 million at 23 locations and Homebase
will be able to serve 25,000 cases annually.
Homebase not only provides financial assistance to
clients, but also encompasses eviction prevention,
financial counseling, assistance obtaining benefits,
landlord and family mediation, employment services,
and referrals. We advertise our Homebase services
through a public awareness campaign that includes ads
on the radio, television and on subways.

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Savings initiatives -- The End the
Epidemic shelter savings.

Shelter savings are anticipated to begin
in FY17 through the expansion of HASA services,
including case management, rental assistance,
nutrition, and transportation benefits to individuals
with asymptomatic HIV. Shelter savings are projected
as an estimated 800 single adults and 110 families
currently in shelters, but newly eligible for HASA
benefits under the expansion will be able to
transition into independent housing.

Supportive housing shelter savings.

Shelter savings are anticipated from the
placement of 15,000 individuals over 15 years in
newly created supportive housing units; research
evaluating the impact of previous supportive housing
initiatives suggests that individuals placed into
supportive housing have reduced utilization of
various public benefits, including an average of
about 160 fewer days of shelter over the two years
following placement for certain populations; 15,000
new units are expected to result in a shelter census
reduction of about 550 individuals by full
implementation [sic] in FY20.

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4 With respect to these savings
5 initiatives, it is critical that the state includes
6 these important joint-funded initiatives in the 2016-
7 2017 state budget. In the case of both New York
8 City's HASA program and our supportive housing plan,
9 these are clear examples of how providing safe,
10 affordable and permanent housing results in positive
11 outcomes for our clients but additionally, saves
12 taxpayer dollars.

13 As we proceed with the reform efforts
14 described in this testimony following the 90-day
15 review, we will continue to identify ways in which
16 our programs to prevent and alleviate homelessness
17 can be enhanced. While a lot has been accomplished
18 during the past 90 days, we know there's a lot more
19 to do. Thank you again for this opportunity to
20 testify and I welcome your questions.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
22 Commissioner. So I'm gonna ask some questions that
23 may also refer to HRA's budget, but I think more
24 appropriate to ask in this setting.

25 So I'll start off -- with the rental
26 assistance programs, what I'll ask you to do is to
27 break out each rental assistance program and how much

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of it the City is contributing, how much is the state
contributing and how much is the federal dollars
contributing and what the overall budget is and where
we can find it; is that fair; something you can do?

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes, I have most of
the information you're requesting at hand; some of it
I may need to provide to you after the hearing, but
we'll... [crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

COMMISSIONER BANKS: go through and see
how we do.

So let's start with DHS LINC I...
[crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

COMMISSIONER BANKS: that's the program
for families working in the shelter system...

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

COMMISSIONER BANKS: families with
children working in the shelter system; that's a
joint city/state program in which the City is
providing half and the state's providing half.
Between FY15 and through February, 951 households
which consist of 3,309 individuals, have been moved

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4 out through that program, which is essentially a
5 50/50 program.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. And where --
7 in terms of the budget, where does that live in the
8 City's budget?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It lives in the HRA
10 budget.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In the HRA budget.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The HRA budget.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And do you know in
14 which category, which funding; is it within like
15 public assistance grants?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's in that area
17 and we'll get you the exact code and we can...
18 [crosstalk]

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: review in more
21 detail with you between the Preliminary Budget and
22 the Executive Budget.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: DHS LINC II, that is
25 a joint state/city program also; that is a program
that's targeted to families that have used the
shelter system multiple times in the past and the

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4 importance of providing housing for stability, that
5 is again, a split program between the state and the
6 city, 540 families benefited from that program so far
7 and that's 1,879 people. I just note that as you
8 recall, we implemented these programs during FY15;
9 they were initially implemented in October, but at a
10 \$1200 a monthly rent level that was authorized by the
11 state, we could not find very much if any take-up of
12 the program and in late November we increased the
13 rate to the HUD-set level at \$1515 per month with the
14 City having to bear the full cost of the gap between
15 \$1515 and \$1200 and so substantially all of the
16 families that have made use of these two programs
17 really began to move out in earnest in like December-
18 January 2015, so you can see the uptake in this
19 program during this period of time.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And I'm sorry; for
21 both LINC I and II and then going forward, is there a
22 budgeted dollar amount for 16 and 17 for those?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: When we implemented
24 these programs they were new; it was in the post
25 Advantage period, after there had been no rental
assistance at all between 2011-2014 and the landlords
had expressed concern in terms of participation, so

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4 we implemented new programs with goals of moving out
5 the kinds of numbers of people that we actually have
6 moved out over about a year's time...

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and then the dollars
9 we can identify for you what those were, but we're
10 essentially on target for the program as it is for
11 these two levels. DHS LINC III was for survivors of
12 domestic violence who have been found eligible for
13 domestic violence shelter but were placed in the DHS
14 shelter system and those were individuals that had
15 been placed DHS because of lack of capacity in the
16 HRA system and we are addressing that, as you know,
17 to the additional funding for more domestic violence
18 beds; 520 families during this period of time from
19 mid 2015 through February 2016 were able to take
20 advantage of that program; 1,810 people benefited;
21 that is a 100 percent City-funded program.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay and that's
23 reflected -- where does that live?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Same place in the
25 budget. By the way, the overall funding for these
26 programs was \$89 million in FY16 and \$123 million in

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4 FY17 and we can go through with you any additional
5 questions you have within those large numbers.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So that 89...
7 [crosstalk]

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Those are all...

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: and 120...

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Those are all of
11 these programs.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: All of them together.
13 And those are in the HRA budget...

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yep, those are...

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: right and probably in
16 the budget line for...

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: for public assistance
19 grants.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right and we can
21 walk you through that...

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: but again, LINC III,
24 now we begin the place where they're all City-funded
25 with exceptions, which I will highlight for you. So
LINC III is City-funded; LINC IV, DHS LINC IV is for
seniors, singles or adult family seniors and single

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or adult families with disabilities and 1,295
households have been moved out of shelter through
that program, including 1,552 people. DHS LINC V is
for single adults or adult families that are working;
that is also 100 percent City-funded and the same
way, LINC IV is 100 percent City-funded, 807 single
adults or adult families took advantage of the
program and 905 individuals benefited over
essentially the last year. LINC VI, again, City-
funded 100 percent; this is for shared housing to
help with family reunification, 51 households were
able to take advantage of it, 172 people involved.
As you could imagine, when we're targeting
eligibility for shelter entry, we're identifying
people that have no place else to go only and so the
fact that some people are able to identify resources
to move out during their time in shelter is a good
thing and we wanna continue to encourage that even
though the low take-up is indicative of just how few
options people have in the groups that are sheltered.

HRA LINC III; this is for domestic
violence survivors placed in the HRA shelters, 384
households will be moved out over this approximate
year period of time, just over a year, benefiting

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1,336 people; that again is 100 percent City-funded.

CITYFEPS... [crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That's different... I'm
sorry; that's different from the DHS LINC III in that
it's individuals and families coming out of the HRA
system.

COMMISSIONER BANKS: The HRA system,
that's correct. CITYFEPS, this is a City analog of
the state family eviction prevention supplement; the
CITYFEPS program was created to address gaps that we
saw in the State FEPS program; CITYFEPS provides rent
at the HUD approved level which HUD has determined is
the amount that you need to pay rent in the City at
\$1515 per month as opposed to the State FEPS rate,
which is approximately \$1000 a month. The CITYFEPS
program benefited 1,422 families, including 4,947
people; this program was implemented, as you will
recall, in June of 2015, so it's been operating for
less than a year and already 1,422 families have
benefited from it. In addition to setting the rent
at the HUD level, this is also available to families
with children who are survivors of domestic violence
and have been certified as such in either the HRA or
the DHS systems, so there's some overlap for LINC

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III, but you can see there's been a tremendous take-
up of that particular program; that's 100 percent
City-funded.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And if I may
interrupt you right there; do you believe there's a
reason why that has such a significant uptake versus
some of the other programs... [crosstalk]

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well I think...

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: What makes this one
more appealing?

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well I think one of
the things that we wanted to do when we created these
programs was to not have a one-size-fits-all approach
and so we have multiple programs that are targeted to
multiple, different kinds of families and kinds of
adult families and kinds of homeless adults. So the
multiplicity of program is really to enhance
targeting and this particular program, I think in
part it's because the landlord community has
familiarity with the FEPS program and so the brand of
it is something that is recognized; we've also been
able to work with community-based partners who are
FEPS providers, terrific not-for-profits; some in
your district, some across the city, who have been

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4 very helpful in helping identify units for this
5 program and that is a successful model that we're
6 certainly looking at.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And the fact that
8 it's not time-limited; does that have a...

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, it's like the
10 FEPS program in that the time is based upon public
11 assistance eligibility and so again it's a
12 familiarity with the program...

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: in the landlord
15 community.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And that lives in the
17 HRA budget as well?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes it does.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Now the NYCHA move-
21 outs began before the LINC program was implemented,
22 so this really does go back to the summer of 2014,
23 but through February, 2,955 households have moved out
24 of shelter; this includes some of the veteran move-
25 outs as part of the veterans' initiative and that
benefited 10,243 people during this period of time.
Again NYCHA of course is a federally-funded program,

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4 although, as you know, there are challenges with
5 respect to the funding there.

6 The Section 8 program permitted 1,155
7 households to move out; again this began during 2014
8 and that benefited 3,785 people; that too is a
9 federally-funded program.

10 SEPS is a program that we developed to
11 parallel the FEPS program; there is no state
12 equivalent, but we created a city equivalent for
13 eviction prevention and particularly targeted to
14 domestic violence survivors and veterans and a number
15 of the SEPS rental assistance benefits were provided
16 as part of our veterans move-out effort; that program
17 was implemented just this past October in earnest and
18 so 147 people moved out through that program or
19 received services to avoid entry as a result of that
20 program. I should highlight with CITYFEPS that some
21 of those are to prevent entry into the system as well
22 as move-outs, because it's a prevention and shelter
23 move-out program. SEPS is also 100 percent City-
24 funded.

25 HOME-Tenant-based Rental Assistance or
HOME TBRA; that is a federal program that was
transferred to HRA's budget and we ran an application

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2 process; it's a federal program, and so already 15
3 households with those vouchers have been able to take
4 part in it, including 52 individuals; that's been
5 targeted particularly to families with a household
6 member with disabilities because of the ongoing
7 nature of the federal rental assistance.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: The SEPS, that also
9 is reflected in the HRA budget?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And do I need...

12 [crosstalk]

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, all of these
14 programs, except Section 8 and NYCHA are reflected in
15 the HRA budget.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. And then are
17 those reflected in new needs, as proposed in the
18 January plan in the HRA budget or was it all funded
19 out years previously?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: These are reflected
21 as continued funding for the people that are in the
22 program and as we develop our Executive Budget and as
23 we conclude the 90-day review we'll be looking at
24 ways in which we can enhance these programs and then
25

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4 there'll be a need identified in the Executive
5 Budget.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. And I'm gonna
7 refrain from asking too many questions about the 90-
8 day review 'cause I think today is day 90 and I don't
9 wanna preempt you from making, you know, making the
10 determinations and announcements of what the results
11 of that are gonna be. My one question about it is;
12 do you anticipate that there will be new needs for
13 FY17 associated with the 90-day review, either in the
14 DHS or HRA budget?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well let me just
16 review the 90-day review process. So we're reaching
17 the conclusion of the review period this evening and
18 we will then be presenting our recommendations to the
19 Mayor, who will certainly consider those
20 recommendations and then depending on what the
21 determinations are; they'll be reflected in the
22 Executive Budget.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,
24 Commissioner. I'm gonna turn it over to... [crosstalk]

25 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But I can say, for
example, the domestic violence program that I
described as one of our initiatives to enhance safety

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4 and security in the DHS shelters, that's a need that
5 we will be putting in the Executive Budget...

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: because it's a
8 program based upon the review; we know it's
9 critically needed and we'll be funding it and as you
10 can see, other programs that we announced during the
11 90-day review period have a FY16 and FY17 component
12 in the January plan.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm gonna come back
14 to some of those...

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: when I come back, but
17 I do wanna welcome my colleagues who are here,
18 Council Member Rafael Salamanca from the Bronx,
19 Council Member Ritchie Torres from the Bronx, Council
20 Member Barry Grodenchik from Queens; we were joined
21 by Council member Annabel Palma of the Bronx, Council
22 Member Fernando Cabrera of the Bronx, Council Member
23 Daneek Miller of Queens, and Council Member Vanessa
24 Gibson of the Bronx. We'll turn it over to Council
25 Member Torres for questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Thank you,
Mr. Chairman; good to see you, Commissioner.

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Good to see you too.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I suspect you
6 answered this question, but -- what's the capital
7 investment that the City's making in the shelter
8 system over the next five years?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: There is \$120
10 million for capital repairs in the shelter system in
11 the DHS budget; that's in addition to the maintenance
12 dollars; one of the things clearly that we found
13 during the review and through the enhanced shelter
14 repair process is that problems in shelters have
15 built up over many years... [crosstalk]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Right.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: because of capital
18 needs that...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Right.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: that hadn't been
21 met; some of the repairs that we're making are
22 clearly things that can be done out of the expense
23 budget and we've gone ahead and done them...
24 [crosstalk]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: How much of that
120 is capital?

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's entirely
5 capital.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Give me a frame
7 of reference; that's an increase from what dollar
8 amount invested in the shelter system?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think one of the
10 problems is we started almost from a dead stop; there
11 were funds that may have been allocated in prior
12 plans that weren't used, so I don't wanna give you an
13 apples to oranges comparison...

14 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Was there ever a
15 dedicated capital stream for the shelter system?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah, historically
17 there had been... [crosstalk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: but what we did
20 find when we looked at particular shelters, they had
21 been asking, and even DHS' request, they'd been
22 asking for certain needs to be met and they hadn't
23 been met and so part of the inspections that we began
24 on January 1 was to set a baseline for all the needs
25 that really needed to get met; we're taking those in
from the shelter providers, we're comparing the notes
of the inspectors and if we need to make adjustments

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4 in that \$120 million, we will; I think the shelter
5 repair inspections reveal some significant
6 disinvestment problems that clearly need capital
7 repairs, running from boiler systems, to roofs, to
8 other things of that nature.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Have you done a
10 capital needs assessment of the overall shelter
11 system?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's part of the
13 new process that we're putting in place; that is
14 going to be done and as I said, we know that we have
15 the \$120 million in capital needs and we'll further
16 evaluate the continuing needs as we go forward. I
17 wanna amplify one aspect of my answer to your earlier
18 question though. The RFP that we're amending that
19 would provide for shelter development to include a
20 combination of temporary and permanent housing and a
21 community space is in part based upon a very
22 promising model called Gateway or Homestretch that
23 may well help meet some of those capital needs by
24 looking at existing buildings and to see what uses
25 could be made on the parcels of land that they're
located to both improve conditions in the shelter and
potentially create permanent housing. That's one of

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4 the reasons why when we announced the cluster closure
5 we wanted to highlight that we were gonna take a new
6 approach to shelter development in the future.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: And I do have a
8 -- is it still -- I have a question about the LINC
9 program... [crosstalk]

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Sure.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: which I know is
12 part of HRA's budget, but is it still the case that
13 most of the recipients of LINC are having trouble
14 finding landlords willing to accept them; is that
15 still the reality?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean look, as part
17 of the review I spoke to focus groups of clients, I
18 spoke to clients on the streets, I spoke to clients
19 in shelter; the most recent time I was in Bellevue
20 about 10 days ago; I encountered just, you know,
21 unscientifically, a group of men said isn't it great,
22 I have SEPS or LINC or whatever and I'm moving out,
23 it's terrific, it's working well and another group of
24 individuals said I'm not having any luck proceeding...
25 [crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Right.

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: but I think one of
5 the things that we have put in place already to try
6 to address that is to address violations of the local
7 law... [crosstalk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I'm just
9 constrained on time, but do we have just a percentage
10 of voucher holders who...

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's not a program
12 that works that way; it's a program if you meet the
13 criteria and you find an apartment, you can move out
14 and the numbers of people that have moved out are
15 targeted to the numbers we're reaching, but that
16 doesn't mean that if you haven't found a place yet
17 that we're not gonna be putting programs in place to
18 help you as part of the review process.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So I know that there
21 was a report at one point earlier and I know I'm
22 taking Council Member Torres' time; Chair, I hope
23 you'll let me give this answer on my time. There was
24 a report earlier about, you know, only 20 percent of
25 voucher holders were able to use... [crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Right.

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: them and that's not
5 a full way to look at the situation. For example,
6 many people were in multiple categories; they
7 could've moved to the Housing Authority, they
8 could've moved out through LINC III for domestic
9 violence survivors; people fit multiple categories;
10 that's what we found in the veterans move-out, that
11 we gave people multiple options. So the best one
12 that we could match them to that resulted in move-
13 out, that's the successful one. There are other
14 people that moved out before they were able to use
15 their voucher. So that was as a result of saying
16 well how many people could be eligible and how many
17 people use them as opposed to, how many people were
18 eligible for multiple programs and moved out through
19 one of them and then if I move out [bell] through one
20 program and we free up that slot for someone else to
21 use. So it wasn't a helpful piece of information
22 because I think it gave a perspective that wasn't a
23 full one. Having said that, we are concerned about
24 sources of income discrimination; we set up a hotline
25 at HRA and we're working closely with the Human
Rights Commission to bring cases where we find
landlords refusing taking vouchers... [interpose]

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4 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Mr. Chairman; can
5 I ask two final questions or?

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is it okay to come
7 back on a second round?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I'm leaving, but
9 it's your discretion; I will defer to you, it's your
10 committee.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: You can ask... yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Okay. Is source
13 of income discrimination the most common obstacle to
14 transitioning from temporary shelter into permanent
15 housing and can you point to evidence of high end
16 enforcement against source of income discrimination?

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think that there
18 are a number of factors that are barriers; one of the
19 biggest factors is the elimination of the Advantage
20 program and that there is still a concern in the
21 landlord community that a rental assistance program
22 was ended in 2011 and landlords and tenants were left
23 to hold the bag. I've said this many times before,
24 you know I was the attorney in the case that lost
25 that case 4-3 in the Court of Appeals; if we had won
it might've had a different outcome, but there still
is residual impact; we have met with the Rent

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4 Stabilization Association; they've been very helpful,
5 other landlord groups to convey that the Mayor is
6 committed to this program and we have gotten a very
7 high take-up in the program now, but that continues
8 to be a concern. But to the extent anyone is
9 listening on this hearing broadcast, I wanna just
10 make clear; this a program we're committed to and we
11 won't have a repeat of Advantage. Having said that,
12 there are issues with respect to source of income
13 discrimination; we set up a hotline at HRA to develop
14 individual cases and work with the Human Rights
15 Commission, they're investigating 85 cases; that
16 indicates I think the level of seriousness with which
17 the administration's taking this issue. And of
18 course there have been individual litigation brought
19 by Housing Works, which we are supporting at HRA and
20 I know the Legal Aid Society has probably cases as
21 well.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Thank you,
23 Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
25 Council Member Torres. Next I wanna call on Council
Member Vanessa Gibson for questions.

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4 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very
5 much, Chair Levin again and good afternoon once
6 again, Commissioner. I just had a couple of
7 questions, so I wanna try to get to them as quickly
8 as I can. Wow, we only have three minutes; I thought
9 we had five. Okay, sorry.

10 I wanted to ask about the recent
11 announcement you made along with the NYPD and the
12 administration on homeless shelter security; I wanted
13 to find out what the current framework is for
14 security staffing at our shelters and what we expect
15 to get with NYPD inclusion; are we looking at
16 intercoms and security cameras and other measures and
17 how long do we expect this would take and obviously
18 some of the costs that will be associated with that;
19 who's going to take that burden?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The security systems
21 that currently exist depend on the numbers of people
22 in residence; the configuration of the location, but
23 overall it's a combination of Department of Homeless
24 Services peace officers, privately contracted
25 security provided through contracts with the City and
either privately contracted or directly provided
security by not-for-profit or private shelter

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4 operators and the NYPD initiative that we announced
5 last night and this morning is to have a management
6 team of NYPD make a full assessment and provide an
7 action plan to upgrade security throughout the
8 system. There are cameras and metal detectors in
9 shelters, there are security guards deployed, but we
10 wanna draw upon the expertise of the NYPD to provide
11 the kind of action plan that hasn't been in place in
12 the city since the system of multiple kinds of
13 shelters developed 20 years ago.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. And I know
15 that you have a phase-out plan for cluster and
16 scatter sites, but how are you targeting those
17 particular units and what are we doing working with
18 those landlords to ensure that the full building is
19 not going to turn into a shelter, because I know that
20 that has happened in the past? I have a lot of
21 cluster and scatter sites; don't like them, I want us
22 to get down to a cluster vision zero mechanism where
23 we can zero, so I wanna know, how are we looking at
24 phasing them out; are we going to boroughs, the
25 greatest need; how is that working?

26 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay. So in the
27 shelter repair announcement that we made earlier this

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month, we've designated 260 for closure by the end of
this fiscal year; we made that determination based
upon the particular circumstances at those locations.
Our greatest goal however is to convert as many as
possible of these units back into permanent housing,
restore them to the permanent housing stock and allow
families who want to remain, to remain in the units
as ongoing tenants with us paying rental assistance.
We would welcome a partnership with you and any other
council members to look at locations in your
districts where there may be the ability to have a
partnership with a landlord to upgrade... [interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Great.

COMMISSIONER BANKS: conditions in the
building and... [interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER BANKS: to flip it back,
because that's what the goal is... [crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I already have... I
already have one address that I'll share with your
staff [bell] at the end of the hearing... [interpose]

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Great.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: And I just wanted
to quickly ask; Council Member Barron talked earlier

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4 about a fair share analysis; the PATH center in the
5 Bronx, the only intake site in the city; are we
6 looking for the site in Brooklyn; where are we with
7 that, and in terms of future sitings, is that
8 something that we're going to change the process so
9 that low-income communities of color are not
10 inundated and saturated with all of the shelters
11 throughout the city?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think there --
13 there are multiple parts to that question, so let me
14 see if I can answer... [interpose]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Always.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: answer each of them.
17 So first, as part of the review, we are looking at
18 the intake systems and PATH and the various proposals
19 that have been made for changes in intake systems.
20 Second, we are a right-to-shelter jurisdiction where
21 a court mandate does require the provision of shelter
22 and therefore I know there have been challenges in
23 the past with respect to the ability to consult when
24 there's a court order requiring the provision of
25 shelter. Having said that, I'm sorry that Council
Member Torres left; we just had a very positive
experience in providing early notice and working

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4 through addressing some concerns that he had; we will
5 continue to do that wherever we can at the same time
6 as we have to meet our legal and moral requirements
7 to provide shelter. But I look forward to working
8 with you on the cluster, flipping temporary units
9 back into permanent housing.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. Thank you
11 very much. Thank you, Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council
13 Member Gibson. Council Member Grodenchik.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Don't start
15 that clock. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you
16 Commissioner, thank you for being here for a very
17 long session today and I think it needs to be said;
18 thank you for the work that you've done with our
19 veterans, I think that's really a great credit to
20 this administration and we all appreciate it.

21 Just a couple of quick questions. The
22 anti-domestic violence programs that are being
23 reinitiated, will that start immediately?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're gonna be
25 proceeding as quickly as we can; our plan is to get
26 them in place during FY16 and not wait till 17 and we
27 would have to identify the dollars to do that, but we

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4 wanna make sure that we can get those services in
5 place right away.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay.

7 Homeless people or mentally ill people that are
8 riding the subways, do you have regularly scheduled
9 outreach teams on the subways; how does that work?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes, Bowery

11 Residents Committee has a contract with both DHS and
12 the MTA, it's a joint program that we use; I have
13 spent time with them doing that ride and they are
14 riding the subways that have the most numbers of
15 people on it; they spend time in the big subways and
16 I know you might have seen recently the Mayor and I,
17 Deputy Mayor Palacio joined one of the teams and had
18 success in bringing people in; this is the promise of
19 HOME-STAT that we're gonna take a citywide picture of
20 every person that we identify on the streets and
21 develop plans that haven't been in place in the past
22 that may involve multiagency focus to get each
23 individual off; on the other hand, I want a level set
24 here; the path that brought people to be on the
25 subways or brought people to be on the streets was
not a linear one and the path to get them off is not
going to be linear, it takes a great deal of effort

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4 to convince people to come back in after they've
5 fallen through every safety net and that's what the
6 professional outreach teams do and the Mayor's HOME-
7 STAT initiative is allowing us to improve our street
8 effort by deploying people to canvas the streets,
9 identify people, respond to 311 complaints, and then
10 deploy the outreach staff to where people are seen;
11 the outreach staff already has lists of people and
12 they're tracking them and they're having success in
13 bringing them off the streets, but there are new
14 people that the canvassers can find and help them be
15 connected to services, and then of course the Police
16 Department plays a key role in helping as well where
17 there may be law enforcement issues with respect to
18 people on the streets.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you.

20 And one last quick question; the new youth beds, will
21 they be managed by Homeless Services or by DYCD?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The current approach
23 is that DYCD will be managing them; obviously we
24 continue to look at all aspects of the system as we
25 move forward with reforms.

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4 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you
5 very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you,
6 Commissioner.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
9 Council Member Grodenchik. Council Member Salamanca.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chair.

12 Commissioner, I have a question in terms
13 of cluster sites. In my community.. well at least in
14 my community, yes, we have some buildings where...
15 let's say we have 60 apartments and 45 of them are
16 occupied by DHS clients; what are the safety or what
17 are the security requirements for such a building
18 that has over 50 percent of clients from DHS?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think you've
20 highlighted one of the reasons why the Mayor
21 announced and we're implementing a plan to phase out
22 the use of that model. It's a model in which the
23 operation is just as you described it; you're taking
24 a building in which people are long-time tenants and
25 living next to units which are used as shelter.
Again, the same offer that I made to Council Member
Gibson; earlier to Council Member Barron; I'd be

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4 happy to work with you or any other member that has
5 particular buildings in your district where we could
6 potentially convince the landlord to flip that unit
7 into a permanent apartment where the family could
8 stay there. In many of these units the families have
9 been there for long periods of time, so they are
10 functionally tenants in every way that the other
11 people next to them are.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: The other
13 question I have is in terms of contracts; recently
14 there was... [interpose]

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'm sorry?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: there was a
17 provider... recently there was a provider in my
18 district in which DHS took the contract away from
19 them and gave the contract to another provider and
20 that contract stood on the desk of DHS and HRA for a
21 while and therefore that provider was not getting the
22 paid full amount necessary to provide necessary
23 services, so for example, security was cut in half.
24 What is the process or how long does a contract take
25 for DHS to sign so that that provider can be paid a
full amount so they can provide adequate services?

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well I think, you
5 know I think, as has been focused on publicly, the
6 contracting process is something that HRA recently
7 assumed responsibility for and depending on who the
8 provider is, I'd certainly wanna follow up with you,
9 because we've made loans available to many of the
10 providers while we straighten out their contracts.
11 One thing I do wanna highlight though is; for
12 providers that might have cluster contracts, as a
13 part of the renegotiation of those contracts we wanna
14 make sure that there will be a plan for phasing out
15 the use of those cluster units. So some providers --
16 I don't know which ones you're talking about -- have
17 been extremely helpful in renegotiating their
18 contracts to provide for a phase-out of their units;
19 others have not been that helpful, so I don't know
20 which category this particular provider falls in, but
21 we're happy to work through them; again, I wanna
22 highlight that we have made loans available pending
23 the registration of contracts that we assumed in this
24 new process and [bell] we're well on the way I think
25 to resolving any outstanding contract problems for
people, but I'd be happy to follow up with you on
that particular organization.

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4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Mr. Chair,
5 could I ask one more question? Alright. My last
6 question is; in terms of the hotline that you
7 mentioned previously for the DHS clients, in these
8 buildings as well where there's rent-paying tenants,
9 there's a history where the landlord is not providing
10 adequate service for the rent-paying tenants; what
11 measures has DHS put in to ensure that rent-paying
12 tenants are also getting adequate service such as
13 your DHS clients...

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. When we...
15 [interpose]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: In terms of
17 maintenance of their apartments?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. When we
19 looked at the cluster buildings and did the shelter
20 scorecard and also the repair efforts, the building
21 -- if a particular group of residents are living at a
22 particular location, the scorecard reflects all of
23 the violations in the building; not simply the
24 violations in the units that are being occupied by
25 clients placed by DHS. Depending on the nature of
the conditions, some of those buildings will be
subject to enforcement actions in order to improve

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4 the conditions, and again, such a building; I'd be
5 happy to work with you, might be a perfect building
6 to, as part of that process, be able to convert the
7 temporary housing arrangements for the families into
8 permanent housing and have us pay the rent subsidies,
9 which would be part of a plan to help upgrade
10 conditions in the building.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright.
12 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
14 Council Member Salamanca. Council Member Miller.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Good afternoon.
16 Mr. Chair, thank you and good afternoon, Commissioner
17 and thank you for the work that you have done in your
18 unenviable task in supplying services to so many
19 needy.

20 I'm gonna throw a softball at you to
21 start out there and I'm gonna ask you about the
22 mental health services that are provided in homeless
23 shelters; will you speak to that?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. I mean as
25 part of the review process we actually enhanced
funding for mental health services in the actual
shelters; I think a related aspect that I wanna

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4 handle and I don't know if this consistent a your
5 softball; part of the reason why we want to ensure
6 that we're able to implement the supportive housing
7 plan is because we do find that there's a significant
8 number of people in the shelter system who have
9 mental health needs and we've got that proven track
10 methodology of providing someone with an apartment
11 and mental health services where the data shows that
12 85 percent of the people remain housed. So it's a
13 continuum of looking at mental health services, what
14 more can we do in the shelter system and how can we
15 quickly stabilize people and get them back into
16 housing while continuing the mental health services...
17 [interpose]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: But currently
19 there is no -- are you providing mental health
20 services?

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes we are.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: In the shelter
24 system as well as in... [crosstalk]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: In the shel... No,
I mean specifically in the shelters?

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes we are. We have
5 27 specific mental health shelters...

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Uh-huh.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: for single adults
8 and there are mental health services provided there...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: But they're not
10 provided in every shelter... [interpose]

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: In other shelters
12 there are services that are available, but over the
13 past period of time, over a number of years, there
14 was a determination made to designate certain
15 shelters as mental health shelters; part of our
16 review will -- we're certainly looking at that issue...
17 [crosstalk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: that you're asking
20 me about in terms of the breadth of... [crosstalk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Right.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: the mental health
23 services in the system beyond those [inaudible]
24 shelters... [crosstalk]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So I... I'm sorry;
you know there's... this is time-sensitive; I do wanna
ask you about programming and services for clients in

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4 the shelters; it seems to that many seem to wander
5 aimlessly through our communities, which is a
6 question, but along with that I want to... but I have
7 not seen that qualitative and quantitative analysis
8 of the impact on the clients; most importantly,
9 communities and around providing the services. One
10 of the things that -- and I know this is a supply and
11 demand thing and we've talked about finding landlords
12 or whatever; there are -- I talked to some of my
13 colleagues and they're concerned about some of the
14 subsidies not being enough and I look and in my
15 community I see some of this in communities, some of
16 the subsidies are actually [bell] driving up some of
17 the market rate housing because they're paying way
18 too much for some of the small studio apartments that
19 aren't really worthy of that scale of market rate and
20 so how do you kind of manage that, because what we
21 are looking at, if we assess it, are we now creating
22 that next generation of homeless population by
23 creating housing that is not affordable by paying too
24 much here?

25 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. I mean the
rate that we are paying for these rental assistance
programs are set by -- we're paying the HUD rate,

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we're paying the rate that the Department of Housing
and Urban Development determined is the rate that's
necessary to pay, but we're also able to pay up to
that rate, which is if we can identify apartments
where the rate is less, we would certainly pay that
and if there are particular groups of landlords who
would rent for less, I'm happy to do that, but the
rent levels that we set are based upon what HUD has
said the rents should be in this particular
jurisdiction.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay, I kinda
disagree that they are marketing some places and that
they are driving the market. If you allow me just
the final, and that is; what are the considerations,
and I think we've had this conversation about and
turned into agreements in which shelters and what
communities they go into and I understand that is,
again, a supply and demand, but what considerations
are taken when entering into these contracts?

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. I think the
first consideration that we're currently involved in
is can we -- which facilities can we close; we've
been very focused on taking down the clusters and as
the Mayor announced and I announced, we're also

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4 focusing on the commercial hotels, so we've been very
5 focused on managing shelter move-outs; now as...
6 [crosstalk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I think I was
8 speak... I'm sorry; I was speaking specifically about
9 -- I know it was mentioned earlier about communities
10 being disproportionately impacted by that; what
11 considerations are we taking there, in terms of
12 impact on communities as well as clients?

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think there's the
14 use of the RFP process that we have been focused on
15 gives communities greater notice now than the prior
16 use of the emergency declaration, which gave very
17 limited notice, so new facilities that we're bringing
18 online are going through the RFP process. But again,
19 I want a level set because we are under a court
20 mandate to provide shelter and if we should find
21 ourselves in a situation in which we can't find any
22 other place, we will have to use places that we can
23 identify that meet the standards. But again, I wanna
24 emphasize our focus right now is on how can we phase
25 out the use of certain facilities whenever we can.

26 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you. Thank
27 you, Chair; appreciate it. [sic]

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4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council
5 Member Miller. Council Member Cabrera.

6 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
7 Commissioner, it's good so speak to you again and
8 thank you; it's been a long day I know for you.

9 I wanna focus on children -- it's kind of
10 a follow-up and a more specific question that Council
11 Member Miller was addressing and that is regarding
12 our children -- I used to be a school counselor in my
13 other life and was a college professor, training
14 school counselors and a lot of these kids, especially
15 in my district, most of my schools have between 20-39
16 percent of the students are living in shelters; do we
17 have social workers that are specifically trained in
18 working with children and what I mean by social
19 worker, I mean licensed social workers?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean there are a
21 couple of ways in which the kinds of services that I
22 think you and Council Member Miller are interested
23 in, which is, you know the importance of providing
24 mental health services are also reflected and the
25 importance of ensuring you've got educational
services and other supportive services for children
in place, so the services that are in place for

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children track the State 18 NYCRR Part 900 regulations
which specify what services are to be provided and in
order to have a shelter operate, there's a
requirement that there be an operating plan approved
by the state and that approves the staffing plan. In
terms of social worker licensing, that's certainly
something we could look at, but we do have the
staffing patterns laid out through what's required
under state regulation. In terms of educational
services, we're very grateful for the support from
the Department of Education that does provide
liaisons in terms of school enrollment and
transportation and so forth, so there's multiagency
cooperation there. But look, I take your question to
be; can we keep looking at things; I take, similar to
I took Council Member Miller's question about both
mental health services and you know, placing the
location of shelters I take in the spirit in which
they are conveyed, which is, we maybe working hard,
we may be trying to address a lot of problems, but
keep looking for ways to improve services, and I
think that's a good thing for you to ask us to keep
looking at.

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4 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Because the situation
5 in the public school is, at the high school level
6 school counselors are mandated; elementary school
7 level they're not, and so we have a tremendous
8 shortage of these kind of services, with exception,
9 of course, those in special education that are not
10 receiving this kinda help and you know a lot of these
11 kids, as you know better than I do, have gone through
12 a lot of trauma, a lot of loss, they've gone through
13 a lot of grieving; [bell] for some of them,
14 **[inaudible]** stable environment; I think it might be
15 something to look at, maybe starting with 100 social
16 workers **[inaudible]** that. What would it cost us to
17 have 100 licensed social workers to be spread out
18 throughout the shelter system?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean look, one of
20 the positive service enhancements that DHS had been
21 working on, you know, before the 90-day review was
22 the deployment of social workers and identifying
23 social workers that could help enhance services for
24 clients; I think we're certainly gonna be analyzing
25 the positive impacts from that to see what impact we
should have; it's not at the level of 100, but it's

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4 also at a level that I think will have a positive
5 impact.

6 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Thank you so much.
7 Mr. Chair.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council
9 Member Cabrera. Commissioner, I just have a few
10 final questions here I wanna cover and then we may
11 have some follow-up questions that we may...

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ask you in writing.

14 Around -- let's see, let's start -- In terms of
15 interagency responsibility, so HRA has taken over
16 some of the issues around contracting of DHS
17 contracts, as you mentioned before to one of my
18 colleague's questions; is there a budgetary impact to
19 that and if so, have you been able to quantify that
20 and is that going to be part of the 90-day review
21 maybe?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We took over the
23 contracting process during the 90-day review and
24 actually right before it and we're certainly looking
25 to make recommendations as to what's the best course
of action going forward and we'll look at staffing
and cost as part of that, but it's continuing now and

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4 it's one of the things we're looking at in terms of
5 what the future state should be.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Has there been a
7 budgetary impact in DHS and HRA in FY16 thus far
8 since it's been in practice?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: In 16 we've simply
10 been repurposing existing positions to create a more
11 unified command structure between HRA and DHS
12 positions and where there's been some vacancies, used
13 those to enhance the effort.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So there hasn't been
15 a repurposing of staff from one agency...

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: to another; a
18 repositioning...

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, it's similar to
20 the effort that we used for the veterans move-out,
21 which is we created a unified command structure of
22 staff among multiple agencies -- HRA, DHS, MoVA, HPD,
23 NYCHA -- and through that unified command structure,
24 which HRA coordinated, we were able to get good
25 results there and we're taking the same approach to
the contracting process as well.

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4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So then somebody who
5 used to report only to the DHS Commissioner is now
6 reporting to a unified command structure?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: During this period
8 of time; on the other hand, you know people are
9 certainly doing the work they had been doing prior to
10 the 90-day review, they're just working under a
11 different structure in which, you know the HRA
12 Commissioner is also overseeing the DHS operations
13 and therefore the agency chief contracting officer at
14 HRA is overseeing the contracting operations.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Commissioner, in
16 November DHS came to the Council in the budget
17 modification with additional need for \$88 million in
18 FY16, the Preliminary Budget in the January plan has
19 an additional \$32.4 million for FY16 as well; is
20 there -- obviously that seems like a lot; we've seen
21 this in past years where the DHS budget increases
22 throughout the course of the year, but is there a
23 reason why \$88 million wasn't sufficient and when did
24 DHS determine that \$88 million wasn't sufficient for
25 the remainder of FY16 and there was another \$32
million in needs for shelter costs?

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think your
5 historical reference is important to just consider as
6 background. So January 1, 1994 there were
7 approximately 23,000 people in the shelter system;
8 January 1, 2002 there were approximately 37,000,
9 almost 38,000 people in the shelter system, and in
10 January 1, 2014 there were about 51,000 people in the
11 shelter system, so certainly there's been an approach
12 over time of coming during the course of the year and
13 re-estimating what the shelter census would be. The
14 additional funding that was requested in the
15 modification in the January plan is simply to reflect
16 operations through June 30. As part of the review
17 and then in the development of the Executive Budget,
18 we will be coming back to you with our projections
19 based upon you know how we've evaluated the existing
20 programs and any new programs that may be needed and
21 there will certainly be an opportunity to talk about
22 that estimate at the Executive Budget.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: With regard to the
24 overall shelter budget, obviously there's been a lot
25 of back and forth between the state and the city over
the last several months and I just want to get a
clear picture, both for this committee and for the

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4 general public about the city and state share for
5 shelter operations and how much basically the city
6 pays for and how much the state pays for, both for
7 singles and families.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So let me try to
9 give it to you in gross terms and see if that's
10 helpful to address your question; I appreciate it.
11 So in looking at adult shelters, the state share is
12 22 percent...

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Twenty-two percent
14 state share.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah. One of the
16 issues though to remember as to the state share is
17 it's capped at \$69 million, so if we bring in more
18 people from the streets, for example, and therefore
19 there are more people in shelter and so costs go up,
20 the state contribution is capped.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And that's because of
22 a state statute?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: State law, yes, in
24 terms of allocating shelter funding. Family shelter,
25 the state share is 9 percent of family shelter; the
federal share is 54 percent and the city share is 37

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percent; this is for shelter for families with
children.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: State 9... sorry,
federal...

COMMISSIONER BANKS: 54...

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 54...

COMMISSIONER BANKS: city 37.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

COMMISSIONER BANKS: For adult families,
the state share is 15 percent...

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uhm-hm.

COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'm sorry, the state
share is 19 percent and the city share is 81 percent.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

COMMISSIONER BANKS: Overall, if we step
back and aggregate all of the different populations
being served, the state share is 15 percent, the
federal share is 28 percent; the city share is 56
percent.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, for overall
shelter costs?

COMMISSIONER BANKS: For overall shelter
costs.

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4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That is good to know,
5 thank you. In terms of security cost, there's new
6 needs identified in the budget for \$7.6... I'm sorry,
7 \$7.... for new need for security is... My question is; is
8 that gonna be enough?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, during the
10 90-day review we added additional funding for
11 security in mental health shelters and to provide
12 additional security in commercial hotels; that's post
13 the January plan...

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uhm-hm.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: so those are based
16 upon determinations we made during the 90-day review
17 and with today's -- yesterday and today's
18 announcement that a management team from NYPD will be
19 deployed at DHS to develop an action plan, obviously
20 we are going to be asking -- we have asked the NYPD
21 is going to be evaluating what the need for that
22 action plan is and so we'll have more to say once
23 we've got the NYPD's evaluation.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And that's also gonna
25 apply to hotel units and cluster units as well;
right?

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The NYPD is gonna be
5 looking at the overall shelter system which has built
6 up with a combination of directly run -- shelter
7 facilities that are directly run by the city, shelter
8 facilities that are operated by not-for-profits and
9 some shelters that are operated by private entities
10 or commercial entities and this is what's built up
11 over 20 years. By the way, just in terms of numbers,
12 the funding for -- direct spending by DHS on peace
13 officers and FJC security guards is just the direct
14 DHS funding; went from \$48 million in FY 2013 to \$78
15 million in FY 2016. But again, as part of our
16 review, notwithstanding the substantial additional
17 investments that this administration has made and the
18 investments that we've announced during the 90-day
19 period, we want the NYPD to develop an action plan
20 based upon their assessment of what's needed.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And also for shelter
22 repairs, so that's for... I'm sorry, \$7.7 for shelter
23 repair squad; do you believe that's going to be
24 sufficient to get down to a manageable number of
25 violations or presumably, violations that -- getting
to zero violations of the types of violations that

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4 can be done through the shelter repair squad and not
5 by large-scale capital projects?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: In our baseline and
7 evaluation we found -- you know we wanted to both be
8 inspecting so we could find everything that existed
9 and not go on what had been previously posted and
10 previously found and then we've gone about
11 aggressively fixing them. We've obviously found a
12 lot of problems and fixed a lot of problems and the
13 money that we've allocated for this reflects our best
14 projection of what will cover it, but if we need more
15 to correct the situation we'll clearly seek
16 additional funds.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: With regard to drop-
18 in centers, you mentioned expanding of drop-in
19 centers, but I don't see a reflection of that in new
20 needs in the Preliminary Budget; is that going to be
21 added to the Executive Budget or is it somewhere that
22 I'm not seeing in the prelim?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah, it will be... so
24 you know there were a number of announcements that we
25 made in early January, right before everything was
released and so at the Executive Budget we'll be
including -- you know obviously the funding for the

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4 supportive housing was included, 'cause that
5 particular announcement was made soon enough, but
6 there are other things that we announced that will be
7 reflected in the Executive Budget.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So everything
9 that is not in the prelim that was announced back in
10 January will be part of the exec?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right and that's an
12 \$8.5 million commitment that will be in the Executive
13 Budget.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And Safe Haven, is
15 that expanded as well?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah, I mean there
17 is a commitment to increase by 500 that number and if
18 we need more we have the ability to seek more and
19 we'll take a look at the Executive Budget whether or
20 not we think more will be coming.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm gonna turn it
22 over to my colleague Ben Kallos for three minutes of
23 questions and then I have one last question; then
24 I'll let you go.

25 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Good to see you
again, Commissioner.

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Good to see you
5 again too.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Want to just
7 touch on some quick items. First piece is -- anytime
8 I talk to constituents about what we're dealing with
9 with homelessness, I ask them to call 311, use the
10 311 app and then hear back; there is still a problem
11 with callbacks coming back with the status of the
12 outreach far after the initial call; sometimes at
13 4:00 a.m.; this has happened to me; this has happened
14 to my staff who have similar directives and to
15 constituents, so to the extent we can make sure that
16 if you call at 10 or 11 and then the outreach happens
17 within the next hour or two that that comes back.
18 Similarly, there's actually no feedback on the app,
19 so the app doesn't actually tell you what happened,
20 other than the fact that the case is closed, so if
21 you can work with 311 so that people can get feedback
22 through the app instead of a call at 4:00 a.m.;
23 waking me up before a hearing.

24 With regard to health... [crosstalk]

25 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you for those
26 suggestions; I appreciate it.

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4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: You've got it.

5 With regard to health and safety, I think that
6 something got lost a little bit between the different
7 conversations and the press coverage. When it's
8 freezing out, when I'm cold being outside in my coat
9 and I'm worried about the people on the street and if
10 I call 311, is DHS; is HRA; are you working together
11 to actually get those people off the street for that
12 night and into shelter for that night; are there
13 beds? And then, just wrapping it up; during the
14 Mayor Bloomberg administration people would actually
15 kicked out of the shelter during the day, they
16 weren't allowed to stick around; some folks still
17 think that way and this is something we've worked
18 together a little bit about, but do we have enough
19 funding so that every single shelter, every single
20 outreach program, every single... everything offering
21 support to the homeless has the ability to provide
22 employment training, literacy and recreation so that
23 they have somewhere to be other than on the streets?
24 And last but not least, within the framework of being
25 supportive, do we have enough beds; do we have enough
funding for there to have mental health support so if
somebody is visibly or apparent and identified by

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4 workers or others in the shelter, even other people
5 staying in the shelter as needing mental or substance
6 abuse support; do we have the funding to get them
7 that support immediately; not 21 days later, but
8 actually that day or within 24 hours?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Almost everything
10 that you're asking about are things that we're
11 looking at as part of the review process, which is
12 coming to a close today; let me just say though...
13 [interpose]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And things we've
15 been talking about for...

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Absolutely. Let me
17 just say that having 27 shelters that provide mental
18 health services may well be reflective of larger
19 needs in terms of delivery of mental health services
20 and really the Mayor's plan to [bell] greatly enhance
21 mental health services is very welcome, because for
22 many years the problem has been seen as, we'll just
23 have more mental health shelters, which is becoming a
24 de facto mental health system within the shelter
25 system, so this clearly something that we are looking
at.

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4 In terms of the daytime issues, I can say
5 that one of the first things we did during the
6 review, First Deputy Commissioner Stevens issued a
7 directive to clarify for every shelter that people
8 are not to be put out during the day. In terms of if
9 you have any shelters that are still doing that,
10 please let us know and we will follow up; actually,
11 the vast, vast majority of shelters were not doing
12 that, there were some that were, and that's why we
13 issued the directive.

14 In terms of bringing people... [interpose]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: But just to be
16 clear for the media and for all the members here, if
17 we're hearing reports of people being forced out of
18 the shelters and onto the street to panhandle or what
19 have you, get back to you, let you know and you'll
20 work with the shelter to get them the funding they
21 need and the support so that folks don't have to be
22 out in the cold.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, they have the
24 funding they need and they have the directive not to
25 put people out, so if there's an issued with not
26 complying with that, we would like to know so we can
27 take immediate action.

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4 In terms of... [interpose]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And I know that
6 you've actually done that in occasions and I
7 appreciate your having done that for me, so thank
8 you.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And I appreciate
10 getting a heads up that notwithstanding the clarity
11 of our directive that there were some issues with
12 respect to compliance with it.

13 During the colder months we spent
14 tremendous resources through the DHS outreach
15 workers, with the Police Department, with EMS; with
16 the Fire Department in a unified, coordinated effort
17 every night and many people were brought in. Of
18 course, for the people who don't wanna come in, we
19 have to comply with the State Mental Hygiene Law,
20 which limits the ability to bring people in if they
21 don't wanna come in, but we have excellent trained
22 staff who are licensed under the Mental Hygiene Law
23 to make those judgments and in fact they do make
24 those judgments to bring people in and brought many
25 people in over the course of the winter. And as we
proceed with HOME-STAT, the purpose of HOME-STAT is
to, whether it's cold or not, to be able to track

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4 each individual on the street to see what services we
5 can deliver to convince them to come back in from the
6 streets.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,
9 Commissioner. Quick question about HOME-STAT; does
10 that have a budgetary impact in 17 or is that -- how
11 are you paying for the HOME-STAT...? [crosstalk]

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We use existing head
13 count to fill those positions and move forward with
14 this very important program.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So there's no
16 new need in -- or we don't expect a new need in the
17 Executive Budget related to HOME-STAT...? [crosstalk]

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Uh... you know
19 obviously the review period is closing; we need to
20 review the recommendations, but when the Mayor
21 announced the program, the staffing was incorporated
22 within positions that we had.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And then final
24 question here; so obviously, big picture, there's a
25 lot of work that both agencies have been doing to
address homelessness in New York City, significant
infrastructure that you've been building up with both

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4 agencies and it's remarkable in contrast to what was
5 there before, honestly, in that prior to this
6 administration coming in, I think that the issue of
7 homelessness had been allowed to languish for a
8 number of years and we are seeing the results of that
9 play out and there are obviously persistent and
10 difficult issues to try to address; do you see or are
11 you confident overall that the programs that have
12 been introduced over the last couple of years now are
13 going -- are you confident that we're gonna start to
14 see a real impact in terms of the shelter census in
15 terms of metrics that we have available to us to
16 start to see the impact of all of those efforts
17 accumulatively?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well I think we're
19 already seeing impact in two ways; one impact is on
20 the reduction in the numbers of evictions and of
21 course there's a lag time between when someone's
22 evicted and when they seek shelter, but the fact that
23 the numbers are down for the period of time since
24 we've implemented a whole range of programs since
25 the... [crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: By 18 percent; right?

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4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah, currently..
5 yeah, the 18 percent reduction occurs at a period of
6 time when we expanded eviction prevention legal
7 assistance, expanded the payment of rent arrears,
8 expanded Homebase; a number of different steps that
9 we good, so that's one place to look. And the other
10 place is of course what was the trajectory of the
11 increases in the shelter system that were occurring
12 on January 1, 2014 and where are we now in terms of
13 the trajectory.. [crosstalk]

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and... and what kind
16 of progress is being made. But you're absolutely
17 right; one of the reasons why the Mayor directed
18 there be a 90-day review is because of a desire to
19 ensure that we are doing everything possible to
20 prevent and alleviate homelessness in New York City
21 and we have announced substantial policy changes
22 during the 90-day period, we've begun to implement
23 them and we're gonna continue to do so post the
24 review based upon the ultimate steps that the Mayor
25 wants to take.

26 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Well thank you very
27 much Commissioner for your time; thank you to your

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4 team; we really appreciate it; we look forward to
5 seeing the results of the 90-day review; we plan to
6 hold a hearing sometime thereafter; obviously it's a
7 busy season and with budget, but we will figure out a
8 time to have you back to talk about the results of
9 the 90-day review and we look forward to seeing you
10 in May for the Executive Budget Hearing. Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you very much.

12 [pause]

13 [gavel]

14 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Good afternoon, I'm
15 Council Member Fernando Cabrera, Chair of the
16 Juvenile Justice Committee. I wanna thank Chair
17 Levin, who will be back here promptly and Chair Cumbo
18 for their collaboration with the Committee.

19 I first want to commend ACS for your
20 work, particularly for the time and effort that you
21 and your staff have put into the Council's Cure
22 Violence Initiative; I am impressed with your
23 attentiveness to the initiative; I'm also grateful
24 that ACS has enhanced mentorship programming, which
25 came out of a truly collaborative effort that I am
glad to have been part of. I am very happy to see
that funding was added for Close to Home monitoring;

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4 however, today I want to discuss the issue of
5 external monitoring; it is great that ACS is
6 dedicating resources to increase internal monitoring,
7 but National Best Practices say that external
8 monitoring is absolutely essential and we need to
9 ensure that those practices are fully implemented and
10 embraced within New York City's juvenile justice
11 system.

12 Before I conclude, I would like to thank
13 Brittan Morrissey, our Financial Analyst; Beth Golub,
14 our Legislative Analyst; William Hongach, our Policy
15 Analyst for their work they did in putting together
16 today's budget. I look forward to hearing from the
17 commissioners today, we have four commissioners
18 today, but before we do so, let me pass it to my
19 colleague, Council Member and Chair Cumbo.

20 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Thank you so much, Chair
21 Cabrera. Good morning. I'm Council Member Laurie
22 Cumbo and I'm very pleased to be here today; I'm the
23 Chair of the Women's Issues Committee. I'd like to
24 thank Chair Levin for his support and collaboration
25 with this committee.

26 I'd also like to thank my committee staff
27 -- Finance Analyst Brittany Morrissey; Counsel Aminta

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4 Kilawan and Policy Analyst Joan Povolny for their
5 work in preparing this hearing.

6 Along with Council Member Levin, I also
7 participated in the Council's first Foster Youth
8 Shadow Day in October and it was an eye-opening
9 experience. After sitting down and listening to
10 young women and men share their stories and
11 experiences in foster care, it is clear that ACS and
12 its staff plays a central role in their lives. These
13 young people are in need of services and programs
14 that will empower and uplift them. ACS is uniquely
15 positioned to provide such resources to not only
16 children in foster care and those aging out of foster
17 care, but ACS can also support the children, families
18 and providers in the Early Learn system.

19 At last year's budget hearing I raised
20 questions and concerns, along with Chair Levin and
21 many other members about the inadequate funding of
22 Early Learn teachers and staff who mold children
23 during their very formative years. Time after time
24 these questions have come up but we have yet to come
25 to any sort of resolution or resolve; many of these
26 providers are women of color; many of their students
27 are children of color.

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Today I would like to revisit this
unanswered question and all of these unanswered
questions raised last year so that we can ensure that
those who do such important work for our city's youth
are adequately funded. I do not wanna come back next
year with the same set of questions on this
particular issue because so many women, particularly
women of color, are waiting for us to solve this
dilemma.

Children under 5 who have faced high
incidences of trauma benefit from the Early Learn
Program. I appreciate that the administration has
added resources to help ACS address this issue;
however, children in the child welfare system and
juvenile justice system also face trauma and need
services to address trauma-related issues.

Nationally, the proportion of girls,
especially girls of color in the juvenile justice
system is growing; many of these girls are also
involved in the child welfare system. The U.S.
Department of Justice noted that increased arrest
rates among girls isn't a result of increased
criminal activity or growing participation in
violence; rather, evidence suggests it can be

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4 attributed to more aggressive enforcement of non-
5 serious offenses that are rooted in the experiences
6 of abuse and trauma.

7 Girls in the juvenile justice system
8 experience high rates of sexual violence and it's
9 reported that 70 percent of girls in the juvenile
10 justice system had been exposed to some form of
11 trauma, and knowing the scope of the problem on a
12 national level, I hope that today we can examine what
13 New York City is doing to address the unique needs of
14 girls in the juvenile justice and child welfare
15 system. With March being Women's History Month, we
16 need to take this opportunity to identify how we can
17 support young women in this city who have been
18 neglected for far too long.

19 I would like to acknowledge the members
20 that are here of the Women's Issues Committee --
21 Council Member Ben Kallos -- and we are going to
22 continue with the testimony and the swearing in.

23 And now we are going to have Chair Levin.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
25 Chair Cumbo.

26 Good afternoon everybody. I'm Council
27 Member Stephen Levin, Chair of the Council's General

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4 Welfare Committee and I wanna thank my colleagues,
5 Chair Cabrera; Chair Cumbo. We are excited to
6 examine the Preliminary Budget for the Administration
7 for Children's Services.

8 I would like to acknowledge the members
9 of the General Welfare Committee that are here this
10 afternoon -- Council Member Barry Grodenchik of
11 Queens, Council Member Vanessa Gibson of the Bronx
12 and we expect that there will be more members joining
13 us later.

14 We look forward today to hearing
15 testimony from the Administration for Children's
16 Services on its expense and capital budgets for
17 Fiscal 2017 and the Fiscal 2016 Preliminary Mayor's
18 Management Report.

19 ACS' proposed FY17 expense budget totals
20 \$2.97 billion, which is approximately \$20 million
21 more than the Fiscal 2016 Adopted Budget. Included
22 in this increase is funding for Close to Home
23 monitoring and ThriveNYC, Trauma Informed Care, and
24 Early Learn.

25 The Fiscal 2016 PMMR shows slightly
improved Early Learn enrollment rates for the first
four months of Fiscal 16 as compared to the first

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4 four months of Fiscal 15. I would like to learn
5 about ACS' strategy for improving enrollment and
6 dealing with the effects of the UPK expansion on the
7 Early Learn system.

8 While this hearing will examine the new
9 additions to ACS' budget, we will spend time
10 reviewing issues of considerable importance to this
11 Council, including salaries for Early Learn teachers
12 and staff, decline in preventive services use as
13 reported by the PMMR and reforms to the foster care
14 system, among other issues. I also want to revisit
15 the issue of Head Start oversight and hear updates
16 regarding the progress of corrective action by ACS
17 that's following up on a hearing that had last year.

18 This past October I had the privilege of
19 hosing the Council's first Foster Youth Shadow Day
20 with Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and Council Member
21 Mathieu Eugene, Chair of the Youth Services
22 Committee. This event allowed council members and
23 members of the General Welfare Committee and Youth
24 Services Committee to talk to 16 young people who are
25 either currently in the New York City foster care
system or have recently aged out of their experiences

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4 in foster care, and we heard from them about their
5 experiences in great detail.

6 The City should be proud that the number
7 of youth in foster care continues to decline, with
8 the PMMR indicating an average of 10,408 youth in
9 foster care during the first four months of Fiscal 16
10 and my understanding is that the number is now below
11 10,000 youth in care. However, just because the
12 number of youth in foster care continues to decrease
13 does not mean that we do not need to look for ways to
14 better serve this population, particularly young
15 people who are aging out of the system and who are on
16 their own and the City has a particular
17 responsibility to support.

18 I would also like to thank the Committee
19 staff who worked on this hearing -- Brittany
20 Morrissey, Finance Analyst; Andrea Vazquez, Counsel
21 to the Committee; Tonya Cyrus, Policy Analyst, as
22 well as our Finance Division Director, Latonia
23 McKinney and Deputy Director Regina Poreda Ryan.

24 I wanna thank you very much for
25 testifying today, members of the administration, and
before we begin, Aminta Kilawan, Counsel of the
Committee, is going to swear you in. Thank you.

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4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Will you all please
5 raise your right hand? Do you affirm to tell the
6 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in
7 your testimony before the committee and to respond
8 honestly to council member questions? Thank you.

9 DR. JACQUELINE MCKNIGHT: Good afternoon
10 Chairs Levin, Cumbo and Cabrera and members of the
11 Finance, General Welfare, Women's Issues, and
12 Juvenile Justice Committees. I am Dr. Jacqueline
13 McKnight, Executive Deputy Commissioner of New York
14 City's Administration for Children's Services. I
15 will be reading the testimony this afternoon;
16 unfortunately our Commissioner, Gladys Carrion, is
17 ill; she sends her deepest regrets; she's a very
18 strong leader and if she could be physically here,
19 she would be.

20 Our Deputy Commissioner for Finance,
21 Susan Nuccio, is also out ill and we also need to
22 note that our Deputy Commissioner, Lorelei Vargas of
23 the Early Care and Education is also out due to death
24 in the family.

25 With me today are Jill Krauss, Deputy
Commissioner of the Division of Communications and
Community Affairs; Andrew White, Deputy Commissioner

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of the Division of Policy, Planning and Measurement,

and Courtney LeBoriosis, Assistant Commissioner of

Budget, Division of Finance Services. You will hear

from other leaders as deemed appropriate, so please

bear with us. This year, ACS celebrates 20 years of

service to New York City's children and families.

Before I present testimony on budget and recent

initiatives, we are going to share a presentation

with you to illustrate the progress that the City has

made over the past 20 years. Andrew.

ANDREW WHITE: Good afternoon. Alright.

So to start off, before I get to this first slide,

Nicholas Scoppetta created ACS 20 years ago, giving a

new focus to child welfare services in New York City;

in recent years ACS has been at the forefront of

child welfare and juvenile justice reform nationwide,

moving toward keeping children safe, stable and well

in the least restrictive settings possible. Today

ACS is offering families more and more effective

services and supports than at any time in our

history.

So this slide shows -- New York has many

fewer children in foster care today than it did in

1996; the number of children in foster care has

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4 dramatically declined since our agency began
5 operations; back then there were a total of 41,669
6 children in foster care, by 2015, in December, that
7 number had shrunk to 9,957; that's a fairly
8 incredible 76 percent decrease in the number of
9 children in foster care in New York City.

10 On the right-hand side of the slide you
11 see the congregate care settings; these are group
12 homes and residential treatment centers for youth in
13 foster care. Substantial research has found that
14 children have far better outcomes in family foster
15 care than in group homes, so we continue to move away
16 from congregate care in favor of family foster care
17 settings in the foster care system; this is reflected
18 in the 81 percent decrease in the number of children
19 in congregate care settings, from 4,340 children in
20 1996 to just 832 children in 2015.

21 This next slide -- another way of looking
22 at the City's reduced reliance on foster care is by
23 counting the total number of days that all children
24 in New York spend in care in a given year. If you
25 look at the purple column, in 1996 the total number
of days that all children spent in foster care
totaled 15,718,511; by calendar year 2015 we had

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4 reduced that number by 71 percent, so all the care
5 days in the whole year of 2015 was just 4,588,472
6 days. So this means far fewer kids are in foster
7 care and over all, New York City children are
8 spending far less time there.

9 This slide is about preventive services.
10 The large decrease in the number of New York City
11 youth in foster care is due in part to our efforts to
12 intervene with families earlier and in different ways
13 in order to keep children safe and thriving at home
14 and prevent them from entering the foster care system
15 in the first place. Over the last 20 years we've
16 seen a huge increase in the pace of families who
17 receive preventive services from our nonprofit family
18 support service provider agency partners. In 1996,
19 8,902 families received these preventive services; by
20 2015 that number increased to 19,686 unique families;
21 that's a difference of 121 percent. The number of
22 children in families receiving preventive services
23 rose by 226 percent, from 13,856 in 1996 to 45,186 in
24 2015.

25 Child Protective Services -- One of the
most important ways that ACS keeps children safe is
by making sure that child protective investigators

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4 have manageable caseloads. Since 1996, our
5 incredible child protective specialists have
6 conducted 1,111,187 investigations; that's more than
7 50,000 a year. As the data has shown so far, the
8 child welfare system was enormous 20 years ago; in
9 1996 our child protective specialists carried an
10 average caseload of 18.4 families per worker; as we
11 worked to shrink the system over the years we've also
12 made tremendous strides in shrinking the number of
13 cases that our CPS workers carry. At the end of 2015
14 the average caseload for a child protective
15 specialist at ACS stood at 10.8 families per worker,
16 and that's well below the national standard.

17 Slide six, Parent Engagement -- something
18 else we are very proud of. Child safety conferences
19 are conducted whenever a child has been removed or is
20 at risk for removal from their home and/or court
21 intervention is contemplated. These child safety
22 conferences are premised on research that shows that
23 a child's safety and well-being are best achieved
24 when children services pursues an inclusive approach
25 to engagement and collaboration with parents, family
members and community members. So to make sure
children are safe, we want the buy-in of the entire

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4 family and the support of a family and community
5 network. ACS incorporated child safety conferences
6 into our practice in 2007; that year we conducted 555
7 of them; last year, 2015, we conducted 16,037 child
8 safety conferences.

9 From the right-hand slide is Family Team
10 Conference with parent advocate; this is a change
11 within just the last few years. Following the
12 successful pilot programs in the Bronx and East
13 Harlem starting in 2006, ACS began offering the
14 services of a parent advocate to parents and family
15 team conferences; they became available to half of
16 the families in our system in 2013. A parent
17 advocate is a community member who has had personal
18 experience with ACS and who has received specialized
19 training in child safety and risk, peer advocacy,
20 conference protocols, and neighborhood resources; the
21 majority of them are men and women who have been
22 through the front door of our system and experienced
23 an investigation. The Jewish Child Care Association
24 provides this service in Brooklyn and Queens and the
25 Center for Human Development and Family Services
serves the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island. In
calendar year 2004 ACS conducted 21 Family Team

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4 Conferences with parent advocates; in calendar year
5 2015 that number rose to 5,103.

6 The next slide is about juvenile justice.
7 (DJJ) Department of Juvenile Justice merged with ACS
8 in 2010; the transformation in juvenile justice in
9 recent years is stunning and it's a strong testament
10 to families and our young people and to all the great
11 youth development and family support work that's
12 happening in communities and city agencies. We've
13 seen a significant decline in the number of arrests
14 of youth under the age of 16. In 2004 there were
15 11,095 arrests; by 2015 that number decreased by 49
16 percent, to a total of 5,647. This decline is due in
17 large part to an intentional increase in new
18 community-based alternatives, including our FAP
19 services, respite care, alternatives to detention,
20 and alternatives to placement.

21 And the detention and placement census;
22 this is the last slide -- The same interventions that
23 have spurred a reduction in juvenile arrests have
24 driven a marked decline in the census of youth in
25 detention and juvenile justice placement. The
average daily detention census decreased from 333
young people in December 1996 to 150 in December

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4 2015; that's a 55 percent reduction. Similarly, the
5 number of young people in juvenile justice placement
6 at any given time; that's after adjudication,
7 declined by 77 percent, from 1,110 young people in
8 December 1986 [sic] to just 260 in December 2015.

9 DR. JACQUELINE MCKNIGHT: As you can see,
10 our landscape has shifted dramatically in the past 20
11 years. There is no magic bullet, but we have so much
12 more information about how to help families, we have
13 science that tells us what works. We know that
14 removing children from their families should be a
15 last resort when the risk to their safety cannot be
16 mitigated. We also know that so often we cannot help
17 children without helping parents.

18 One thing has not changed over time --
19 the children and families who come to us are among
20 the most challenged and most vulnerable in New York
21 City. We cannot do this work without acknowledging
22 that the vast majority of our families are lacking
23 resources -- in health, mental health, education,
24 money, housing, employment, emotional support -- our
25 families are struggling. Over 70 percent of our
families receive public assistance. One in four
families are in the Department of Homeless Services

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shelters have some sort of child welfare involvement.

The families we serve are concentrated in
neighborhoods with the highest poverty rates. For
example, 37 percent of the children in Brownsville
have had some involvement in the child welfare system
in the past five years and we also must acknowledge
that we are primarily serving families of color.

Ninety percent of the children in substantiated
reports are African American and Latino and nearly 97
percent of our children in juvenile justice, out-of-
home placement are African American and Latino.
Poverty and chronic stress disproportionately impact
children and families of color.

Our families often lack the resources to
effectively navigate the child welfare system, which
can seem very intimidating and complicated. ACS has
implemented conferencing models that partner with
families and their support figures to discuss
concerns and their strengths and form joint decision
plans around the best way to ensure safety and
permanency. For the past several years we have
included parent advocates and community
representatives, as indicated in the PowerPoint
slides, individuals again who have knowledge or

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4 experience in the child welfare system to support
5 families at the initial Child Safety Conference and
6 help allay their concerns.

7 Instead of merely focusing on what is
8 missing, the child welfare system is starting to
9 recognize the assets of our families; in particular,
10 the extended relatives and kin who are critical in
11 supporting children and parents who are in crisis.
12 In the past, reunification or termination of the
13 parents' rights and getting the children adopted were
14 seen as the only routes to permanency. But more
15 recently, kinship guardianship has emerged as an
16 important permanency option for children to maintain
17 relationships with their parents, their culture and
18 their identities.

19 Our Child Protection Division is
20 expanding a program called Family Assessment Response
21 (FAR) to serve families citywide. Traditionally a
22 knock at the door from ACS is all too often met with
23 fear, which presents significant barriers for us to
24 help and to be a source of help. Through this new
25 approach, in our lowest-risk cases where safety is
not an issue, CPS are taking a slightly different
approach, using social work skills to partner with

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families and identify needs and strengths, as well as
solutions. By using this approach, we have found
that families often times are more comfortable
disclosing issues like domestic violence and their
experience with trauma. Again, it is not a magic
bullet, but the less our families feel intruded upon,
the more help we can provide.

As you just saw, we have conducted over
one million investigations in our 20-year history.
These jobs showing up in homes to look into claims of
abuse and neglect are bigger and harder than you
might imagine, our staff deal with almost impossible
challenges every day; they are at the front lines
that show up in homes throughout the city to figure
out what has gone wrong and how we can help prevent
harm. You would not believe some of the heartbreak
our staff encounters -- balancing the harm. And,
given how ACS is publicly portrayed, you might also
not believe how hard our staff work to get struggling
families the help that they need to keep children
safe.

As you have just seen, the number of
children and families in our system have decreased
dramatically, which means that those who are in the

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system are among the most challenged, many of whom
come from families that are dealing with significant
mental health challenges. ACS is pleased to
participate in New York City's Mental Health Roadmap,
ThriveNYC.

We have seen a large gap in support for
families who have experienced trauma themselves as
children and now have very young children of their
own. ACS has several ThriveNYC initiatives
throughout our child welfare continuum geared to
supporting these families and children.

In the area of prevention we have
expanded two programs -- Child-Parent Psychotherapy
and SafeCare, both of which provide strong support
for parents of young children so that they are better
equipped to address their own challenges and nurture
their children.

In foster care we have launched an in-
home therapeutic model called Attachment and
Biobehavioral Catch-up (ABC) in Brooklyn to help
caregivers provide responsive, nurturing and
developmentally appropriate care to infants and
toddlers. A young child's trust for her caregiver
gives her a sense of safety and mitigates the effects

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4 of trauma so she can self-regulate during times of
5 stress. ACS is implementing Partnering for Success
6 at 18 of our family foster care agencies throughout
7 the city. Partnering for Success will improve access
8 to the delivery of mentally health services for
9 children in foster care and their families. Finally,
10 ACS is also partnering with the Mayor's Office to
11 Combat Domestic Violence to provide healthy
12 relationship training to all New York City teens in
13 foster care as well as staff at ACS and our provider
14 agencies, parents and foster parents in order to help
15 prevent recognize and respond to dating violence.

16 Children's Services' budget for the 2017
17 Preliminary Budget plan provides for operating
18 expenses of \$2.97 billion of which approximately \$884
19 million is to be City tax levies. Last year's
20 adopted 2016 budget was \$2.95 billion; the difference
21 of \$19.8 million is primarily due to new need
22 funding, which I will describe in greater detail, as
23 well as the Federal Title IV-E Waiver Fund added to
24 the budget. Like all agencies across the city, ACS
25 has been asked to identify efficiencies in our
budget. I'm pleased to say that we are able to

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4 achieve savings through technical adjustments that
5 will in no way impact services to families.

6 For the past two years we have testified
7 before the Council about the Mayor's unprecedented
8 investment in the child welfare, juvenile justice and
9 early education systems. In total the City has added
10 a total of \$119 million to support core initiatives
11 and collective bargaining increases, allowing ACS to
12 create 723 positions that are significantly improving
13 our ability to protect and work with vulnerable
14 children and families.

15 The most extraordinary single investment
16 to date has been last year's \$14 million commitment
17 to create the ACS Workforce Institute, a state-of-
18 the-art professional development institute which is
19 providing frontline staff the skills and support they
20 need to better serve our families. In partnership
21 with the CUNY School of Professional Studies, the
22 Workforce Institute is focusing on core competencies
23 for child welfare and juvenile justice workers, such
24 as analytic thinking, interviewing, and investigation
25 skills and critical interpersonal skills of empathy,
adaptability and advocacy. The institute is also
transforming how supervisors work in our system,

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4 preparing them to be more effective coaches and
5 support their team; we are now providing learning
6 programs for thousands of staff employed by ACS and
7 by more than 75 provider agencies in the child
8 welfare sector.

9 In Early Care and Education, the
10 administration is investing \$4.1 million to implement
11 a trauma-informed care model across our Early Learn
12 NYC system; the investment is made up of three
13 components, all of which are part of the larger
14 ThriveNYC Mental Health Roadmap. ACS will spend \$1.7
15 million to hire 24 staff, 22 of whom are social
16 workers that will support Early Learn programs across
17 the city. ACS will dedicate \$1.7 million to procure
18 an evidence-based trauma-informed model; through this
19 model ACS will provide ongoing intensive support
20 approximately 90 programs in South Bronx and
21 Brownsville area of Brooklyn that have been
22 identified as serving particularly high-risk
23 families. Finally, we are allocating \$800,000 in
24 one-time funding to train Early Care and education
25 providers in the social and emotional foundations of
learning, addressing everything from promoting a

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positive classroom environment, engaging parents and
helping children cope.

As you may know, Early Learn contracts
expire in September 2016, at which point we will take
advantage of the option to renew contracts for two
years through September 2018. We recognize how
tirelessly our providers have been working since
Early Learn began in 2012; we hope that the two-year
renewal, coupled with the transition to an expense-
based reimbursement system gives our providers some
relief so that they can continue to help the city's
youngest children learn and grow. We are continuing
to talk with City Hall, OMB and are keen to engage
external stakeholders, such as the Council, providers
and advocates to determine how the next iteration of
our child care system will look.

As the Council has heard for the past
several years, in 2012 New York City transformed our
juvenile justice placement system by launching the
first phase of Close to Home. And, after significant
construction-related delays, the second and final
phase of Close to Home, Limited Secure Placement,
launched in December 2015. Currently, 13 youth are
placed in Limited Secure facilities. In 2015, 226

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4 youth were placed in non secure facilities and
5 another 237 youth completed services and residential
6 care and have returned to their home communities and
7 are receiving aftercare services.

8 As always, the safety, security and well-
9 being of our young people and the community are
10 paramount to ACS. After a serious incident in 2015,
11 we recognized the need to reinforce the oversight of
12 our providers; this year we received additional
13 funding to help us create a stronger safety framework
14 and allow us to monitor their ability to keep the
15 children in care as well as the surrounding
16 communities safe. In Fiscal Year 2017 ACS is hiring
17 35 new staff to carry out this work within several
18 different divisions throughout the agency. ACS will
19 allocate \$4 million to bolster the monitoring of the
20 daily census of youth, frequency of site visits,
21 swift response to incidents, and ability to promptly
22 locate and return youth from unauthorized absences,
23 as well as refine an IT system that will assist with
24 the comprehensive monitoring of providers.

25 We thank the Council for recognizing ACS
as a partner in the citywide Cure Violence Initiative
by awarding us \$250,000 which will expand our ability

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4 to do this work. In November 2015, with strong
5 support from Chair Cabrera, we began to pilot this
6 initiative in collaboration with Community
7 Connections for Youth in the Bronx. The program is
8 hosted at a community center operated by Good
9 Shepherd Services and facilitates a relationship
10 between youth and peer mentors from Community
11 Connections who serve as credible messengers. Young
12 people receive a stipend for attending each mentoring
13 group as well as dinner and travel allowance.
14 Additionally, Good Shepherd's Bronx Rises Against Gun
15 Violence (BRAG) team is on hand to offer case
16 management services specifically related to violence,
17 interruption and mediation.

18 ACS is moving aggressively to improve
19 outcomes for children and families across the child
20 welfare system by improving our practice at our front
21 door. Investigation allegations of maltreatment --
22 we have significantly and safely reduced the number
23 of children coming into foster care, as the
24 PowerPoint showed. Our foster care census has
25 dropped below 10,000, reaching an all-time low of
9,957 as of December 2015. Concurrently, ACS has
increased the number of children and families served

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4 in the preventive services with cutting edge
5 research-based support programs that help stabilize
6 families and keep children safe and thriving at home.

7 In addition to the major professional
8 development opportunities that we are providing
9 through the Workforce Institute, ACS also launched
10 our Federal Title IV-E Waiver Initiative Strong
11 Families NYC, which invests more than \$200 million
12 over five years. The Strong Families NYC initiative
13 contains four innovative components -- comprehensive
14 trauma screening for all children who come into care,
15 dramatically reducing caseloads for foster care
16 agency staff and increasing their supervision;
17 promoting healthy development of infants and toddlers
18 who have experienced trauma and adversity and
19 increasing the collaboration between mental health
20 clinicians and foster care workers. So far Strong
21 Families has reduced caseloads for foster care
22 caseworkers to historically low levels, caseworkers
23 now carry caseloads of 10 children, compared to
24 previous caseloads of more than 20 children at a
25 time.

26 New York City is taking a number of steps
27 to continue improving our ability to help children

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4 achieve permanent, safe and stable homes. In 2015,
5 an ACS initiative named No Time to Wait began
6 streamlining processes to speed reunification and
7 adoptions; last year we significantly streamlined the
8 adoption subsidy process, centralized the process
9 from procuring birth certificates, streamlined the
10 kinship guardianship (KinGAP) application process and
11 conducted technical assistance sessions with every
12 foster care agency on kinship guardianship. For
13 example, in 2015 just 4 percent of adoption subsidies
14 were approved in 30 days because of a complicated
15 process that involved both ACS and the New York State
16 Office of Children and Family Services. Today we
17 handle it internally at ACS and this year so far 56
18 percent of the adoption subsidy applications have
19 been approved within 30 days of submission.

20 ACS is building on this work and we are
21 implementing several new initiatives focused on
22 accelerating unification, kinship and adoption.

23 For the first time in 20 years, ACS will
24 also celebrate the National Reunification Month; this
25 June ACS will join child welfare organizations across
the country as we recognize the important
accomplishments of parents in getting their children

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4 returned to their care safely and the professionals
5 who support them. Reunification takes hard work,
6 commitment and investment of time and resources by
7 parents, family members, social workers, attorneys,
8 the court, and the community.

9 We are also working to strengthen our
10 network of foster and adoptive homes and launch the
11 Home Away from Home: Caregiving for Well-Being
12 initiative to improve our recruitment, retention and
13 support of foster and adoptive parents, with support
14 from the Warner Fund, Redlich Horwitz Foundation,
15 Pinkerton Foundation, and Casey Family Program, we
16 completed an analysis of the current state of our
17 system and are compiling recommendations for the
18 future state will be implemented in the coming years.

19 As ACS deepens our attention on the
20 influence of trauma on our young people's
21 development, we are also shifting how we address
22 gender in our services. Girls' experiences of
23 responses to trauma can place them at significant
24 risk of numerous negative outcomes, including sexual
25 victimization, teen pregnancy and involvement in the
justice system. This is a challenge that we are
focusing on as a city; I know that Speaker Mark-

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Viverito and Chair Cumbo are also investing in the
health and well-being of New York City's girls and
young women.

One of the important initiatives we are
committed to is launching the Girls Health Screen at
ACS. This is the only validated health, mental
health and trauma screening tool in the nation
designed exclusively for girls between 11-17 years
old who enter residential programs. Girls Health
Screen will allow us to assess the needs of and
determine the best interventions for the girls who
come into our care. We are developing an
implementation plan for the Screen throughout both
our juvenile justice and our child welfare systems.

We are also excited to bring together
national and local experts at our upcoming *Girls
Matter!* forum on March 29th to discuss the importance
of gender-responsive programming in the child welfare
and juvenile justice systems. ACS and the New York
Women's Foundation will host a number of national
leaders and practitioners at an all-day convening to
share knowledge and examine some of the gender-
specific interventions for girls in New York City.

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This year, as we celebrate our 20th anniversary as a standalone agency, we are also preparing for a citywide celebration of National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. It is a time for all New Yorkers to come together to celebrate, strengthen and support families. Throughout the month, ACS will highlight ways to keep families strong, healthy and safe. Our April recognition events will include a walk across the Brooklyn Bridge to raise awareness, a Party for Prevention, a community even open to City residents in Mott Haven's St. Mary's Park, and a Weekend of Prayer that engages the faith-based community to prevent child abuse and support families. There will be more information on our website. I hope you can join us in April, and follow us on Twitter at @ACSNYC, hashtag NYCFamilyStrong.

In closing, I would especially like to thank our dedicated workforce and our provider partners for their tireless efforts to support the safety and well-being of our children and families. I would also like to thank the City Council for supporting our agency's efforts, and for the commendable work you do every day to advocate on

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4 behalf of the City's most vulnerable citizens. I
5 look forward to our continued productive
6 collaboration and welcome your questions.

7 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Thank you for your
8 testimony and I will begin and then I will turn it
9 over to my colleague, Chair Cabrera.

10 So just jumping right into the heart of
11 the matter in terms of some of the questions that
12 we've had, it wasn't discussed in the testimony, so
13 wanted to know what your strategy is in terms of ACS
14 and UPK pay parity.

15 So staff and teachers within the
16 Department of Education Universal Pre-K program are
17 paid more than their peers in the Early Learn system,
18 as you know, despite performing the same work and
19 often in the same centers. The Council has also
20 heard that is difficult not only to enroll 4-year-
21 olds but retain teachers, as they often leave to work
22 in the UPK system, so our young people are quite
23 challenged by what is happening with the pay parity.
24 The pay parity issue has been raised at numerous
25 budget hearings, particularly since I've been here,
back in the Fiscal 2015 Preliminary Budget Hearing,
Commissioner Carrion testified that ACS was examining

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options to address the issue surrounding pay parity.

ACS has had two years; what are the options for
addressing the pay parity issue? We wanna finally
come away with a budget that solves this issue; we've
been here time and time again to discuss this issue
and we've never come away with a resolution. So as
the chair of the Women's Issues Committee, this is an
issue that particularly impacts women of color,
particularly black and Latino women who are also
servicing black and Latino children predominantly, so
we wanna know, where are we with this issue and what
is the strategy for a solution?

JILL KRAUSS: Hi, Council Member, I'm
Jill Krauss, Deputy Commissioner for Communications
and Community Affairs.

I think first I wanna point out by
saying, I think the Council is aware that the Mayor
recently announced, I think in January of this year,
that all city workers and every worker who contracts
with the City by the year 2018 will make up to
\$15.00, minimum of \$15.00 an hour. So for us, that's
a first step because it covers a lot of the staff who
are working in our child care facilities.

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4 The other thing that's really important
5 to point out is that this is primarily a collective
6 bargaining conversation and we know that the Office
7 of Labor Relations, the Day Care Council, CSA,
8 DC 1707; all of the relevant unions are talking with
9 the City, the Office of Labor Relations and OMB, to
10 think through the best solution to the issue. We
11 have made a number of changes in the way that our
12 Early Care and education providers are reimbursed; my
13 colleague Courtney LeBorious will be able to talk
14 through some of those specific changes, but I think
15 that a number of these changes, in particular, the
16 fact that providers are no longer paid by enrollment
17 of the kids in care, but are instead paid in a line
18 item budget, so they can submit a budget to us
19 detailing what their expenses are and we work with
20 them to make sure we're able to cover the cost of
21 their expenses.

22 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: It sounds like you're
23 saying though that in this budget cycle this issue
24 will not be solved and that you're looking for 2018
25 for the \$15.00 movement to kick in, so that way
you're looking for that to solve your issue versus an
entire workforce that has been waiting for quite some

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time and really can't afford to wait until 2018 for
this to be resolved through the raise or the increase
of \$15.00 and many other contracts have already been
addressed and people understand where they stand and
they understand where they're going to live, where
they're gonna send their children; at this current
rate, by the time that issue is solved so many of
those workers will have been relocated or forced to
remove from their homes or -- I mean ultimately, what
we know the truth of the matter is so much of our
workforce are actually living in homeless shelters,
so to push this out into 2018, when this workforce,
particularly women of color, have been waiting for
this resolution for so long, our goal was to see this
resolved in this budget cycle, particularly because
ACS is hiring so many new people in their workforce,
almost 1,000 new people will be hired; how can we in
good faith hire so many people in a workforce who
will be making more than these particular women, I'm
confident of that, and we haven't addressed that
issue?

JILL KRAUSS: So I'm not saying that
we're gonna wait until 2018 to address it; I'm saying
that the promise by the administration that the

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4 minimum wage for these staff will be \$15.00 an hour
5 by 2018 is one of several steps the administration is
6 taking. I think -- and Courtney, if you could jump
7 in to address some of the changes that the -- the way
8 we reimburse providers is also another form of relief
9 that will make sure that the staff are paid what they
10 need to be paid.

11 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Sure. So I just
12 wanna reiterate; the administration, ACS, is very
13 committed to -- we have staff that attends these
14 meetings with the Day Care Council and with 1707 and
15 with Office of Labor Relations and the goal is to
16 come up with a solution in the near future. That...
17 [interpose]

18 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Can you define near
19 future?

20 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: It's working towards
21 that, it is a process and I think the parties that
22 are at the table have been very happy with the
23 openness of the process and so I would say that I
24 don't have a specific date, but all parties that are
25 involved, which is a transparent process, because we
do have the union in the room and the Day Care
Council representatives, as well as Labor Relations

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4 and CSA are all working towards that goal and we're
5 addressing the issues of health insurance as well as
6 wage, which you're mentioning, and training, and
7 there's a career ladder that's being developed that I
8 think will be really excited to be announced soon,
9 but they're developing career ladder opportunities
10 also for our professional teacher... [interpose]

11 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: How do you define soon;
12 do you define soon within this budget cycle; do you
13 define soon as in next year or as in the next
14 administration; how do you all define soon? Because
15 with all of the people that you said are at the
16 table, these individuals must have been at the table
17 now for over two years and it's confusing that a
18 resolution has not been come forward... [crosstalk]

19 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Yeah, this... this
20 particular process started about seven months ago
21 where the parties are sitting down together and I
22 can't say how soon it will -- but the goal is in the
23 near future, but I can't say to the time. I can
24 speak to the things that have been implemented to
25 date which I think are helpful; there were two other
items that Jill -- I apologize; I'm Courtney
LeBorious, the Assistant Commissioner for Finance,

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4 and I did wanna thank you for the opportunity to
5 speak about these very important issues. So two of
6 the items that we've put into place are -- as you
7 know, the Mayor announced the wage adjustment
8 initiative, so we've been really successful -- I
9 think 135 of our providers were eligible to receive
10 this wage adjustment, of which we've heard back from
11 133 of them and we've processed nearly all of those,
12 so those amendments have happened to their contracts,
13 the funds are available, which gives them additional
14 2.5 percent and brings the minimum wage for those
15 workers up to \$11.50... [interpose]

16 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Were any of those wage
17 adjustments, did it happen within the Early Learn
18 system?

19 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Yes. Yeah.

20 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: What percentage are we
21 talking about here?

22 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: So of those that
23 were eligible, which is 135, we've received almost 98
24 percent response rate, so the -- Are you asking the
25 percentage of the contracts that were eligible?

CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Correct.

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4 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Sure. So our total
5 contract system is 158; 151 -- so 135 out of 151 is,
6 I think about 85 percent; is that -- 90 percent. The
7 Head Start is part of a separate collective
8 bargaining unit, so all of our contracts that are
9 covered under the Head Start only, I would describe
10 them as, receive collective bargaining through a
11 separate process and it's a separate union
12 membership.

13 In addition, we've received additional
14 relief for our providers this year through line item,
15 what we're calling moving to a line item payment
16 system... [interpose]

17 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Could you speak a little
18 closer into the mic; my hearing must be a little...
19 [crosstalk]

20 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Oh sure, I can... I'm
21 a little soft; I apologize; I...

22 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay.

23 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: So we've also
24 shifted to a pay on a line item or expense basis, so
25 in the past, as you're familiar, we had a payment
that was based on enrollment; going for... actually,
retroactive to July 1 of this year, we are paying

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4 providers based on their reported expenses for
5 certain items. So to date we've trained about -- we
6 announced this in January of this year and we've
7 trained about... 300 individuals showed up for our
8 trainings and about 50 individual provider agencies
9 came to one on one technical training sessions to
10 learn how to implement this and what it does is it
11 pay for facility expenses, insurances, as well as
12 additional professional development; again,
13 retroactive to the start of this fiscal year and
14 prospective for the next two years as well, until we
15 transition into the new system that will be RFP'd.

16 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: I hope that -- and
17 speaking of RFPs, I wanna jump right into that, but I
18 do hope that your definition of soon meets my
19 definition of soon, which is really immediately...
20 [crosstalk]

21 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Yeah...

22 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: because this has been an
23 issue that has continued to challenge us and
24 continues to have an entire workforce left in a
25 question mark and really struggling to live in New
York City as we know it.

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COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Yeah, we recognize
it's a challenge and an issue and it's very important
to us.

CO-CHAIR CUMBO: So going into questions
of child care leases, this was an issue that was
quite challenging last year; as we see more
situations in the city where rents and the cost of
property are rising, particularly in gentrified
neighborhoods such as Fort Greene, Clinton Hill,
Prospect Heights, parts of Bedford-Stuyvesant and all
throughout the city, and child care providers are
having trouble securing space to serve children of
low-income families, what is ACS' general strategy or
goal for dealing with this problem now and in the
future? Would ACS like to increase its capital
budget so it could perhaps purchase more facilities
in the neighborhoods where this is an issue; has ACS
examined the extent to which property is available to
purchase; what is the strategy to continue to have
child care in communities where rent is escalating,
such as in a neighborhood such as Fort Greene,
Clinton Hill where you have extreme levels of poverty
and young people who certainly need child care
services, but at the same time there's also

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4 extraordinary wealth that is putting a great demand
5 on the real estate; thereby potentially pushing some
6 of these child care providers out; what is the
7 solution or the strategy that ACS has put forward?

8 JILL KRAUSS: So currently the City has
9 77 city-leased child care sites and some of them, as
10 you know, the one in your district, I believe is co-
11 located with a DFTA site, so a couple of them are co-
12 locations, but of the 77, there are approximately 40
13 that we're working to renew the leases on currently,
14 and it's a fairly extensive citywide collaboration,
15 so we work with the Department of Design and
16 Construction on the scope for renewing the leases, we
17 work with DCAS on negotiating with the landlords and
18 certainly we work with OMB on the cost that the City
19 is able to pay for the leases. We're working very
20 closely with all of these city agencies to make sure
21 that the city leases that exist right now continue to
22 exist and we can continue to provide care from those
23 facilities.

24 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: What is the strategy as
25 lease negotiations continue, and oftentimes there are
not long-term leases in place, so that has been one
of the challenges that has been brought to my

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4 attention, that because ACS or the administration
5 rather, often does not want to engage in long-term
6 leases that upon renewal of these leases the rent
7 prices have skyrocketed in the interim...

8 JILL KRAUSS: Yeah.

9 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: is the City's intention
10 to continue to just go with the real estate market in
11 the way that it's rising rapidly; is the goal to just
12 continue to keep at pace with the market or is it to
13 discontinue those services?

14 JILL KRAUSS: The intent is not to
15 discontinue the services. Right now, all of the
16 leases that we're renegotiating we're looking to
17 enter into at least 10-year leases, so the prior
18 information that you might have had about shorter
19 term leases is not the plan going forward.

20 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: So moving forward we're
21 going to enter into long-term leases?

22 JILL KRAUSS: We are right now
23 negotiating long-term leases, yes.

24 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: That's fantastic. Let
25 me go a little bit into the RFP process. As ACS
begins to think about the Early Learn RFP, is the
agency considering implementing clearer, more

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4 transparent evaluation criteria and will ACS make it
5 clear who is on the RFP panel? So as you know, with
6 the RFP we had significant challenges last year in
7 terms of issues around experience; we had no clarity
8 in terms of if a year to five years of experience
9 were weighted the same way as a provider who had 50
10 years of experience or 40 years of experience and who
11 had been doing the work; we didn't have any
12 understanding of cultural competency or experience
13 with a community was also evaluated significantly
14 where we saw many organizations doing quality work
15 losing out in the RFP process; the RFP process also
16 comes around significantly very quickly and this is
17 also a hardship on many organizations who have to pay
18 significant amounts of money to do so. Also, we did
19 not know were on the panels or the selection
20 committees that were making these very serious
21 decisions, we had no idea if there was diversity; how
22 many people were on the panels. I also would like to
23 see safeguards to safeguard from what happened
24 previously where contracts are taken from one
25 organization, awarded to another organization and
then agency members leave their job to then go work
for the contract that was awarded to the new group;

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4 like, are all of these things being taken into
5 consideration, because we certainly don't wanna be
6 where we were two years ago and I will say, we don't
7 wanna be where we are right now, because the
8 decisions that were made previously are situations
9 that I'm still dealing with and addressing right now
10 and it seems like the same debacle will continue
11 until the end of this year, when the new RFP process
12 will be undertaken, which could produce a whole
13 'nother debacle and you're still dealing with the old
14 debacle.

15 JILL KRAUSS: So let me address a couple
16 of the things that you raised in turn. I think one
17 of the first things that I just wanna point out is
18 that the prior RFP did count experience in the
19 community and there were several providers who did
20 have experience in the community who applied for each
21 group of possible -- especially where there were
22 city-leased locations, like... [interpose]

23 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: And I get that, but
24 there's a difference between five years of experience
25 and 50 years of experience and I don't feel that that
was weighted from what I saw in that process
significantly. A group could've been there doing the

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4 work for four or five years and a group could've been
5 there for 50 years and I didn't see, in terms of
6 groups losing out by one or two points, but having 50
7 years of experience doing the service, I didn't feel
8 that your RFP adequately gave them an opportunity.
9 So those are the types of nuances that I would like
10 to see addressed in the upcoming RFP. Organizations
11 that have been in the business, doing this work for
12 thirty, forty; 50 years should be weighted more
13 heavily than a group that has five years of
14 experience and that shouldn't just be a one or two
15 percentage point difference; that should be a huge
16 difference in terms of how contracts are awarded.

17 JILL KRAUSS: Understood. And one of the
18 other things that you raised is that the RFP process
19 happens relatively quickly and sometimes providers
20 don't have enough opportunity or advance notice to
21 get their RFP submissions together; that's one of the
22 many reasons that we decided to extend the Early
23 Learn contract in 2016 so that it will be a two-year
24 renewal and the vast majority of Early Learn
25 contracts will be in place through 2018 so we can use
the next year, year-and-a-half to work with the
Council, with the stakeholders, with the advocates,

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4 with the programs; the providers, to figure out the
5 best way that we can put together an RFP that
6 accurately reflects both what the City is looking for
7 in terms of quality of care, but also values
8 experience exactly in the way you're talking about.

9 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: And transparency of
10 committees, in terms... [crosstalk]

11 JILL KRAUSS: So...

12 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: of how the selection --
13 and I would like to utilize, just to put forward, an
14 example of how the Department of Cultural Affairs
15 does their panel review process as an example, where
16 they have individuals that are from the borough,
17 providers that have worked in the industry for a
18 number of years, internal staff are also a part of
19 it, but just the idea, it's unsettling that ACS picks
20 three or four individuals from anywhere in an agency
21 of thousands of people and say, these are the three
22 or four people that will pick who gets what is very
23 troubling.

24 JILL KRAUSS: I just wanna clarify for
25 the record that the reviewers of the prior RFP were
both ACS and DOHMH staff that did have experience in
child care; I will share that the future RFP, when

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there is one, will be almost equally internal ACS and
city staff and external staff.

CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay, that sounds good,
because I don't wanna just take your word for it; we
wanna know names, titles, were there all women on the
panel, all men on the panel, all black people on the
panel, all white people on the panel, all...

[crosstalk]

JILL KRAUSS: We will look...

CO-CHAIR CUMBO: we wanna know what's
happening.

JILL KRAUSS: Yeah. I understand the
question and I understand the concern; I don't have
at the tip of my fingers what the policy procurement
borderline [sic] rules are on what kind of
information we can share, but I do understand the
question and we'll get back to you.

CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay. Wanna switch
gears and then I'm gonna turn it over to my
colleagues, because I know that everyone has
additional questions and then I'll come back to some
of mine. Wanna talk about -- the programs that
you're describing are really incredible with the
child protective services and those sorts of visits

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4 and the case visits, but wanna talk about it from a
5 union perspective. So if we're talking about Local
6 371, right, the union has quickly responded to the
7 case of child protective specialist from the Staten
8 Island field office who was attacked at her mother's
9 residence the evening of March 4th by a former
10 client; she sustained bruises on her face, sought
11 medical treatment and the assailant still has not
12 been caught at this time, so many of the workers that
13 are part of this union have received multiple
14 attacks, tires slashed, attacks when visiting the
15 home, all of these sorts of things; what has been
16 your strategy, because it's very important that we do
17 these sorts of visits and that we're in the homes and
18 that we're meeting families right where they are, but
19 for the workers who are performing this service, have
20 we also thought about a strategy in play in this
21 budget cycle how we are going to do what we need to
22 do to ensure the safety of the workers who are doing
23 this important and critical work.

24 JILL KRAUSS: So Dr. McKnight will talk
25 about some of the work that we're doing, but I did
wanna remind the Council that I believe in 2012 there
was state legislation that passed making it a felony

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4 to attack a social service child welfare worker in
5 who's acting in the course of their work, so it's
6 something the administration takes very, very
7 seriously; we lobbied for that legislation for quite
8 some time and feel like it's a very important message
9 to send to people. Obviously our staff are going
10 into very, very difficult situations, they're, as
11 Jacqueline testified, there's heightened emotion
12 around the work that we're doing and they are -- you
13 know, these are people who are sort of working at the
14 intersection of law enforcement and of social work
15 without a lot of the sort of -- you know, our staff
16 don't carry weapons; we're really there to make sure
17 that the families are safe and it's very important,
18 especially when staff are in danger, that we have as
19 much information about the situation that they're
20 going into before we send staff out.

21 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Have you put measures in
22 place in terms of assistance when you're going into
23 homes that there's more than one case worker, that
24 there is additional support staff; are there all of
25 these different mechanisms put in place? I'm not an
expert in this field, but there are certainly active
measures that could be put in place to make sure that

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4 workers are safe because that is of paramount
5 importance to us in the Council.

6 DR. JACQUELINE MCKNIGHT: Yes and we
7 actually take the safety of each one of our staff
8 members very seriously as well and we're trying to do
9 everything possible to address their well-being
10 equally. Just to note that the assailant in this
11 particular issue has been arrested... [crosstalk]

12 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Oh that's fantastic.

13 DR. JACQUELINE MCKNIGHT: and we actually
14 have collaborated with the local and we are
15 discussing a co-assist worker safety seminar to
16 address this issue further.

17 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay, thank you. And
18 I'll close out with one question around the ACS
19 Workforce Institute. I think it's a phenomenal
20 concept and idea; when I saw it and read it, my
21 initial thought was that this was an ACS Workforce
22 Institute that was going to be potentially for young
23 people in the foster care agency that are aging out,
24 so that was my first inclination, just on reading the
25 title; I see that that's not exactly what this is or
what the intention of this was, but wanting to know,
is there any way or thoughts in terms of how the ACS

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4 Workforce Institute could be a benefit to young
5 people that are aging out. When we had the young
6 people that came to visit us from the foster care
7 aging out system, they spoke a lot about their work
8 experience and a lot of them seem to be working in
9 these fields and categories in terms of social
10 service work and that sort of thing and child
11 protective services and care providers; they had
12 extraordinary careers actually in helping people, so
13 wanted to know; had there been any thought about how
14 this ACS Workforce Institute and CUNY could work with
15 our foster care young people who are aging out?

16 ANDREW WHITE: Yeah, so you're touching
17 on two very critical issues that we are working with
18 and making progress on; one is our workforce itself,
19 not just ACS' workforce, but our provider workforce
20 and we have built this institute over the last year;
21 it's now out and working, training, providing
22 learning opportunities to several thousand employees
23 of our providers and our own frontline staff; it's
24 all about building the professional capacities of the
25 frontline staff in the child welfare and juvenile
justice systems. At the same time there's a direct
intersection with what you're talking about, which is

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4 the young people in foster care or who have been in
5 foster care, and Julie is best placed to speak about
6 that, Julie.

7 JULIE FARBER: Sure. I'm Julie Farber,
8 Deputy Commissioner for Family Permanency Services,
9 so that's the foster care part of ACS. And so
10 improving outcomes for youth aging out of foster care
11 is a critical priority; I mean the fact is, the
12 children in the foster care system either get
13 reunified with their families or get adopted, but
14 there is a small number who age out and we're very
15 concerned about outcomes for those young people and
16 so we've put in place a number of services that I
17 could talk about, but specifically focused on the
18 issue of employment and workforce development. We
19 actually just created a new ACS Office of Employment
20 and Workforce Development to specifically target
21 attention to this really important issue and that
22 office is going a couple of things; one, we are
23 working with our colleague and sister agencies around
24 developing programming that specifically meets the
25 needs of young people who have been in both the
foster care or the juvenile justice systems. So for
example, HRA has actually opened a special center

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where our young people can go as opposed to having to
go into the large door, the regular door that
everyone goes through; our young people now can go to
this specialized center. We've also just
collaborated with DYCD, and we're very excited about
this, to issue an RFP for a new Young Adult
Internship program so they already have the YAIP
program and this is now YAIP Plus, and it is
specifically again targeted for our young people,
because our young people have additional challenges
of trauma and the histories that they have
experienced and so this program sort of adds an
additional element to make this YAIP program trauma-
sensitive and supportive so that kids in foster care
and juvenile justice who've had that experience can
succeed, and so that is a program that places young
people in supported internships and then does job
placements. And it's great to hear that you and
Council Member Levin have done shadow days; those
kinds of shadow days are really impactful for young
people and so these are the kinds of things that this
office is working on and it's really a priority for
us and we're gonna be building on that with this new
office in the next couple of years.

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4 ANDREW WHITE: And there's, you know, one
5 really interesting connection between these two
6 projects, which is the Civil Service Pathways for
7 Youth... [crosstalk]

8 JULIE FARBER: Uh yes.

9 ANDREW WHITE: project that we've start
10 about a year ago, little more than a year ago; it's
11 designed for all young people aged 18-21 in foster
12 care to understand the civil service system and
13 apply, get on lists, ideally; take the tests, and
14 then move into our workforce.

15 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: I'm glad to hear that
16 and look forward to... [interpose]

17 JULIE FARBER: It's really important.

18 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: seeing this particular
19 program in play and in implementation. So thank you
20 very much. I'm gonna turn it over to Chair Levin...
21 Chair Cabrera.

22 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Thank you so much to
23 both of my chairs, and also we wanna recognize that
24 we've been joined by Council Member Barron, from the
25 Bronx... from Brooklyn; I was about to adopt you into
the Bronx, [laughter, background comment] to the
promised land.

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4 I first wanna thank Commissioner Carrion
5 and Commissioner Felipe Franco for the wonderful
6 experience I have had in working together in
7 collaboration and through this committee to make sure
8 that our young people in our juvenile justice system
9 are getting the services that they deserve. I wanna
10 also take a moment to thank both of them for their
11 wonderful event, the first of its kind that we had at
12 Horizon and Crossroads in honoring all the staff
13 there; it was greater than what I expected, it was
14 better than what I expected and obviously they
15 deserve all of the accolades that they received that
16 day. And also I wanna congratulate you for acquiring
17 \$3 million, I believe from the federal government
18 towards the mentoring program that we've been talking
19 about and so happy to hear about that.

20 I have a few questions here that's
21 related to Close to Home we're looking for; Fiscal
22 2017 Preliminary Budget added \$4 million to Fiscal
23 2016 and \$3.6 million in Fiscal 2017 to provide 35
24 full-time positions to better monitor the daily
25 census of youth and make more frequent visits and
improve ACS' ability to respond to incidents. So
here's my question; can you describe to us the

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4 protocol and policy changes that would be
5 implemented, the ability to respond to incidents and
6 how the providers will be evaluated?

7 FELIPE FRANCO: Hi, Felipe Franco, Deputy
8 Commissioner, Division of Youth and Family Justice.

9 Addressing your question, we are
10 immediately moving into a different way of actually
11 capturing census within our foster care providers
12 that provide Close to Home services; to actually do
13 it at every shift, so we actually now are gathering
14 concrete information about the number of youth three
15 times a day, at every change of shift; we actually
16 have a 24/7 operation which is a call center where
17 actually we initiate the calls [inaudible] sense of
18 how many kids are at every one of the sites at any
19 one moment; that's our immediate action. We actually
20 really focused on the beginning of this
21 administration to reduce the number of AWOLs; there's
22 actually no more than a handful of AWOLs at any one
23 moment now in Close to Home; we actually tend to be
24 below 10 percent and actually, a lot of this has been
25 by proactively improving practices in the provider
community, increasing engagement in activities and
within the staff at each one of the providers were

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4 actually by the development of a special unit of
5 former police officers, which are **[inaudible]**
6 consultants who are available immediately to try to
7 return these young people when they go AWOL and is
8 needed to do so. But we actually really focused on
9 improving outcome, so but we've really been spending
10 a lot of time and will be spending more time this
11 year just on the development of standards or
12 practice. So what the City is doing, which actually
13 is at the national forefront, is actually bringing in
14 to New York City the development of performance-based
15 standards which are a set of standards that look at
16 the quality and the practices at each one of these
17 institutions, so that will be our main focus through
18 2016 and we will be able to compare providers among
19 **[inaudible]** in New York City, but actually, through
20 the nation overall.

21 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Fantastic. Can you
22 get closer to the mic; I don't know what it is with
23 the **[inaudible]** here; it's hard... actually, if you
24 could get the mic closer to you, it just...

25 FELIPE FRANCO: Here?

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4 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: for some reason it's
5 hard to hear from where we're sitting; either that or
6 I'm becoming more challenged in terms... [background
7 comments] both of us are becoming...

8 Along the same lines; did ACS, dealing
9 with Close to Home monitoring; did ACS consider
10 utilizing an external monitor?

11 FELIPE FRANCO: Yes, we're actually using
12 performance-based standards, actually a set of... it's
13 a private company that actually was developed by the
14 Department of Justice about 16 years ago to actually
15 look at conditions of confinement and the quality of
16 practices across the nation.

17 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Let me switch here to
18 the Cure Violence, the Council initiative that was
19 very close to me and Councilman Jumaane Williams that
20 we're so glad that we were able to push through a few
21 years ago and we're already starting to see a
22 tremendous impact in our community, and I could talk
23 about that all day long, the impact it's having in my
24 community with Good Shepherds and the other programs.
25 The Council allocated \$250,000 to ACS to bring
violen

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4 you provide us with a status update on how the five
5 organizations are doing?

6 FELIPE FRANCO: Yeah, you know those were
7 fairly good news early in the year, so we are
8 actually just beginning to launch the program. We
9 actually have five providers in place that have been
10 identified because of their expertise by the Mayor's
11 Office of Criminal Justice; we actually have had
12 three meetings with them; we actually... they are going
13 through a process of learning our practices, but more
14 important than anything, developing the relationships
15 between our provider community and our staff and
16 their staff. Our intent at the end of the day is
17 more about getting them to provide interruption
18 services within the Close to Home sites; this for
19 actually for them to provide a network of support for
20 young people when they return home. And as you may
21 know, actually some of these groups are actually
22 happening three times a week a few blocks away from
23 your office in the Bronx and I believe we began in
24 East Harlem at GOSO (Getting Out and Staying Out)
25 last week.

26 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: And commissioner, let
27 me just say this; again, I really appreciate every

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4 time an idea comes forth that I see happens in the
5 meeting, you guys grab it, you run with it, you
6 implement it and you run... I mean it's just simply
7 amazing to see that and to see it happen so quickly.

8 In terms of -- Let me switch a different
9 question here. What is the average daily population
10 in detention desegregated by juvenile offenders and
11 juvenile delinquents?

12 FELIPE FRANCO: So the average daily
13 population, as Andrew presented before, continues to
14 drop in New York City; it's about 63 of them are
15 juvenile offenders and about 24 of them, which I
16 think sounds a little lower than I expected; I would
17 say it's a littler higher than 24 juvenile
18 delinquents in the secure facilities. So again, I
19 think what we have been seeing as New York City does
20 better by keeping low-level offenders in the
21 community with the right support in the family, our
22 security facilities are really just mainly serving a
23 majority of juvenile offenders, which are young
24 people who committed serious crimes and are placed
25 with us through the family court, I mean through the
criminal court.

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4 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Can we start a
5 practice of reporting -- Can we have a reporting in
6 the MMR and the PMMR in the future?

7 FELIPE FRANCO: Sure.

8 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay.

9 FELIPE FRANCO: You mean in terms of the
10 average daily population? Yes.

11 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay. Fantastic. And
12 let me close with this one and I'll come back later,
13 'cause we wanna get moving here. But given the
14 significant increase in the state and federal funding
15 for Fiscal 2017, is ACS able to drum down additional
16 funding that could be used to provide additional
17 service to crossover youth?

18 FELIPE FRANCO: Yeah, I mean our
19 crossover youth, by nature of who they are, they
20 actually are serve [sic] our young people in the
21 foster care system, where we actually work really
22 hard with our preventive network of providers and
23 foster care providers to prevent to penetrate deeper
24 into the juvenile justice system qualify for full
25 refunding and I know the agencies are actually
particularly good and are strategic about using those
resources. I think we continue to work, you know

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4 between child welfare, foster care; preventive
5 services to change our practices to make sure that
6 **[inaudible]** the negative consequences **[inaudible]** in
7 the juvenile justice system don't happen to our
8 foster care kids.

9 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Let me squeeze in
10 another question in here. Advocates involving the
11 aftercare for juveniles, I stated that programs are
12 now being filled; what are you thoughts about this?

13 FELIPE FRANCO: I think you know, ACS has
14 an array of really good family-focused aftercare
15 programs for our young people coming back from Close
16 to Home; I think what we have learned, and actually,
17 you have been instrumental and Council Member Cumbo,
18 is that actually family support is one of the key
19 elements, but it's not enough. So I mean we are
20 moving into trying to develop further capacity,
21 targeting work in the neighborhoods where our kids
22 return to and actually doing, as Julie mentioned
23 before, not just family interventions, but actually
24 more positive youth development programming, like the
25 Young Internship Program that we are just launching
with DYCD.

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4 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: I'm just curious to
5 know also; have you been in communication with state
6 administration regarding raising the age and any
7 feedback as of lately?

8 FELIPE FRANCO: Yeah, the most recent
9 news that we heard is that there's no news.

10 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: That there's no news.
11 Okay. What do you anticipate?

12 FELIPE FRANCO: It's hard to predict that
13 in election year in Albany... [crosstalk]

14 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay.

15 FELIPE FRANCO: **[inaudible]** for eight
16 years.

17 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: I was hoping you would
18 be a prophet for a second.

19 FELIPE FRANCO: Yeah.

20 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Beautiful. Okay, so
21 let me turn it over to my colleague Chair, Steve
22 Levin.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
24 Chair Cabrera; thank you all.

25 So I may jump around a little bit; I've
been known to do that, but a lot of issues to kind of
cover and obviously, so many different programming

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4 areas within ACS. I wanna start following up on
5 Council Member Chair Cumbo's questions around salary
6 parity within the Early Learn system. So I have the
7 numbers here, and basically there's three tiers of
8 salaries that are in the system; you have your CBO
9 Early Learn salary level, you have your CBO UPK
10 teacher level and then you have your DOE UPK teacher
11 level, which is the same as teachers -- UFT teachers
12 in the DOE system, and the issue, as you know, is
13 that, you know we are all very happy with this
14 administration's focus on UPK, it was a tremendous
15 success; it has been and continues to be a tremendous
16 success, this administration deserves all the credit
17 in the world for bringing a new educational resource
18 to tens and tens of thousands of New York City
19 children and that will be that way for generations,
20 so that's a wonderful, wonderful thing, wonderful
21 thing; one of the unintended consequences is that it
22 has had an impact on the Early Learn system, which as
23 you all know, because we've been talking about this
24 for five years now or four years; that it's a
25 challenged system, it's a system that has -- nobody
would say that the Early Learn system has been like
firing on all cylinders at any point along the way;

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it's always had challenges of some kind or another
and UPK presented new challenges because 4-year-olds
are going into the DOE system that used to be in the
CBO system, so that's taking children out of -- and
that's enrollment, out of the CBO Early Learn system.
So just wanna first off just present the numbers for
the pay. So a teacher with two years, bachelor's
certified, starting salary \$37,274 in a -- I'm sorry;
just certified; not two years, so just certified BA,
starting salary \$36,542; that's compared -- so
\$36,542 compared to the CBO UPK salary, so that's
somebody that's teaching a UPK class from in the same
building, of \$44,000; that's then compared to the UFT
UPK in a Department of Education school of \$46,445.
So you've got a difference of around \$7,500 for the
UPK teacher and then basically about \$10,000 starting
salary for UPK teacher in the DOE system; that's
creating all types of pressures on CBOs, 'cause
they're losing teachers, teachers... obviously... you
know, the indication to teachers that are certified
with a BA is, the City is gung-ho on UPK; come do
UPK; be a UPK teacher, but don't go over to Early
Learn because you're not gonna get paid as much,
you've gotta work longer hours, you've gotta work

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4 over the summer; all of those things make it a much
5 less appealing job and the fact that we're expanding
6 UPK... you know, continuously expanding UPK. So that I
7 think is presenting a significant threat, you know,
8 not anybody's fault, but it's presenting a
9 significant threat to the health of the Early Learn
10 system; now if we're gonna continue -- if we're not
11 gonna issue a new RFP and we're gonna continue under
12 the current contract for another two years, I'm
13 afraid of what's gonna happen if nothing's done to
14 address this pay parity issues. Obviously it's gonna
15 cost money and there's a contract issue, I realize
16 there's a contract issue that has to get resolved
17 with 1707, the Day Care Council and CSA, but whatever
18 happens is gonna have to cost the City money to
19 bridge that gap, so I'm sorry I went off for a little
20 long there, but you guys recognize that; right?

21 JILL KRAUSS: We recognize it; we've --
22 thank you for laying it out so clearly -- we've
23 talked about it with Council Member Cumbo, we've
24 talked about it at prior hearings; I think the
25 response that we had for you in March of 2016 at the
Preliminary Budget is, while there is not a single
magic bullet to this answer at this moment, there are

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4 a number of things that the administration has done
5 and is doing to lessen the financial pressure on some
6 of... almost all of the Early Learn providers, starting
7 with changing the way that they're reimbursed so that
8 they are able to use funds for health insurance... to
9 get additional funds from the City to use it for
10 health insurance, to use it for facility costs; the
11 cost of rent that Council Member Cumbo was talking
12 about. So we are working as best we can outside of
13 the collective bargaining conversations that are
14 currently underway to address some of the financial
15 stresses that our providers are facing.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but that still
17 is -- you know, outside of that, we still have to
18 address that pay parity issue because that's creating
19 a whole separate pressure, because the overall
20 provider pressures that we've talked about for a
21 couple of years now, you know that might be addressed
22 by the conversation to... [interpose]

23 JILL KRAUSS: Line item.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: to reimbursement-
25 based, and so that might work there, but you're still
gonna have this issue hanging out there and it's
gonna... it's just... it's a question of attracting and

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4 retaining qualified teachers in the system. So I
5 mean is there -- it's gonna cost money; we've gotta...
6 I... you know, do we have a sense of how much it's
7 gonna cost? I asked Director Fuleihan this at the
8 OMB hearing as well. I mean do we know how much it
9 would cost to bring everybody up to parity?

10 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: So we've done the
11 math, looking at what the current salaries are for
12 the CBOs and for the DOE directly-provided UPK
13 compared to the union-negotiated salaries, looking at
14 the hours and the time; that is part of a collective
15 effort that's being talked through with the union,
16 with CSA as well; with Day Car Council, Office of
17 Labor Relations and OMB; everyone is really committed
18 to finding a solution; as you can imagine, it's
19 taking some time. So but everyone is committed..
20 [crosstalk]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

22 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: that is... we don't
23 have a number that we can share now, because it's
24 also part of other components of compensation that
25 include the health insurance and the other insurances
as well... [interpose]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. So...

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4 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: and it's complicated
5 with the union issue as well.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, I understand
7 and it's in OLR and I get that. What I've heard is
8 that 1707, CSA; Day Care Council are pretty much all
9 on the same page, so the one entity that's not on
10 that page is OMB or OLR in terms of meeting them,
11 where they're all agreeing, they know, they're all in
12 the -- it's their centers, they know, they work
13 there; they know what it would take to create a
14 sustainable system. I'm just afraid that as -- if it
15 goes on and on and on, you know again, the message to
16 a teacher that's trying to -- if I was a teacher
17 coming out of college and was certified and saw, you
18 know, what are my two options here; I could go teach
19 UPK and I could make \$44,000 a year or I could go... or
20 \$46,000 a year, or I could go to the Early Learn
21 system and get paid, you know, a third less or a
22 quarter less, you know, it's just the... the... the... you
23 can't attract teachers to do that; that's also
24 working till 6:00 p.m. every day, probably later
25 actually and working all summer. So it's just gonna
cost money.

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4 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Yeah. And you know,
5 the Commissioner for Labor Relations is involved
6 actively and there are a lot of people that are
7 dedicating their time to resolving the issue, so I
8 can assure you that people are taking it seriously;
9 we're also at the table as well and dedicate a lot of
10 time to finding a solution.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I hear you; I'm just...
12 sorry, I don't mean to belabor it, but [background
13 comments] OLR is not going be looking at this from
14 the perspective of, you know, how do we make sure the
15 system doesn't fall apart and you know, it's like --
16 they're looking at it from like a management labor
17 perspective instead of a, you know, health of the
18 system perspective. So I mean that's... and you know,
19 that's what my job is and that's what your job is
20 too.

21 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Yeah and we welcome
22 that feedback really.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. On the health
24 insurance, do we have a clear assessment of the
25 number of employees that are actually taking the
health insurance?

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4 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: So we do... that's
5 part of the information that we requested from our
6 providers, so as we were rolling out the wage effort,
7 the wage initiative, we did ask for the supplemental
8 information; we were more focused on implementing the
9 wage, so we do have some preliminary information that
10 we're not able to share yet, but we did receive some
11 information on who is participating with the
12 insurances that we hope to be able to share with you
13 soon.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, 'cause what
15 we're hearing is that, you know, not that many people
16 are take... and one other thing that just came up is,
17 you know tax season is coming up and this is the
18 first year where people are gonna start paying
19 penalties for not taking insurance, so here -- if
20 they can't afford the insurance because of the out-
21 of-pocket expenses, then they're actually gonna be
22 without insurance; they may or may not qualify for
23 Medicaid; I don't know if they qualify for Medicaid,
24 but if they don't take the insurance, then they are
25 going to be penalized under ACA for not taking
insurance, so they're gonna have to then pay an
additional cost and that's gonna go up every year.

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4 So they're gonna be really caught between a rock and
5 a hard place, so the wages are low -- you know, the
6 salary's too low, the insurance is too expensive and
7 now they're gonna get penalized; right?

8 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: And to that end, we
9 did offer some relief on the provider side through
10 the line item adjustment where we are paying for the
11 insurance experience and we are looking into the
12 participation factor, that's very important in what
13 the committee I spoke about earlier is reviewing.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I mean it's
15 just it's another issue that's gonna -- and again, if
16 we're not gonna be reissuing a brand new RFP, then
17 these things have to be addressed in the current
18 contract and you know, yeah. I mean one thing to...
19 just as a suggestion, is go back to the Central
20 Insurance like it used to be, where they were covered
21 under Central City Insurance, which I don't think
22 that that's on the table, but it really should be.

23 JILL KRAUSS: Noted.

24 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Right.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah. Okay. I mean
really, that's one way to... you know, to take some
pressure off of the individual employee.

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4 I wanted to ask about the Title IV-E
5 Waiver Fund and I find this very interesting, so can
6 you explain a little bit about how ACS has been able
7 to draw down IV-E Waiver Fund; my understanding is
8 it's \$17.7 million of new IV-E Waiver that's federal
9 funds that we're drawing now that's something that
10 hasn't happened in previous years and are there other
11 opportunities that may present themselves to be
12 covered under IV-E Waiver Fund?

13 ANDREW WHITE: So I'll start by just
14 framing that up, which is that IV-E, Title IV-E is
15 the federal guidelines by which we receive funding
16 for the child welfare system and traditionally it's
17 funded on a head count of children in foster care;
18 federal government -- the primary, the bulk of
19 federal funding for child welfare comes to support
20 foster care, which is a perverse incentive; it means
21 you're only getting paid for putting kids into foster
22 care, not for keeping them out of foster care. The
23 Title IV-E Waiver, which came into effect two years
24 ago now, gave us a flat amount based on our foster
25 care census back in about 2012 and that amount we get
every year for five years to spend not only on kids
in foster care, but on innovative initiatives and

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4 even on some preventive work. So as far as the new
5 money; why don't you talk about that and then I can
6 talk about the broader scheme of what we're doing.

7 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Yeah, so just
8 briefly, the funds, as Andrew spoke to, over the
9 course of the five years they're about \$2.5...
10 [interpose]

11 ANDREW WHITE: Billion.

12 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: billion dollars and
13 so half of that is City commitment and half of that
14 is federal/state together funds and we have a plan to
15 spend that, which changes year over year as we roll
16 out these efforts that Andrew's about to talk about.
17 So yes, this year you did see an increase in federal
18 funding for IV-E as a result of some efforts that
19 Andrew will speak to you about that have gotten
20 underway.

21 ANDREW WHITE: Yeah, so it's really... it's
22 not as though this is new money just for this year
23 and that it will continue to grow, it's just the
24 allocation of that \$2.5 billion over five years is
25 flexible. So what we're doing with this money; in
exchange for getting this waiver, we have to
implement some innovative strategies and test them

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4 and see if they actually have an impact on improving
5 permanency for the children in care, improving the
6 stability of stays in foster care so that children
7 aren't bouncing around from one foster home to
8 another and third, making sure that the families are
9 strong and able to take their children back.

10 The core of the work, the most important
11 investment over five years is in caseload reductions;
12 we have reduced the caseload for our foster care case
13 planners to no more than 12 children per case
14 planner, and that's at our provider agencies; in the
15 past they've been up above 20 children; starting in...
16 and when this administration came into office we put
17 in this investment of \$169 million over five years to
18 bring down that caseload, so all of our frontline
19 case planners in the foster care system now not only
20 get to participate in the Workforce Institute, thanks
21 to Mayor de Blasio; they also are getting much lower
22 caseloads, which means they are able to focus on the
23 needs not only of the children in care, but of the
24 families that they're working with, because it's also
25 a foster care case planner's job to work with the
children's parents or caretakers so that they can

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4 bring the children home; that's the biggest
5 investment.

6 Next is an investment in CANS, which is
7 the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths
8 Assessment, which is a tool used in various places
9 around the country; it's going to become a
10 fundamental tool of children's Medicaid redesign;
11 every child who comes into family foster care now
12 gets assessed for trauma, gets assessed for their
13 well-being in terms of their educational experience,
14 you know, it looks back into their history, it looks
15 at their current situation and it helps the case
16 planner decide what services the child needs and it
17 also informs what they do with the family.

18 The two new sort of evidence-based
19 initiatives that we're doing under this program, the
20 first is called Partnering for Success; it is the
21 framework for bridging the mental health and child
22 welfare systems; we're training thousands of case
23 planners, all the case planners in the system, to
24 understand how to work with the mental health system;
25 in particular around cognitive behavioral therapy,
but more broadly, around all kinds of mental health
care. The idea is that -- you know we've seen great

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gaps in terms of the behavioral health needs of
children going into foster care; there are gaps in
services in New York City for mental health, which
the Roadmap has been designed -- ThriveNYC has been
designed to address. So by helping case planners
understand how to more effectively work with mental
health providers they are able to support children
while they're getting mental health care, they're
able to find the right clinicians; at the same time
we're training clinicians to work with trauma-
informed CBT or trauma-focused CBT, I should say, so
200 clinicians in New York City are learning now how
to use this technique and specifically, to use it
with children in foster care.

The fourth and final initiative under
what we call Strong Families NYC; that's the waiver
program, is Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-Up;
it's ABC; it is a home-based parent coaching program
intended to nurture children -- to support parents
and foster parents in understanding how to be
responsive parents, how to be nurturing parents and
also to help them learn about early childhood brain
development. As I've said to this committee before,
what we know now from research about early childhood

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4 development is light years ahead of where we were a
5 decade ago and we truly now can definitively say that
6 a lot of the behavioral issues that emerge when kids
7 become teenagers and struggle relates back to their
8 experience in early childhood where they may not have
9 gotten the kind of responsive parenting, the kind of
10 some nurturing that helped them build up a tolerance
11 for stress; we know that chemically children develop
12 differently if they're not getting real nurturing
13 parenting, so we wanna just make sure that foster
14 parents who are working with infants and toddlers
15 know what it means to be responsive and work closely
16 with an infant; we also are working with parents
17 themselves so that they are learning these skills.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is that the monitor
19 [sic] program that's the...

20 ANDREW WHITE: No, this is different;
21 Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-Up is provided by
22 a new organization called Power of Two; right now
23 they're working in all of Brooklyn; they do
24 preventive services that we fund in part but
25 primarily we have them working with children when
they come into foster care and then when they go home
from foster care.

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4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So I wanted to ask;
5 is there an opportunity to use those funds, the Title
6 IV-E Waiver Funds to expand -- or is there a model to
7 expand preventive services to families who don't have
8 open child welfare cases?

9 ANDREW WHITE: Good question; it's sort
10 of the fundamental limits of the way IV-E works and
11 the way our system works. To get reimbursement
12 through that system, a child has to be known to ACS.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

14 ANDREW WHITE: We have other strategies
15 we're developing, which we're not ready to talk about
16 yet around primary prevention, and in fact, Early
17 Care and Education, the ECE system, is a key
18 component of primary prevention to work with
19 families, to identify families who can use support
20 long before they're known to our... [crosstalk]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Within that... Within
22 the preventive program... [interpose]

23 ANDREW WHITE: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: or within like Early
25 Learn?

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4 ANDREW WHITE: Well within ACS. I mean
5 we're trying to think of ACS in a much more holistic
6 way, so... [crosstalk]

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

8 ANDREW WHITE: Early Care and Education
9 is truly a preventive provider in many ways.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But that's not
11 available for IV-E Waiver Funds because it has...
12 [crosstalk]

13 ANDREW WHITE: No.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: children have to be...
15 to be known... [crosstalk]

16 ANDREW WHITE: it's not... just isn't
17 available to be use... [crosstalk]

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But if there's.

19 ANDREW WHITE: for families in that way.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Honestly, looking at
21 the budget... going over the budget over the last few
22 days, there's honestly quite a bit of movement within
23 the agency on budget lines and so if there's ways to
24 offset -- I mean there's a lot of -- I'm not gonna
25 necessarily get into all of it right now, but there's
a lot of movement between budget lines, various

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4 categories of funding within the agency itself and
5 so...

6 ANDREW WHITE: Yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: you know, if there is
8 a way to free up funds so that you can use City tax
9 levy funds that don't have restrictions on them...

10 ANDREW WHITE: Right.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: for an initiative
12 like that, I think I'd be excited to see something
13 like that... [interpose]

14 ANDREW WHITE: Right.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: because one of the
16 things we love to see is more preventive services
17 available to more families, with less stigma...

18 ANDREW WHITE: Yeah.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right?

20 ANDREW WHITE: Well at the same time too,
21 I mean in the preventive side of the system we are
22 doing a lot and we've talked about this with you on
23 the early childhood clinical services type of
24 services, just to layer on top of existing general
25 preventive programs to make sure that families, for
example, families with very young children, where the
parents have experienced a lot of trauma in their

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4 lives, they need a certain kind of care, but...

5 [interpose]

6 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: And we are
7 exploring, as part of the efforts that Andrew was
8 speaking about earlier that we can't yet talk about,
9 but as preliminary for exec, we are looking at
10 extending the use of IV-E for some of those
11 activities.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And then one other
13 question and it's -- I'm gonna sound a little bit
14 like a broken record on this as well, but we had
15 talked a year ago about the contract in foster care
16 for You Gotta Believe in COAC, around adoptive
17 services for older youth in care and I'm just
18 wondering, I know that that hasn't been restored, but
19 has the -- where is that budget line and has the --
20 'cause it was a \$750,000 contract and is the funding
21 still there in the FY16 or FY17 budget or has it gone
22 elsewhere; has it been budget modded [sic] out or
23 what's... and what's the status of re-RFPing [sic] that
24 contract or... Okay.

25 JILL KRAUSS: So I think Julie can talk
26 to the sort of programmatic needs and how we're

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4 meeting them and then Courtney can talk about the
5 budget.

6 JULIE FARBER: Okay. Alright, we'll do
7 the programmatic first. So we're really looking at
8 revamping the entire way that we recruit and support
9 foster parents and so I think Dr. McKnight mentioned
10 in her testimony that we have this Home Away from
11 Home initiative that is really digging deep into our
12 data and looking at the status of the current system
13 and the current way we recruit and retain foster
14 parents, and so we're doing a really deep dive into
15 this and part of what we have found is around the
16 need to recruit a significant number of more foster
17 homes and we're gonna be putting in place, we're
18 gonna be sort of moving from diagnostics to
19 implementation really in the next couple of months
20 around this and we're looking forward to informing
21 the Council about those efforts.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but
23 specifically for -- but this was an issue that had
24 come to me about older youth being paired with
25 families that are looking to adopt older youth;
that's specifically the -- I mean is that... that was
the -- that whole issue was before you got here, but

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4 it was... is that something that's gonna be looked as
5 part of that conversation?

6 JULIE FARBER: For sure. So as part of
7 our foster care blueprint that focused on older youth
8 is really critically; we have a fair number of older
9 youth in the system and so the efforts around those
10 young people include some of the things we mentioned
11 before in terms of employment and education and
12 housing, right? And then on the other track...
13 [interpose]

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I mean aftercare is a
15 whole 'nother...

16 JULIE FARBER: That's right.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I mean really,
18 really, really, really, that's a huge issue; we heard
19 from youth in our shadow day; it was like, once
20 they're out, like it's a challenge, it's a really big
21 challenge; they're often kind of fending for
22 themselves.

23 JULIE FARBER: So there's a lot I can
24 share with you about that and I'm happy to address
25 that, but coming back to the issue of permanency
first...

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

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4 JULIE FARBER: so our goal really is to
5 reduce the number of young people that age out and so
6 we have a number of initiatives underway around
7 permanency writ large, but permanency specifically
8 for older youth, and so one of those options; I think
9 some of my colleagues have mentioned it, is really
10 looking more intensively at the option of kinship
11 guardianship; there are a lot of young people,
12 including older youth, who have been with relatives
13 for quite some time and for whom kinship guardianship
14 is an option. Another option for older youth that
15 we're really looking at expanding is around open
16 adoption as well.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Open adoption,
18 meaning...

19 JULIE FARBER: Open adoption, meaning
20 having an adoption where the parties of the adoption
21 triad -- the birth parents, the foster parents and
22 the young person -- agree to maintain contact, which
23 obviously can make a lot of sense for an older youth,
24 an 11-year-old doesn't forget that they have a
25 biological parent, right; it's not like a newborn
adoption, and there's a lot of research out there
about the benefits of open adoption to all members of

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4 the adoption triad; it's not a panacea, it's
5 obviously not appropriate in every circumstance, but
6 it's a way that a young person who might otherwise
7 might not have been open to adoption because they
8 felt like they had to disown their parent; it's a way
9 of sort of everybody being in the room around this
10 child and not having to split the child. So we see
11 that as being an option as well.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I look forward
13 to... we're gonna have another hearing later in the
14 spring on foster care, so look forward to continuing
15 the conversation.

16 JULIE FARBER: Look forward to that.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And then last
18 question here and I realize that we're running late
19 on time here. There's a \$6 million reduction in
20 preventive homemaking services and I just wondered if
21 you could talk about that for a second and what...
22 [interpose]

23 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Sure. Sure. It's
24 not actually a reduction; it's just the way that we
25 load our intracity agreements into the budget. We
typically load them this time of the year, so what
you're seeing is not actually a reduction; it's just

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4 that it hasn't been loaded into the FY17 budget; we
5 still expect the \$6 million to be in next year's
6 budget as soon as we load the intracity revenue.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry; say that
8 again.

9 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: So we often don't
10 baseline intracities; we put them into the budget one
11 year at a time, so you're just seeing something
12 that's a technical adjustment that needs to be done
13 for next year. The commitment to homemaking remains
14 the same.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, so then it'll
16 be... it'll be in the adopted; it'll be in the
17 executive adopted... [crosstalk]

18 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: It'll be in the
19 adopted... yeah, when you see... probably by... [crosstalk]

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Just not baselined?

21 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Yeah, it's just not
22 baselined, that's right.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

24 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Yeah.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Obviously we'd like
it to be baselined, but...

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4 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Yeah, well we shall
5 look into that. I know, I agree; I think to the
6 extent that we can baseline intracities, we should
7 be, yeah.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great. Thank you
9 very much; I appreciate your time.

10 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: I have just two quick
11 questions here. We have heard from advocates that
12 have an electronic health record for youth in the
13 juvenile justice system and it's necessary in order
14 to provide proper care; do staff and youth in
15 detention or placement have access to electronic
16 health records?

17 FELIPE FRANCO: Perfect timing. You know
18 we are actually working with our information
19 technology folks because... and our partners at HHC and
20 Bellevue to develop electronic record for every one
21 of our youth in detention and placement.

22 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay, excellent. And
23 my last question is, in regards to all of the
24 wonderful programs that you have at the detention
25 centers, they're amazing and I know some of them are
here today and I wanna applaud them for the work that
they do; I think the challenge sometimes is when they

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4 get out; how do we create that bridge so they could
5 continue in those programs; how do we keep them
6 connected; is there a best practice that we should
7 follow; what are we doing that is working and what
8 can we do that will make it better?

9 FELIPE FRANCO: I mean at the end of the
10 day, you know the opportunity that we are providing
11 by having a young person in detention or placement is
12 short-term and you know, that's what it should be; it
13 should be an opportunity to teach them some skills,
14 hopefully develop some hope and identifying some
15 interest that they can continue in their community.
16 One thing that actually we have become a little bit
17 more prescriptive about is that instead of just
18 having providers come to detention in a individual
19 basis, now working closely with the DYCD, you know we
20 have a network of providers that actually come in a
21 coordinated way and as part of their contract, you
22 know, which is actually a contract through DYCD, they
23 actually have two mandates; to provide activities
24 while in detention, but actually more important and
25 for the first time, identify those interests,
identify a similar program in the community the youth
is gonna return so that actually that's kind of a

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4 passing of a baton between the DYCD programming
5 happening at the facility and the potential DYCD
6 programming happening in East New York, where they
7 return to.

8 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: And who will be
9 responsible to do that follow-up?

10 FELIPE FRANCO: It's actually the lead
11 agency contracted by DYCD.

12 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Okay.

13 FELIPE FRANCO: Which actually, you know,
14 with the support of DYCD and their commissioner, it's
15 actually creating this math [sic] of opportunities
16 for young people to return to their community. I
17 mean we see it often; I mean one good example is
18 Carnegie Hall, so you know we have young people who
19 actually participate for Carnegie Hall and they have
20 been doing that for more than five years in our
21 detention centers. Carnegie Hall now actually
22 provides them with a success pass, so that actually
23 we are beginning to track the number of young people
24 who met Carnegie Hall while in placement or detention
25 and how many of them actually continued to go and
participate in the Carnegie Hall programs that they
have available in Midtown. And actually, that

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4 **[inaudible]** we're reviewing it actually later this
5 week; we are partners with Carnegie Hall [sic].

6 CO-CHAIR CABRERA: Fantastic. I wanna
7 say something completely off JJ topic here that was
8 mentioned earlier, but is a passion of mine; is
9 adoption; when I think about that we have a million
10 potential parents that are looking to adopt in the
11 United States, it drives me nuts that they have to go
12 all over to the other side of the world, pay \$35-
13 40,000; we have 2,000 kids here -- is it about 2,000
14 -- [background comments] 2,000 kids that are waiting;
15 I'm so happy to hear that you're exploring different
16 possibilities, 'cause those kids, those children need
17 active, caring, loving; eager parents to come into
18 their lives and the sooner that we can do that,
19 rather than this long wait that we have and as
20 compare to other states, I'm looking forward for that
21 hearing taking place and the sooner we could do that
22 the better. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23 ANDREW WHITE: Thank you for bringing
24 that up.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much.
You know I have one more question and this is like a
totally esoteric, technical question; it's around the

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4 CIRS system -- curve ball -- this is the retirement
5 system that child care programs pay into; there's
6 been a change recently in who remits the payments to
7 CIRS, so the City used to do it and now the City's
8 telling the providers that they need to do it and
9 CIRS isn't getting the payment and it's -- you know,
10 for all the other things that these programs have to
11 do, you know, putting an additional burden of having
12 them remit their pension plan program payments is --
13 I can see this not going well, so can you explain
14 what's going on here and if the City's considering
15 reversing this decision and going back to the way
16 that it was, that it had been for a while?

17 COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: Sure. We haven't
18 actually formally communicated that to our providers
19 yet, our provider community because we were about to
20 initiate it and we halted, to be thoughtful about it,
21 so I can't comment as to where we are with the
22 ultimate decision as to how we'll proceed, but we do
23 recognize that the cost of -- yeah, we do recognize
24 that it would be a challenge for our providers to pay
25 unless we come out with a clear methodology for them
to do so, which we were establishing and we're in the
process of establishing.

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CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is there any reason
why we're moving away from the model up till now,
where the City remitted the payments?

COURTNEY LEBORIOUS: That's an... I think
we'd have to ask of the current administration; I
believe that involves litigation that I'm not able to
comment on.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Okay, if it's...

JILL KRAUSS: We can look into it and get
back to you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. If it's not
subject to, you know, litigation or you know,
judicial decree; then you know, I think that it's... I
could see this being a problem both for the
employees, the programs and CIRS actually for this
change to be implemented. Thank you.

CO-CHAIR CUMBO: I don't have a question,
but just have a comment, just closing out. Just want
to reiterate my points again on the RFP process and
making sure that the Council is also engaged in terms
of what this RFP process is going to look like,
because we often have to deal with the ramifications
of it on the back end side and the pay parity issue
is critical for us and we certainly do not wanna be

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4 in this same position next year where we're asking
5 the same questions and we're still being told we're
6 all at the table trying to figure it out, so
7 definitely want to make sure that we're moving
8 forward with that and also, making sure and ensuring
9 that while real estate prices continue to rise that
10 there are still child care centers in every
11 neighborhood, particularly in communities that are
12 being gentrified where there are high pockets of
13 poverty within existing real estate markets that are
14 rising. Okay. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Well thank you
16 so much to this panel; we appreciate you being here
17 and for waiting for the late start and for staying
18 late here. Our regards to the Commissioner; hope
19 she's feeling better and to the Deputy Commissioner,
20 our condolences as well. Thank you very much.

21 [collective thank yous]

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: If it's possible to
23 have somebody stay for the public testimony; should
24 be about 45 minutes or so.

25 Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to
actually move over to -- actually, John will tell you
what to do.

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4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Ladies and gentlemen,
5 we're gonna move over to the committee room; we ask
6 you to use the side entrance where my coworker is
7 standing, just follow him. Thank you for your
8 patience. Thank you for your patience.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Thank you
10 everybody for your patience today; this is always my
11 favorite part of the budget hearing and sometimes I
12 wish that we could do this portion first so that we
13 can hear from everybody and hear your experience
14 before we talk to the administration, but obviously
15 we greatly appreciate and value your input and are
16 really appreciative that you stayed all day.

17 We are going to ask folks to limit their
18 testimony to two minutes, at least their spoken
19 testimony for two minutes and then you can obviously
20 submit your written testimony; we have our wonderful
21 Finance Division staff that will obviously take all
22 of that into account as we look towards the Council's
23 Preliminary Budget response and our Executive Budget
24 Hearing in May.

25 So we are going to start with the first
panel; we are going to call up from DC 1707 Kelvin

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4 [sic] McJunkin, Joan Morgan, Robert Ramos, and
5 Victoria Mitchell.

6 [pause]

7 Okay, whoever wants to begin. Just make
8 sure you state your name for the record and turn on
9 the microphone so that there's the red light.

10 [background comments]

11 VICTORIA MITCHELL: Good afternoon. I
12 thank the Council for the opportunity to speak today.
13 I am Victoria Mitchell, Executive Director of
14 District Council 1707 (AFSCME), which represents
15 17,000 workers dedicated to helping some of the
16 neediest New Yorkers in our city. Today I speak
17 about the needs of 5,000 community center-based child
18 care workers, both daycare and Head Start who have
19 educated and cared for hundreds of thousands of New
20 Yorkers' children for almost two generations. My
21 testimony is a summary of my extensive written
22 statement submitted to the Council and I ask that my
23 written statement substitute in the record for what
24 I'm about to say.

25 We're at the crossroads, after gone for a
decade with no wage increases and a massive cut to
medical insurance which forced 3,000 workers, more

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than half of the workforce, to go without insurance
for themselves and their families. These centers are
on the brink of collapse because they cannot attract
and hold certified and dedicated personnel. Adding
to these problems, the City appears unwilling to
properly finance the Cultural Institution Retirement
System which **[inaudible]** my members' retirement
security. My members are demanding justice; they
have had enough; they go to work caring for the
safety and the tens of thousands of other people's
children when they themselves are 10 years behind
cost of living and many can't afford the basic
medical insurance for their own children; this is
terribly unfair. Without significantly more money
being put in the budget to provide decent and good
health care insurance for every employee without
significant additional money being put in the budget
to give teaching staff at least parity with U Pre-K
and preferably with DOE teaching staff; without
putting more money into preserving the pension of our
members, I'm afraid that my members' anger and rage
may not be containable; they want justice; they
deserve it and they want it now.

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4 On behalf of the daycare and Head Start
5 workers, we ask you for your help; daycare and Head
6 Start employees deserve to work with dignity that can
7 only come from earning [sic] enough properly care for
8 their families and protect them for an uncertain
9 illness [sic]; much is at stake in the budget cycle.
10 On behalf of my members, I thank you for your help to
11 get this justice for daycare and Head Start workers.
12 Thank you very much.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

14 [background comments]

15 JOAN MORGAN: Good afternoon. My name is
16 Joan Morgan; I am a teacher's assistant at Blanche
17 Day Care Center in Far Rockaway, Queens. I have
18 worked with the children and parents there for 11
19 years; I have worked in early childhood education for
20 20 years; I loved my job, I enjoy working with young
21 children, who are our future and this has been my
22 career; my job gives me great satisfaction. I am a
23 single woman who head [sic] house, because I am the
24 main provider for my 5-year-old niece. My only
25 regret is that doing the work I love means that each
month I have to scramble to pay my rent; for more
than 10 years I have not received a wage increase

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4 because of Early Learn [background comment] and the
5 previous mayor. I have to think twice before I can
6 even buy a pair of pants; I have to think twice
7 before I can go to the doctor; I have to be careful
8 not to overspend on food. I applied for food stamps
9 and I was told I was not eligible. During the summer
10 I have to walk three miles back and forth to work
11 just to save money. Recently I have not been happy
12 going to work because my bills are overwhelming; my
13 coworker told me that many are afraid to get sick
14 because either they have no coverage or the coverage
15 is not appropriate for their needs. The week we
16 perform is honorable and honest; we know we are
17 building New York's future, but we feel that no one
18 is listening to us. [bell]

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: You can conclude.

20 JOAN MORGAN: Thank you. Mayor Bloomberg
21 took away our education benefits; the Day Care
22 Council of New York, our employer of record, is slow
23 to approve a new contract for our union. I hope that
24 this hearing can send the right message to the right
25 people that daycare workers in community-based
organizations should not be taken for granted and we

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4 need a fair contract now. Thank you for listening.

5 Thanks.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

7 KELVIN MCJUNKIN: Hello. My name is
8 Kelvin McJunkin, Jr.; I'm 29 years old; I'm from
9 Brooklyn, East New York and I'm here representing the
10 United Community Day Care Centers as well as the
11 Early Learn staff.

12 We at the United Day Care Centers under
13 the Early Learn umbrella feel that there is no work
14 parity or equity being practiced. I've been a staff
15 member for the last six years and since I've worked
16 there, there's always been hopeful talk of raises and
17 still to this present day there hasn't been any
18 change; 10 years, no raise.

19 Let's take a look at the numbers -- now
20 please I ask, don't quote me on these numbers, but
21 for you all to get the overall idea of where I'm
22 going. Okay, the average salary of a Department of
23 Education worker ranges from at least \$45,000 to
24 \$75,000 starting; depending on credentials. As an
25 average, an Early Learn staff member's salary ranges
from \$23,000 to \$39,000, depending on his
credentials. Now for example, if you take the

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4 starting salary of a Department of Education worker
5 with a bachelor's degree and a master's degree, his
6 or her starting salary is about \$75,000 with full
7 benefits and pension, wherein as in Early Learn, the
8 workers with the exact same credentials, which are
9 required for us to have in order to teach kids and be
10 around kids, we get about \$35,000 less; like I said,
11 don't quote the numbers, just get the idea. We get
12 about \$35,000 less and partial benefits, which leaves
13 us to go, and as Joan just said, to go out and find
14 out other insurances and then we hear the words of
15 "you're not eligible for it yet," we don't make that
16 amount to be eligible; we're just under. The reality
17 of it -- [clearing throat] excuse me -- alright. So
18 the reality of it is; we have about... [bell] we have
19 all these workers who do 20 years, 10 years, 15 years
20 and it comes to the time to where how long is it
21 going to be while we support the same system that we
22 thought was built on equity to change, because if it
23 doesn't change, then we get those problems where
24 there's less staff members having the same faith
25 [sic] that they had before, so you get less staff
members, which then it turns into less kids, which
then it turns into nobody, so we're the same workers

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4 who are there to help create and make the system
5 work, so there's no equity here for us at all.

6 And the only question I'll leave to ask
7 of everybody that's based on that is; how could you
8 live under the poverty level in New York City,
9 especially in East New York where we're going through
10 gentrification and be able to work and live your life
11 and take care of yourself and your kids; it can't
12 happen. Thank you.

13 [background comments]

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much
15 for your testimony.

16 ROBERT RAMOS: Good afternoon. I'm
17 honored to speak at this important hearing and I
18 thank the City Council for the opportunity. My name
19 is Robert Ramos -- I'm not gonna cry, but I'll try
20 not to -- I am the President of the Day Care Council
21 in New York City; I've also been a teacher for 14
22 years; I have three children of my own who all went
23 through the daycare where I work at. I've seen our
24 system be taken apart over these 10 years, from
25 after-school programs being taken out of our CBOs,
from... I used to be Universal Pre-K teacher, but
because when they took the after-school out -- I'm

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sorry; when they took the kindergarten out, they
moved the classrooms over and I became and 3 and a
4-year-old teacher, which I don't mind; I still
educate the children as much as I can with my
certifications. But I too have problems keeping my
healthcare and my three children didn't have
healthcare for a couple years, until my wife was able
to get healthcare from her job and to be able to be a
worker and not be able to care for your children and
take care of them is very devastating when I'm doing
the job to take care of other people's kids.

I became a worker 'cause my mother was a
worker for 15 years; she taught in a daycare also and
was a teacher there and I seen her struggles also
taking care of me when she was trying to, you know,
live and take care of me also.

As you can hear some of our stories, and
they get worse and worse, you know you get people who
say, you know they have to walk, like she said, to
work and not take a bus because they have to buy
medicine or they have to buy clothes for their kids
and it doesn't make sense that we take care of the
future of our city [bell] and we still can't take
care of ourselves or our families.

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4 And just to answer some of your questions
5 that you asked earlier, if I can; our health
6 insurance, 1500 members, which is... we have about
7 3,200; half, less than half of our members take the
8 healthcare because they can't afford it and the
9 proposal that was given after negotiations still will
10 not help, 'cause we still have to pay into it, to a
11 program that other members in the city get for free,
12 MetroPlus; city workers get it for free, but yet we,
13 we still have to pay into MetroPlus, which is the
14 alternative that is being given to us right now.

15 When you asked about salary parity, what was offered
16 after negotiating for four months at a table since
17 October was \$3,000 extra to teachers; after 10 years
18 of not getting a raise, \$3,000, which is nowhere near
19 parity to the Board of Ed. or to a UPK teacher that
20 is working right next door to you, in the same
21 classes, in the same school. So you have this system
22 that is being torn apart by one person who has the
23 same qualifications getting almost \$10,000 more than
24 somebody else and the answer is \$3,000 was what they
25 offered. And you said how much it would cost to
create parity; well there was a proposal given by the
Day Care Council and the Commissioner did do numbers

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4 on it and he said it would cost \$228 million over
5 three years; now that's over three years, you
6 understand [sic], of the contract, it's not this
7 year, so you can't tell me that the people who take
8 care of the future of this city are not worth \$230
9 million when a budget that we have is...

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: \$84 billion.

11 ROBERT RAMOS: Exactly. So... [background
12 comments]

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: \$82 point...

14 [background comments] sorry, 82...

15 ROBERT RAMOS: with billions and billions
16 and billions of dollars; it's a travesty, because for
17 10 years we waited, you know we waited for 10 years
18 and we sat down and were hoping that at the end of
19 this negotiation things would be okay and that we
20 would get what we deserved and what we should have
21 gotten these past 10 years and in the end nothing was
22 close to what we deserve and the respect that we
23 deserve. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. And I
25 will say, we have a free healthcare option at the New
York City Council, we have GHI and we don't have to
pay for it. [background comment] And a raise.

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4 ROBERT RAMOS: And a raise.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And a raise.

6 [background comment] So we hear you. I wanna... I
7 just, as a... I have question just about the issue of
8 health insurance, because people are gonna start to
9 have to pay -- if they don't have health insurance,
10 you're gonna have to start paying penalties under
11 Obamacare, so are your members -- I mean tax day is
12 coming up, right, so do your members know that; I
13 mean do they know that -- and they are prepared to
14 have to pay a penalty?

15 VICTORIA MITCHELL: They don't have any
16 money to pay for it; where are they gonna get the
17 money to pay for it? They don't.

18 KELVIN MCJUNKIN: I am paying for my own
19 health insurance. When I go to the... I can't afford
20 the co-payment; that's just the honest truth, I can't
21 afford the co-payment. Between the rates that are
22 taken out from me through my pay period and then
23 everything else going on, I can't afford it, so I
24 have to go out and find my own, so like she said
25 earlier, every time I go to the doctor I have a bill
and it's just money that comes right out of my pocket
because the co-payments are way too high; it's like,

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4 to go to the emergency room now is like \$1,000 just
5 to go and just to get checked and per se [sic]; you
6 know what I mean; it's just terrible. And on that
7 tax issue, it's just... it's even worse, because I
8 didn't know that they were gonna tax me and now I
9 have to pay because of that and it sucks, it sucks.

10 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: I have a question in
11 terms of ACS' testimony in terms of the fact that...
12 stating some of the workers have received some
13 element of a raise or some sort of parity that had
14 been adjusted; are you aware or did I misunderstand
15 what the statement was and if so, what is the reality
16 of the situation?

17 VICTORIA MITCHELL: ACS offered a 2.5
18 percent increase to the Early Learn workers; the
19 increase doesn't include the U Pre-K teachers and it
20 doesn't include the discretionary centers that are
21 part of 205, so we have an issue there where we have
22 one contract and some people are getting an increase
23 and some are not. We still... [crosstalk]

24 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: I see.

25 VICTORIA MITCHELL: have agencies that
26 have not received the 2.5 percent increase as of
27 today.

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4 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Okay, thank you.

5 VICTORIA MITCHELL: Okay.

6 ROBERT RAMOS: And even... you know, the
7 2.5 percent is just a drop in the bucket; I mean if
8 you take my salary and take 2.5 percent of that, it's
9 like \$100...

10 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Right.

11 ROBERT RAMOS: you know what I mean,
12 extra and that's... [crosstalk]

13 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Right.

14 ROBERT RAMOS: that's nothing, you know...
15 [crosstalk]

16 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Right.

17 ROBERT RAMOS: it is a good faith or
18 whatever is seen, you know as an idea 'cause we were
19 bargaining, but that's all it is, is a drop and you
20 can't equal that to 10 years... [crosstalk]

21 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Right.

22 ROBERT RAMOS: of not having a contract
23 and just a \$3,000 offer of a raise.

24 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Thank you. We'll take
25 one more and then we've gotta bring up the next
panel.

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VICTORIA MITCHELL: Yes, there is one
issue also; we have teachers, like Miss Morgan, who
is part of Early Learn and U Pre-K and she was told
that she's only getting half of that 2.5 percent
because her salary is... some part of it is from U Pre-
K and some part of it is from Early Learn, so she's
only eligible for half of the 2.5 percent increase.

CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Wow.

VICTORIA MITCHELL: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm sorry; that's a
single 2.5 percent increase; not an annualized 2.5
percent...

ROBERT RAMOS: No.

[background comments]

ROBERT RAMOS: Yeah, it was just given to
us...

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Haven't had a
contract for 10 years, so it's one 2.5 percent...
[crosstalk]

VICTORIA MITCHELL: Right and the...

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: increase for 10
years?

[background comments]

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4 VICTORIA MITCHELL: Effective July 1st
5 until today.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 'Kay. Okay.

7 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: I wanna thank you all
8 for your testimony here today; this is really
9 unacceptable in terms of the fact that, you know as
10 chair of the Women's Issues Committee, to see so many
11 women of color to be at the bottom of the totem pole
12 in the negotiations for contracts when so many have
13 been resolved and come to a conclusion, for you all
14 still to be languishing in abyss of uncertainty is
15 inappropriate and unacceptable and I'm going to
16 continue to work with Council Member Levin, as well
17 as Council Member Cabrera on this issue. So I thank
18 you all for coming and for testifying today. Thank
19 you.

20 [background comments]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Next, Ann Goldman,
22 United Federation of Teachers; Yessenia Rosario and
23 Nicholas Cardell, Council of School Supervisors and
24 Administrators; Lois Lee, Council of School
25 Supervisors and Administrators; Amber Cartwright,
Brooklyn Kindergarten Society, Council of School
Supervisors and Administrators. [background

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4 comments] And it's no surprise, but the CSA slips
5 have the best penmanship; [laughter] makes sense.

6 [pause]

7 Whoever wants to begin.

8 [pause]

9 [background comments]

10 ANNE GOLDMAN: I have it now? Okay.

11 Good afternoon; Anne Goldman from the UFT. I commend
12 the impassioned comments before me and so my remarks
13 will focus on some issues that were not articulated
14 today.

15 If in fact we don't recognize the
16 discrimination that's been articulated against
17 daycare providers, we need to understand the other
18 aspect of this; working people cannot work if we do
19 not allow the poorest individuals to have the slots
20 necessary for their children to be cared for, so the
21 whole pyramid of economics is collapsing because we
22 have reduced and in the new block [sic], unfunded
23 federal mandates; we've put more burdens on child
24 care providers.

25 In addition to that, these unfunded
mandates will drive providers underground where they

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will not be regulated; that is unacceptable to all of
us who champion the voices of our children.

Furthermore, to believe that
fingerprinting, new regulations and the additional
challenges, particularly for informal or legally
exempt providers, who are caring for their own family
members in many cases can be unfolded without thought
is ridiculous; we will then have to fix an impending
doom which is when there is not good thought to these
processes and new requirements and when they're not
done right the first time we see them done over and
over again; that is unacceptable. What wasn't
emphasized, but I know all of you know, is the first
line of public health defensiveness in our town is
our daycare providers who see our children early, who
monitor immunizations, who monitor and assess and
identify when there are developmental delays; we will
pay now or we will pay later. To be able to allow
young children of poor parents [bell] to have that
support is essential. Thank you.

CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Thank you.

YESSENIA ROSARIO: Hello. My name is
Yessenia Rosario; I'm the Director of Nicholas
Cardell Day Care Center; I'm here on behalf of CSA.

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4 I come here today and I wanted to sit in
5 and hear what ACS had to say; I come here as a
6 director who is working among people that have been
7 giving twenty plus years of their lives working for
8 early childhood; I ask them as I stand in front of
9 them as a young one, why are you still here; you
10 haven't made any money; you can barely make your rent
11 and their answer is always the same -- I love the
12 work that I do, but yet that love will not continue
13 to support their livelihood; I'm looking at teachers
14 that I'm asking; they need to go back to school to
15 gain an education so that they can keep their jobs,
16 because certification is a requirement.

17 I come here to ask for formalization of
18 our profession; the demands are greater now. It was
19 stated before; education is now more important than
20 it was before, the demand for quality-based early
21 childhood education is more important than it was
22 before; therefore, we have to formalize our career,
23 we have to recognize that this is a profession and as
24 such, we deserve to get paid like the professionals
25 that we are. Our people deserve to go to work
knowing that they will take enough home to take care
of their own needs so they can come back to work,

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sing those happy songs; read those great books with a
smile on their faces instead of thinking, how will I
make rent today; will I be able to feed my child.
I'm a doctoral student because I'm looking to change
the system, but I need you first to confirm me, that
this profession deserves qualified individuals that
will be recognized and that will receive the respect
that we deserve because of the work that we do; we
educate the youngest ones, we lay the foundation for
lifelong learning; we deserve to be founded on pay
parity. Thank you.

LOIS LEE: Hello. Can you hear me? My
name is Lois Lee and I think you might recognize me;
I'm from CSA; for 45 years I have been with Chinese-
American Planning Council and in early childhood and
after-school programs. My programs are in Flushing
and Corona, but CPC has many, many programs in Lower
Manhattan and Sunset Park.

Now I want to talk about, and Steve heard
me say this before -- oh, Councilman Levin -- it is
the tale of two cities, but we're talking about a
tale of two education systems, the DOE and the ACS
systems. The CSA directors, like myself, we have the
same credentials as the principals and the APs, so

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I'm going to bring up the example of Elaine Short;
she's the Director of Lucille Rose Day Care Center;
she still has her school administration
certification, just like myself, but we don't have
the same benefits; we don't have the same pension or
care. She just went to chemotherapy on the day of
our press conference rally and she had to pay \$3,000
out of pocket expenses, but she was at work the week
before working on her budget. Her two board members
came and they actually fell [sic] on that day of the
hearing and one is a retired physician and one is a
retired school teacher on the board of the sponsoring
board, so we're all qualified professionals. Just to
show you that I am on the school leadership team, the
school safety team; I'm the community person on their
comprehensive education plan, so even the public
school recognizes that they need the community-based
people to form a strong school community partnership.
And also, I'm going to bring up Dr. Beverly Campbell,
and she has her Ph.D. also; she oversees the African-
American parents program in South Jamaica and
oversees 64 family daycare providers; she has not
gotten one cent more from her ACS contract for her
salary too. So I want to show that it is a system of

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4 two systems, the DOE and ACS. We heard that ACS is
5 doing a wonderful job in child preventive services,
6 juvenile services [bell], but they need to get out
7 of, you know, education; education belongs to the DOE
8 and this is what we are advocating for and so I also
9 wanted to bring up the point that one of you brought
10 up about the underutilization; why can't the ACS meet
11 their target of 85 percent? It's because of the
12 eligibility requirements. If Mayor de Blasio can
13 roll out UPK, then he can roll out early childhood
14 for all the twos and the threes and get rid of the
15 eligibility system; it should be available to all
16 people, that's why I'm saying ACS should get out of
17 the education system.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

19 AMBER CARTWRIGHT: Good afternoon. My
20 name is Amber Cartwright and I'm the Director of
21 Curriculum and Instruction for Brooklyn Kindergarten
22 Society. I thank you for your time and attention.

23 At the turn of the century, my great
24 grandfather and grandmother opened up a one-room
25 schoolhouse for black sharecroppers in Fort Worth,
Texas that laid the foundation for four generations
of women like myself who committed a whole lifetime

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4 to teaching children. My grandmother started her
5 career as a family worker in Head Start, my mother
6 taught for 50 years; started her career as a Head
7 Start teacher, moved on to U.S. Department of
8 Education and finally retired from Phoenix, Arizona
9 at Roosevelt School District.

10 Since 2000 I have proudly opened a number
11 of programs; I opened up the Harlem Children Zone's
12 first Head Start and opened up The Child Center of
13 New York childcare center in Woodside, Queens.

14 I have a master's from Bank Street, I
15 have a master's from City College in applied
16 psychology; I am a proud UCLA Head Start Johnson &
17 Johnson fellow. I, like a lot of the women here, are
18 fully credentialed, I have a teacher's license as
19 well as an FBL.

20 I share my proud legacy, but I also
21 present to this committee a concern; I'm deeply
22 troubled with the lack of pay parity, the lack of
23 respect; the lack of recognition that prohibits us to
24 really provide I think quality service the way that
25 we know that we can.

26 Brooklyn Kindergarten Society, like a lot
27 of community-based organizations, struggles to find

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4 quality teachers, because so many of those that we
5 spend time training and grooming leave to the
6 Department of Education and this I know that you
7 know.

8 I come before this board demanding to end
9 the inequality that exists between community-based
10 organizations and DOE. I thank you for your time and
11 attention.

12 LOIS LEE: Can I just say something for...
13 I wanted to thank Councilwoman Cumbo, because you
14 said you don't wanna be here next year hearing the
15 same things over and over again and I'm 67 and I've
16 been standing in front of City Council bringing the
17 same issue; when I'm 70 and retired, I wanna retire
18 in peace; I don't want to be the neglected, you know,
19 stepchild of the education system; we really belong
20 as professionals and we wanna be recognized as
21 professionals. Thank you.

22 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: I just wanna add with
23 that; all of the testimony is so very important; as
24 I'm listening to each and every one of you, it's
25 really gonna take beyond this hearing; it's going to
take all of us to come out, ignite our audiences, our
bases, the youth, our parents, the children, the

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4 teachers; the providers to come together in a way
5 that's got to become a roar as far as that this is
6 unacceptable, that we're not going to accept this
7 anymore and that we should not be marginalized
8 predominantly because we are people of color and
9 predominantly because we are women, and when I look
10 at all of the other contracts, you know, it's glaring
11 what the issue is here in terms of, you know, how we
12 spend our budget and what our budget defines; it
13 shows what our priorities are and what we prioritize
14 and what we value and what we are going to put energy
15 and resources behind and to have a budget that does
16 not put those resources behind the very people that
17 have spoken here today is really not the
18 administration that we can be proud of at this time.
19 So I certainly wanna make sure that we're gonna
20 continue to work with each and every one of you.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. And
22 before you go, I wanna thank our CSA members for your
23 testimony and I certainly appreciate so much the work
24 that you do and the professionalism that you bring to
25 your work and you have generations of New Yorkers to
show, you know, as the result of the good work that
you do.

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4 Miss Goldman, I just wanna -- to your
5 point, that is a very serious issue; I have spoken
6 directly with Commissioner Carrion about it and it
7 was brought up as a major issue during our budget
8 roundtables; certainly it's something that we need
9 the state to take action on to, as you said, this was
10 an unfunded mandate from Congress that could cost the
11 state \$190 million; the Governor's I think put in \$10
12 million and so that -- I mean this is a major issue
13 in terms of how we address this; we need either a
14 waiver of some kind or the state to step up and
15 assist the city, otherwise we are all gonna be in a
16 terrible position of trying to find, you know, over
17 \$100 million in savings in a system that is
18 underfunded to begin with, so let's all work together
19 on this, but I think it's in everybody's interest to
20 be fully informed of the situation that you testified
21 to and work to take action on that. Thank you very
22 much for your testimony. Thank you.

23 Next panel -- Rachel Sabella, Food Bank
24 of New York; Lisa Levy, Hunger-Free NYC; Rena
25 Resnick, Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty;
Patrick Jean Baptiste, Masbia, and Rashida Latef,
West Side Campaign Against Hunger.

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4 [pause]

5 Whoever wants to begin.

6 RACHEL SABELLA: Good afternoon. My name
7 is Rachel Sabella and I'm the Director of Government
8 Relations at Food Bank for New York City. I wanna
9 thank Chairman Levin; Councilwoman Cumbo for the
10 opportunity to testify today.

11 First I wanna say thank you; this Council
12 continues to prioritize the issues of the anti-hunger
13 community. Whenever pressed for attention or for
14 support, this Council has not shied away from that
15 and we are truly grateful and aware of that.

16 You have copies of my written testimony;
17 I've got lots of factoids and maps and numbers; I
18 hope that's helpful to you, but what I wanna focus in
19 on today is the emergency food providers and the
20 emergency food fields.

21 Who relies on emergency food? It's 1.4
22 million New Yorkers; that's 1 out of 5 children, 1
23 out of 6 women, 1 out of 5 seniors and 3 out of 10
24 veterans. Who provides them with services? It's
25 community-based organizations, it's churches, it's
faith-based organizations throughout the city. How
do they operate? Most of them operate on a budget

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less than \$25,000 per year, yet they are serving 1.4
million New Yorkers. Most of them also have no paid
staff; they need our help.

I'm extremely disappointed that the FY27
[sic] Preliminary Budget, despite all of this, not
only does it not reflect an increase in funding, but
it actually has a reduction in funding to the
Emergency Food Assistance Program; this is not
acceptable. Food Bank for New York City, our member
agencies and the entire anti-hunger community stands
at the ready to work with you, to work with the
entire City Council not only to restore those funds,
but to fight and to dramatically increase this
program so that we serve every New Yorker in need.

So I will be seeing lots of you and I
look forward to working with all of you, but thank
you for the opportunity today.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Rachel.

[bell]

LISA LEVY: My name is Lisa Levy and I'm
the Director of Policy Advocacy and Organizing of
Hunger-Free New York City, formerly the New York City
Coalition Against Hunger.

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4 I wanna first thank Chairs Levin and
5 Cumbo for their work on behalf of people in need, as
6 well as the Committees for inviting me to testify
7 here today.

8 As many of you already know, and as you
9 can read in my submitted testimony, there are about
10 1.68 million people who relied on SNAP benefits in
11 January of 2016, according to HRA. In spite of
12 recent economic improvements, 1 in 6 New York City
13 residents still struggle to afford to put food on the
14 table. This number includes approximately 1 in 5
15 children and 1 in 8 seniors in one of the richest
16 cities in the world. Rather than spend my limited
17 time reciting figures that you can read in my
18 testimony, I'll stick with a few policy suggestions
19 and affirmations.

20 We must ensure an adequate nutrition
21 safety net and boost upward mobility through expanded
22 access to SNAP school breakfast, school lunch, WIC
23 and summer meal benefits that make robust benefits
24 available free of stigma and hassle for those in
25 need.

26 The Human Resources Administration is now
27 treating low-income New Yorkers and the advocates who

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4 represent them as trusted partners; not as feared
5 adversaries, for which we commend them, Mayor de
6 Blasio and the Council; unfortunately, while there
7 are still 1.6 million recipients of SNAP in New York
8 City in January, there were approximately 500,000
9 eligible New Yorkers not receiving SNAP. Again, we
10 commend HRA, specifically Commissioner Banks and his
11 staff, for introducing a variety of programs to
12 increase outreach and retention of benefits,
13 requesting waivers from the state to eliminate
14 application and recertification barriers,
15 streamlining methods of communication for our
16 claimants for phone interviews and eliminating
17 redundancies on both application and retention size
18 not only assists claimants, but saves the city and
19 state time and money; notably, his efforts at
20 protecting many of those in danger of losing benefits
21 because of the loss of ABAWD waiver provision [bell]
22 must be recognized. I'm gonna wrap up very quickly.

23 Unfortunately, because of congressional
24 inaction, about 53,000 people are still at risk of
25 losing their benefits on April 1st. In addition to
some of the policies which have already been
implemented, in order to further improve service and

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4 increase the number of New Yorkers receiving
5 benefits, we respectfully request that HRA hire more
6 staff to handle higher caseloads as well as decrease
7 wait times, institute further customer training for
8 staff, seek funding for renovations at HRA job and
9 SNAP centers, and institute flexible hours for HRA
10 offices, including early mornings and late evenings
11 for working people. When funds for SNAP are
12 decreased, people of low-income often turn to
13 emergency food providers to fill in the gap. Hunger-
14 Free New York City estimates that all the food
15 pantries, soup kitchens and food banks in the U.S.
16 provide, at most, \$5 billion worth of food each year;
17 it doesn't take a math genius to know that \$5 billion
18 from charity is less than \$8.6 billion lost in SNAP
19 cuts; unfortunately, this is a gap that's not being
20 filled, so it's people in need who are doing without.
21 Jointly with our anti-hunger partners we... [crosstalk]

22 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: We've gotta bring it to
23 conclusion.

24 LISA LEVY: yes... we request that the EFAP
25 program restore lost funding that was cut; this
program has been chronically underfunded and need has
not decreased.

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4 Through a continued effort, New York City
5 can continue to be more effective at assisting those
6 in need. Thank you very much.

7 CO-CHAIR CUMBO: Thank you.

8 RENA RESNICK: Thank you; thank you
9 Chairs Chin [sic] and Cumbo... [pause] [background
10 comments] My name is Rena Resnick and I'm the
11 Director of Communications at Metropolitan Council on
12 Jewish Poverty. Met Council supports and champions
13 seniors, families and adults living in poverty and
14 near poverty through various social services. City
15 Council support is vital in enabling Met Council to
16 assist vulnerable New Yorkers. In addition to
17 individual member items for our food, social services
18 and free handyman program, Met Council is supported
19 through the following City Council initiatives: ACES,
20 or Access to Crisis and Emergency Services,
21 underwrites the cost for case workers who help
22 clients under the threat of eviction or utility shut-
23 off and those who cannot pay medical bills and have
24 other emergencies; handyman services, which provides
25 free handyman services to low-income seniors to
enable them to live safely and independently in their
homes; DOVE, which enables Met Council's experienced

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4 and culturally sensitive staff to assist survivors of
5 intimate partner and family abuse with a variety of
6 services that create safety, support, emotional
7 recovery, and promote self-sufficiency; the new
8 Holocaust Survivor Initiative which supports Met
9 Council's free home grocery delivery program to
10 Holocaust survivors; ESP, or Extended Services
11 Program, which together with the [inaudible] Jewish
12 Community Councils are the frontline of defense for
13 those in need, providing essential and often
14 emergency anti-poverty services in all five boroughs,
15 and finally, as Rachel and Lisa have discussed, EFAP
16 is essential in supporting our culture food pantry
17 network; with the help of EFAP, is able to provide 7
18 million meals throughout the five boroughs.

19 Met Council cannot continue providing
20 critical social services to thousands of needy New
21 Yorkers each year without the vital partnership of
22 New York City Council; we deeply value your
23 leadership and partnership and look forward to
24 working together to help the needy throughout the New
25 York area. Thank you. [bell]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much
for your testimony.

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4 RASHIDA LATEF: Good afternoon. My name
5 is Rashida Latef; I'm the Advocacy Coordinator at the
6 West Side Campaign Against Hunger. I'd like to thank
7 the General Welfare Committee for allowing me the
8 opportunity to submit testimony on the Fiscal Year
9 2017 Preliminary New York City Budget and
10 specifically, the need to increase funding for the
11 City's Emergency Food Assistance Program, commonly
12 referred to as EFAP. I would also like to thank
13 Chairman Levin for his recent visit to WSCAH this
14 past February to learn more about the ways in which
15 our organization and other emergency food providers
16 stand to benefit from increased EFAP funding in
17 Fiscal Year 2017. Thank you.

18 Founded in 1979, WSCAH is an innovative
19 supermarket style food pantry that combines access to
20 healthy food with support services, job training and
21 policy advocacy to help stabilize clients and put
22 them on the path to self-sufficiency. In the last
23 year we provided 1.5 million pounds of healthy food
24 for more than 1.1 million meals for 43,042 families.
25 We also helped 787 families enroll in SNAP, 564
families enroll in health insurance, and 154 people

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obtain employment; in all, our counselors helped our
clients secure \$7.5 million in public benefits.

On April 1st, 2016, able-bodied adults
without dependants (ABAWDs) who reside in Manhattan
below 110th Street on the West Side and below 96th
Street on the East Side will no longer be eligible to
receive SNAP benefits until 2019. As a result of
this federal provision, New York City's food-insecure
population will grow exponentially overnight. ABAWDs
who previously qualified for SNAP will be forced to
rely solely on emergency food providers, such as
WSCAH, to support their lack of access to a
consistent and healthy meal. As the first responders
to this impending hunger crisis, which is adversely
compounded by the preexisting gap of 241 million
meals in New York City, emergency food providers face
a diminished capacity to meet the increasing demands
and needs of hungry New Yorkers. As a result of
federal ABAWD provision, WSCAH is expecting an
increase in customers [bell] after April 1st. I'll
just finish up. Unlike food-insecure families who
fight hunger with the likelihood that their child
will receive a nutritious meal in school, ABAWDs and
emergency food providers alike will have to rely on

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EFAP to mitigate hunger not only in food **[inaudible]**,
but in communities like the Upper West Side where
pockets of poverty are under-recognized. As an
emergency food provider, it is incumbent upon us to
make the correlation between ABAWDs and EFAP
[inaudible] as there is no other system or
alternative in place to meet the needs of the city's
growing population of food-insecure individuals.

Once again, West Side Campaign Against
Hunger would like to thank the City Council's General
Welfare Committee for the opportunity to testify
about the importance of increased funding for the
Emergency Food Assistance Program in Fiscal Year
2017. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much
Miss Latef.

Now Patrick, I got a text message just
now from Alexander and he said make sure that you
have a seat at the table so that he can see you from
the office, so...

PATRICK JEAN BAPTISTE: Ah, okay.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: if somebody wouldn't
mind giving up their seat... [interpose]

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PATRICK JEAN BAPTISTE: Do you have like
a little stand or...

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I don't think we have
a stand, but maybe you could put it in the front
there.

[background comments]

PATRICK JEAN BAPTISTE: Yeah.

[background comments]

PATRICK JEAN BAPTISTE: 'Cause you gotta
flip over the side, so.

[background comments]

PATRICK JEAN BAPTISTE: So I'll...

[crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But you have to sit...
But Patrick, you have to sit at the table, 'cause...

PATRICK JEAN BAPTISTE: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Alexander has to see
you from the office.

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: The Food Justice
people will know who Alexander is and... [background
comments] Glad to know he's watching too... that the
live feed is working... the live... [crosstalk]

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4 PATRICK JEAN BAPTISTE: Is it working?

5 Can you hear me?

6 [background comments]

7 PATRICK JEAN BAPTISTE: Okay.

8 [background comments] Alright. Good afternoon,

9 Councilman Levin; good afternoon to the General

10 Welfare Committee. I'm Patrick Jean Baptiste; I'm

11 the Volunteer Coordinator at Masbia Soup Kitchen

12 Network.

13 So we're basically a soup kitchen network

14 that serves the needy; we've been around since April

15 2005. So basically I'm here today to talk about food

16 insecurity; let's keep it plain. Now last -- as you

17 can tell on this chart, you could see how many meals

18 that we gave in total over the last three fiscal

19 years. In 2013 we gave almost 500,000 meals; 2014,

20 almost 1.3 million meals; the last fiscal year,

21 Fiscal Year 2015, we gave almost 1.5... over 1.5

22 million meals. Flip it over. And as you can see, so

23 far this year, since July, this fiscal year so far

24 we've given 1,503,113 meals, which means we're gonna

25 destroy the record we had and we're on pace to have

2.5 million meals this year and remember, we haven't

even reached Pesach, Passover for people that don't

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4 Hebrew. So as you can tell, we have quite a
5 situation and I heard earlier by one of the people
6 from DC that was talking, that the City's budget is
7 \$82 billion, but you have \$1.5 billion for a program
8 with the homeless that affects 65,000 people, but you
9 have 1 in 6 New Yorkers, over 1.4 million people, and
10 the budget for EFAP is only \$14 million? I'm pretty
11 sure they can raise the budget, I don't think that's
12 so hard to do, it's very simple and it's straight to
13 the point. I don't think I really have much to say;
14 I think my point's already made. Thank you very
15 much.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you and thank
17 you very much to the good work that all of you do in
18 feeding hungry New Yorkers and for advocating for
19 food justice, for food security here in New York
20 City, it's incredibly important; look forward to
21 keeping the pressure on; now's the time, we have an
22 opportunity with this coming up Executive Budget, so
23 let's make sure that we are keeping our voices strong
24 on this; this in addition to the issue that we heard
25 before of child care staff workers and pay parity are
I think two big issues that have come up as a result
of today's hearing that we really, really wanna see

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4 addressed in the FY17 budget; as Council Member Cumbo
5 said before, our budget is a document that reflects
6 our priorities as a city and right now these are two
7 incredibly underfunded areas and it does not reflect
8 well upon the City of New York and its government.
9 Thank you very much to this panel. Thank you.

10 Next panel -- Barry Campbell, Fortune
11 Society, ATI Coalition; Eric Grossman, Women's Prison
12 Association, ATI Coalition; Amy Ellenbogen from
13 Center for Court Innovation; Mike Jackson, LISC NYC,
14 and Susan Stetzer from Community Board 3 in
15 Manhattan.

16 ERIC GROSSMAN: Good afternoon. Thank
17 you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is
18 Eric Grossman; I'm with the Women's Prison
19 Association and WPA is a member of the ATI and
20 Reentry Coalition of New York City; we're a group of
21 10 nonprofit service organizations; we offer
22 diversion and reentry support for men and women and
23 youth from every City Council District and while our
24 name describes our criminal justice focus, much of
25 our work is aimed at improving the earnings, housing,
education, family relationships, and general welfare
of individuals who seek our assistance every year and

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4 the City Council has been a key partner throughout
5 the Coalition's 20-year history and we thank you for
6 your support.

7 Today I'm pleased to share additional
8 information about WPA's scope of programs which
9 include a home-based alternative to incarceration
10 program (ATI), two DHS-funded, shelters and an ACS-
11 funded family treatment and rehabilitation program,
12 which is aimed at preventing removal of children into
13 the foster care system. Our work in all of these
14 areas, as well as our work in prisons on Rikers
15 Island and with women returning to the community
16 informs our recommendations to you here today.

17 Across our programs we help families with
18 children; we're often struck by the ways in which the
19 mission of each agency can unwittingly undermine a
20 family's progress and by way of example, we work with
21 ATI clients in their homes; we're guided by the use
22 of **[inaudible]** risk assessment; it identifies the
23 causes of criminal behavior and major factors
24 contributing to a woman's criminal risk and in [sic]
25 our programs really are untreated mental illness,
addiction; a lot of our clients are living in
poverty, they have untreated trauma and housing

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4 instability and really, sometimes it's not until they
5 touch the criminal justice system that they're
6 actually first getting help for the things that
7 brought them into contact with the police and the
8 courts, but we know that when we address these issues
9 and we help women to address these issues in her
10 life, she's less likely to return to crime. And
11 you'll note that these issues are not easily treated
12 in correctional settings, in prisons and in jails
13 [bell], so we're here just to advocate -- and I'll
14 wrap this up quickly -- we're here to advocate for
15 the work that we do and for increased funding for the
16 work that we do; we strive to do more to serve these
17 families in need; in the upcoming year we anticipate
18 that the need will be greater and you'll see from our
19 written testimony just our request for increased
20 funding and additional clinical recommendations we
21 have to serve the population that we're working with.
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

24 AMY ELLENBOGEN: Good afternoon. My name
25 is Amy Ellenbogen and I'm the Project Director at the
Crown Heights Community Mediation Center, a Project

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4 of the Center for Court Innovation. Thanks for the
5 opportunity to speak to day.

6 Center for Court Innovation supports the
7 Council's efforts to bring more justice to
8 communities throughout the city. For nearly 20 years
9 the Center has been engaged in the same effort --
10 working to reduce the use of incarceration and reduce
11 recidivism through innovative programming at our
12 neighborhood-based Youth and Community Justice
13 Centers. I'm here today to urge the committees to
14 support continued funding for the Center for Court
15 Innovation.

16 The Center is committed to improving
17 outcomes for young people impacted by the justice
18 system, working with more than 2,300 youth each year.
19 For example, the Center's Youth Court uses positive
20 peer pressure to encourage young people who've
21 committed minor offenses to repay the community and
22 alternatives to detention programs that work with
23 young people charged with delinquency.

24 In addition, the Center recently launched
25 "Project Recess," which has kept nearly one hundred
16- and 17-year-olds out of jail for low-level crimes
and allowed them to avoid the lasting collateral

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4 consequences of a criminal record while still holding
5 them accountable.

6 The Center supports the Council's plan to
7 create a crime victim service coordinator within the
8 Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. Women and
9 transgender individuals who are victims of commercial
10 sexual exploitation, trafficking and prostitution
11 find themselves in the criminal justice system
12 labeled as defendants; the Center has piloted a host
13 of innovative programs that treat New Yorkers trapped
14 in the cycle of exploitation, crime and violence as
15 victims rather than perpetrators. Likewise, Center
16 programs like "Make it Happen" in Crown Heights,
17 Brooklyn provide culturally appropriate counseling
18 and strength-based focus [bell] to help young me of
19 color manage trauma arising from violence that they
20 may have experienced in their communities.

21 This Council supports the Center with
22 expanding services, adding capacity at existing sites
23 throughout the city and piloting new initiatives in
24 underserved communities, and you can read the rest of
25 my testimony.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much.

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4 MIKE JACKSON: Hello there. Thank you,
5 Chair Levin and members of the Committee on General
6 Welfare for the opportunity to testify on the Fiscal
7 Year 17 Preliminary Budget. My name is Mike Jackson
8 and I'm the Communications Officer for Local
9 Initiative Support Corporation's New York City
10 program; I'm filling in for our policy director, who
11 unfortunately couldn't be here today. I'm submitting
12 this written testimony on behalf of LISC New York
13 City.

14 LISC equips struggling communities with
15 the capital strategy and know-how to become good
16 places to work, do business and raise children;
17 working with local stakeholders, we invest in
18 housing, health, education, public safety, and job
19 creation. During the last 30 years we've worked with
20 community-based organizations to address local
21 challenges and incubating new solutions. In New York
22 City alone LISC and its affiliates invested over \$2
23 billion, leveraging over \$5 billion for low- and
24 moderate-income communities, resulting in over 36,000
25 units of affordable housing and over two million
square feet of retail and community space.

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LISC New York City asks for the City
Council's support for additional discretionary
funding for our Communities for Healthy Food program,
which we believe is a powerful tool to address
healthy food access and food insecurity faced by many
New Yorkers. During Fiscal Year 2016, Communities
for Healthy Food received \$500,000 from the City
Council to deliver services in the Mount Eden section
of the Bronx, West Harlem, Cypress Hills, East New
York, and Bedford-Stuyvesant. For City Fiscal Year
2017, we request additional discretionary funds in
the total amount of \$1.3 million to heighten program
impacts in these neighborhoods and to expand into
Hunts Point section of the Bronx and the Far Rockaway
section of Queens. The Communities for Healthy Food
program is an innovative place-based initiative that
integrates access to healthy, affordable food in
underserved neighborhoods across New York City where
residents have high rates of diet-related diseases,
like obesity and diabetes, high levels of poverty,
chronic unemployment, long-term reliance on public
assistance, like SNAP benefits, and low levels of
fruit and vegetable consumption. We believe that

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4 Communities for Healthy... [bell] [laugh] I was trying
5 just to get to the **[inaudible]**...

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That's okay...

7 MIKE JACKSON: We believe that
8 Communities for Healthy Food program is strengthening
9 the food infrastructure system across our catchment
10 neighborhoods, positively impacting low-income
11 households. Since program implementation began in
12 2014, the following resources and units of service
13 have been deployed across our target neighborhoods
14 with participants and recipients spread evenly among
15 seniors, youth and households with young children --
16 I'll just read a couple -- provided over 750,000
17 pounds of emergency food for over 50,000 food pantry
18 clients, we connected directly with almost 15,000
19 residents through neighborhood outreach and awareness
20 campaigns, enrolled 1,350 households in supplementary
21 nutrition assistance programs and created 15 new
22 farmers markets, farm shares and gardens -- the rest
23 you can read on the...

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you so much for
25 all of your testimony and for all the work that you
and your organizations do every day; we look forward
to continuing to work with you all on all these

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4 issues as we move forward in the budget process and
5 we are hopeful that the administration will address
6 some of these issues in the Executive Budget moving
7 forward in FY17. Thank you, thank you much.

8 Next panel -- Gregory Brender, United
9 Neighborhood Houses; Andrea Bowen, United
10 Neighborhood Houses; Nadia Alexander, Magical Years
11 E.C.C. of Sunset Park; Stephanie Gendell, Citizens'
12 Committee for Children; Lisa Caswell, Day Care
13 Council of New York. Whoever wants to go first.

14 NADIA ALEXANDER: Good afternoon. I just
15 want to thank the Council for allowing me to have the
16 opportunity to speak today. My name is Nadia
17 Alexander and I work at Magical Years Early Childhood
18 Center of Sunset Park Community Services; I'm a
19 teacher of children 18 months to 2 years old and I've
20 been in the field for about 8 years. I work with
21 children who need the services that we are providing
22 because we are preparing them for their futures. I
23 love the work that I do and it gives me the
24 opportunity to impact their lives and it may seem
25 like a small thing, but you know they are the young
people that we are preparing for the future.

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4 I wanted to let you know we help them
5 develop socially, emotionally, cognitively;
6 physically, and when the public schools are closed,
7 guess what; we are open, from 7:25-6:00 p.m. Monday-
8 Friday and we have the same qualifications as the
9 teachers in Department of Education, but yet we don't
10 receive the same pay, the benefits and the respect.

11 Most of the teachers that work there for
12 15, 16 years and they have not received a pay raise
13 in 10 years. Earlier I listened to the ACS and they
14 talked about health benefits; ours went up; we are
15 actually paying more and half of the teachers cannot
16 afford it, so they don't have health benefits and
17 that's pretty sad. I'm a single mom, so when I have
18 to pay my health and my son, that takes a lot out of
19 my salary. I've gone back to school to finish up my
20 master's and I'm paying out of pocket. So with no
21 increase, I'm paying for it, so that's less money
22 coming into my home and preparing my son for college.

23 I know the benefits of early childhood
24 'cause my son had that benefit and he's in high
25 school now and he's getting ready to go to college; I
26 know what an early childhood education does; not just

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being in the field, but having that experience as a
parent.

So today I'm just asking the Council that
they really looking into this issue of giving us the
raise that we deserve, giving us the benefits that we
deserve; health care is important and if we are
[bell] sick we can't do the job that we do and we
love what we do; most of the teachers worked there
15, 16 years and the reason they stay is because they
love what they do; they know the impact that they are
having on the lives of the children and if you look
at the doctors and lawyers, most of them, they come
from the early setting, so that's important they had
a great start and we want that to continue and if you
leave us out, what are you going to get as a public
school? I wanna thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much
for your testimony and for the incredible work that
you do and for believing in our children in New York
City and for teaching them.

LISA CASWELL: My name is Lisa Caswell;
I'm the Senior Policy Analyst for the Day Care
Council; I'm gonna summarize my comments based on
what's already been said.

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4 We go back to World War II; we had 120
5 members in 200 centers; we have three issues that you
6 addressed and I wanna thank you for you diligence and
7 also for City Councilwoman Cumbo's diligence and the
8 rest of the City Council and the union and the my
9 colleagues; there is great solidarity on this issue.

10 The three issues are salary parity, the
11 health insurance issues and the pension issues. In
12 terms of the status of our members, 51 percent of
13 them have lost teachers to the DOE, 56 percent are
14 operating without a certified teacher on staff. One
15 of our members that has 310 workers in 11 centers; 17
16 percent of those 310 workers are on food stamps; 54
17 percent of them are receiving Medicaid. After a
18 decade of wage freezes, for what has been clearly
19 defined as a workforce primarily of black and Latino
20 women, there is this \$10,000 wage gap, for starters,
21 with the same qualifications. I also would like to
22 recognize the leadership of the Office of the Public
23 Advocate in terms of these issues early on.

24 When we went into negotiations, after
25 waiting for a long time, we saw the stabilizing
solution right off the bat that had to do with an
immediate market adjustment with the same wage

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4 increases that the DOE workers were receiving; that
5 proposal was rejected; the offer that's on the table
6 is less than one-third of what we proposed. In the
7 health benefits area, what's been put on the table is
8 restricting staff to participation in Health and
9 Hospital Corporation, which has been poorly received.
10 Right now the pension benefits [inaudible] 25 percent
11 of the eligible child care workers were lost in 2012;
12 it is facing a \$64 million shortfall, which severely
13 jeopardizes the fund [bell] and the proposal, as you
14 mentioned at the end of your comments has to do with
15 transferring funds first to the members and then to
16 the pension fund, which would put the funded risk of
17 any shortfalls that the providers might experience.

18 We're in complete solidarity with the
19 rest of the community; we know that you are in the
20 same position; there have been some achievements; the
21 salary -- the 2.5, the COLA, the career ladder, it's
22 nowhere near enough and we face long-term
23 destabilization of a system that's taken a long time
24 to build that is of great importance.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Lisa, just one --
just following up on one thing you just said that

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struck me -- there is solidarity between every..

[crosstalk]

LISA CASWELL: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: so just in contrast
to, you know what we hearing from ACS, which is like,
oh you know, gotta work it out and you've got the Day
Care Council, you've got the unions, you've got the..
everybody's on the same page...

LISA CASWELL: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: and we all know where
this needs to go and so I think just moving forward,
let's just contin... we need to continue to present the
united front to say look, we all... I mean Day Care
Council, 1707, CSA, advocates, everybody kind of
knows... everybody's on the same page, as you said, in
solidarity... [crosstalk]

LISA CASWELL: Yeah. We can't wait to
get to parity with UPK in this labor contract; we
have to go further than that.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

LISA CASWELL: We're gonna lose a system.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah. Thank you.

STEPHANIE GENDELL: Good afternoon. I'm
Stephanie Gendell; I'm Associate Executive Director

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at Citizens' Committee for Children. I'm just gonna
support everything that my colleagues have said about
salary parity and emergency food and since we're a
multi-issue, I'm actually gonna focus on child
welfare and homelessness, since the other issues seem
to be covered, but we stand by those other things as
well.

The first thing we wanted to ask for was
for a City Council initiative to help the City
implement the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard
which is aimed at allowing youth in foster care to
have normalcy in their lives and participate in
activities like their peers do, such as soccer and
violin lessons. Everything else we're gonna be
urging ACS to follow up on; they used to provide a
\$750 discharge grant when children left foster care
and when they were reunified; it had been a Council
initiative; it was baselined and then cut. We also,
as you alluded to this morning, are interested in
post permanency services for children who leave the
system. We are gonna be urging the City to support a
bill pending in the Assembly by Assembly Member
Hevesi, A.7756-A, which would increase the Child
Welfare Housing subsidy and the amount, as well as

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allow youths to receive it until age 24 and help
prevent homelessness for foster youth; right now the
City is only committed to supporting the actual
amount increase and not the age. We're also gonna be
looking to them to increase educational stability for
foster children; as required by federal law they
should be making a plan for how they're gonna
implement that. On the homeless side, we're really
grateful for the supportive housing; we also wanna
see a New York/New York four and we wanna make sure
that there are some slots available for families as
well as for youth aging out of foster care. The new
federal law requires making homeless children a
priority for child care; the City has a system for
finding the 4-year-olds who are homeless and getting
them into pre-K; [bell] we want them to use that for
the children who are in child care, since now they
are federally a priority. And lastly, services to
address the trauma for the children that are in
shelter, which we knew before and is now totally
documented, children are... and aside from the trauma
of homeless, there's trauma while in shelter and then
when they leave shelter and the type of primary
prevention services that you talked to ACS about is

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just the kind of services these children need.

Thanks and thank you for all your support.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Stephanie.

GREGORY BRENDER: Good afternoon and
thanks. I'm Gregory Brender from United Neighborhood
Houses and I'm joined by my colleague Andy Bowen; I'm
gonna talk on salary parity, which I know you've
heard of, and Andy's gonna talk on some hot button
issues with three HRA RFPs.

Much has already been said, so I'm just
gonna summarize and really hit on one point. What is
being lost is really the most effective and best
system of early childhood. The Early Learn system
where we are losing teachers is the only system that
works for working parents; it is the only system that
serves the youngest and the poorest children in New
York City. And what we saw last year when the City
released its own data of performance standards, both
for classroom quality and instructional quality, was
that community-based organizations, like those in
Early Learn, were outperforming and continue to
outperform the public school programs in 9 out of 10
metrics. This cannot continue with salary disparity,
as we continue to lose teachers and staff and

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4 directors and the people who are deeply committed to
5 high-quality early education.

6 I know you know this; you've spoken about
7 it; this year's hearing, last year's hearing and many
8 press conferences, so we look forward to continuing
9 to work with you to make sure that the City hears it
10 as well. And I'm gonna turn it over to Andy to talk
11 about the HRA RFP piece.

12 ANDREA BOWEN: Thank you, Chair for the
13 opportunity to speak. My name is Andrea Bowen; I'm a
14 Policy Analyst at United Neighborhood Houses.

15 Last month HRA released three RFPs for
16 new programs that provide employment and educational
17 assistance to cash assistance applicants, recipients
18 and other HRA service populations who engage in
19 employment activities; it's a Youth Pathways, which
20 provides a wide variety of educational and employment
21 services and service coordination for people between
22 18 and 24; there's Career Compass, which provides
23 employment services and service coordination for
24 people over 25 and Career Advance, which provides
25 clients of Youth Pathways and Career Compass with
further training geared towards career advancement in
specific sectors.

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4 These programs were outlined in concept
5 papers released last summer and we applauded, along
6 with many allies, the basic approach of these
7 programs, which move HRA away from the rapid
8 attachment model and towards career building, but
9 we're greatly concerned that the per participant rate
10 in these RFPs is grossly inadequate and won't come
11 close to covering the cost for providing these
12 services. And so we've made a series of
13 recommendations that, you know, we believe
14 **[inaudible]** more successful if HRA takes the
15 following actions.

16 So first; increasing the funding levels.
17 The concept papers, the rates are not much higher
18 than they were -- the RFPs don't put the rates much
19 higher than they were in the concept papers. Just
20 comparing Youth Pathways, it's currently at \$826 per
21 participant, whereas a very similar program, DYCD's
22 OSY program, compensates between \$8,500 and \$10,500
23 per participant, so that's a pretty big change.

24 HRA still doesn't have a participant
25 tracking -- we called upon HRA to have a participant
[bell] data tracking system that will be field tested
when this hit the ground; the RFPs specifically say

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that they anticipate creating such a system, but the system won't be available until after the contract start date, which seems particularly worrying. The contract sizes, we would want the contract sizes to allow for smaller community-based providers to competitively bid as prime contractors, but that's just not the case. You know, for example, you know you're looking at an estimated 1500 per site annually in Brooklyn for a Youth Pathways site and so smaller organizations can't provide the kind of staffing necessary to service a large volume of clients at these rates.

So very troubling and these smaller neighborhood-based nonprofits that are locked out of competition, you know really provide the holistic services that these RFPs are meant to provide. There's more in the written testimony, but we urge City Council to push the administration to take steps to ensure that the providers have these resources necessary to, you know, provide the right services to New Yorkers.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry; specifically you mentioned the price per participant for Youth Pathways; on the other ones, do you have that..

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4 ANDREA BOWEN: Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: price per
6 participant?

7 ANDREA BOWEN: So comparison-wise, the
8 concept paper put Youth Pathways at \$612 and the RFP
9 put it at \$826; that's the biggest leap. Career
10 Compass, the concept paper was at \$358 per
11 participant and the RFP is only at \$437 per
12 participant. Career Advance, the paper put it at
13 \$713 per participant and the RFP has leaped it up to
14 \$756 per participant.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry; Youth went
16 from what to what?

17 ANDREA BOWEN: \$612 to \$826.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. And that was
19 the greatest jump percentage-wise...

20 ANDREA BOWEN: Yeah.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: it was only \$200?

22 ANDREA BOWEN: Yeah.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I mean where... what
24 would be a... I don't know, just because I don't know
25 the nuts and bolts of running a problem like that;
what would be a sustainable number or a reasonable
number price per participant?

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4 ANDREA BOWEN: So our comparison for
5 Youth Pathways is the OSY program, which... [crosstalk]

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: **[inaudible]**

7 ANDREA BOWEN: you know, provides a
8 similar basket of services; not exactly, but similar
9 -- mentoring, academic support, employment
10 preparedness -- and that reimbursement rate is
11 between \$8,500 per participant and \$10,500 per
12 participant. Looking at Career Advance, \$756 per
13 participant; that compares pretty unfavorably with
14 the state-support Career Pathways program, 'cause the
15 state has its own program labeled Career Pathways...

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

17 ANDREA BOWEN: which is an adult... you
18 know, which is a program for, you know, out of
19 work/out of school youth and also adults. That
20 reimbursement **[inaudible]** at a rate of approximately
21 \$4,500 for successful delivery services, so...
22 [crosstalk]

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Wow, so somewhere in
24 -- 10 times as much.

25 ANDREA BOWEN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Alright, let's
continue to work on this; if there's an opportunity

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4 to impact this, I presume this would be in this
5 year's budget, so...

6 ANDREA BOWEN: Yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: but I think that it
8 needs [sic] to be something that we hear a lot about,
9 you know a lot from providers, a lot from potential
10 providers, obviously and advocates over the next
11 couple of months.

12 ANDREA BOWEN: And I'm happy to say that
13 allies from New York City Employment and Training
14 Coalition are here; they'll be speaking to this and
15 other organizations I'm sure; this is not the last
16 you'll be hearing of this.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Okay, thanks.

18 ANDREA BOWEN: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you to this
20 panel. Thank you. And thanks for your patience too.

21 Okay, final panel -- Mary Ellen Clark,
22 New York City Employment and Training Coalition --
23 sorry, I didn't have you guys on the same panel --
24 David Ng from Human Services Council; Carlyn Cowen
25 from FPWA, and Merble Reagon from Women's Center for
Education and Career Advancement.

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4 And then is there anybody else that
5 signed up to testify or that wishes to testify?
6 Going once, going twice. Okay. [background
7 comments]

8 [pause]

9 Thank you so much; whoever wants to
10 begin.

11 [pause]

12 MARY ELLEN CLARK: Thank you for giving
13 us the opportunity to talk at the end of a very, very
14 long day for all of us. My name is Mary Ellen Clark
15 and I'm the Executive Director of the New York City
16 Employment and Training Coalition and we'd like to
17 speak today about HRA's employment plan, which Andy
18 Bowen, our colleague, led into very well.

19 Commissioner Banks gave scant attention
20 to this employment plan this morning, but we have
21 deep concerns about it and the three request for
22 proposals which were issued very recently.

23 The Coalition is an association of more
24 than 150 community-based organizations, labor unions
25 and higher education organizations that annually
provide job training and employment services to over
800,000 most vulnerable New Yorkers. We support the

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4 administration's Career Pathways concept and HRA's
5 bold plan to reimagine employment services to help
6 public assistance clients more effectively enter the
7 workforce and buy the food; have the medical benefits
8 that you've been hearing about all day today.

9 We had the opportunity to provide
10 feedback and input to HRA on their concepts before
11 the RFPs were issued and we were optimistic and our
12 expectations were very high, since they delayed the
13 issuance for so many months. We thought they were
14 taking into account the feedback that the experience
15 from the workforce development community had
16 provided.

17 HRA also had the opportunity to work with
18 a number of providers who were funded by the Robin
19 Hood Foundation over the past year to learn more
20 about how programs with fairly strong outcomes are
21 structured and funded.

22 Unfortunately, the RFPs released in
23 February still fall short of being fully
24 transformational and will not fulfill the
25 administration's Career Pathways vision; most
importantly, as Andy alluded to, the Youth Pathways,
Career Compass and Career Advance are disappointing

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4 in that they are not adequately funded to support a
5 viable cost per participant. The feedback from the
6 community-based organization provider community
7 indicates the cost per participant numbers are much
8 too low to provide these additional services and
9 high-performance outcomes that they're demanding.

10 In the details [bell] we included some
11 comparative costs, as Andy did; as the Human Services
12 Council recent report, "New York Nonprofits in the
13 Aftermath of FECS" states, underfunded government
14 payment rates are the primary driver of financial
15 distress, and they were talking about 80 cents on the
16 dollar; these RFPs are looking at 10-50 cents on the
17 dollar for adequate funding.

18 So in conclusion, really to better meet
19 the individual client needs and address the poverty
20 and income inequality, HRA has designed a very
21 complex system and as well know, complex systems are
22 much more expensive than simple ones. By creating a
23 complex system without proper contract terms and
24 underlying processes in place and by underfunding it,
25 HRA might actually reduce the overall service
quality, which will put New York City's nonprofit
provider community at financial risk, as well as, and

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more importantly, putting the Career Pathways vision
at risk and jeopardizing the opportunity for
individuals who need it the most to compete for
living wage jobs. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. And just
following up on that; I mean I think... my
understanding is that there's a lot of organizations
that applied for the RFP; that in and of itself is
not an indication that the rate is fair, right; if
you were... [crosstalk]

MARY ELLEN CLARK: Right.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: gonna apply for it,
because they don't wanna lose out on the contract...

MARY ELLEN CLARK: Right.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: but that doesn't
necessarily mean that they are able to figure out how
to make it work for 10 cents on the dollar.

MARY ELLEN CLARK: No, that's... and we've
been working with Human Services Council on thinking
of ways to -- and you may be speaking to that --
create some rater system so that we can alert the
community on what's a good RFP and what's not so
people won't put their organizations in jeopardy by
applying for things that are not viable.

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4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right and it's hard
5 to extrapolate necessarily what happened with FECS...
6 [crosstalk]

7 MARY ELLEN CLARK: With FECS, right.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: in terms of you know,
9 what went into that situation, but you know it's
10 certainly a source of concern and as I said to the
11 previous panel, I think organizing around this issue
12 in the coming weeks I think is important so that
13 there's some clarity out there; I think that'd be
14 very helpful.

15 MARY ELLEN CLARK: Thank you for
16 listening. And Page Two, we have great detail about
17 comparable costs... [crosstalk]

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And the other thing
19 is just, yeah, whether... you know, if you look at the
20 Back to Work contracts; I think FECS had a Back to
21 Work contract, right; these were enormous contracts
22 under the previous administration; you had two or
23 three organizations that had the lion's share of
24 contracts. So obviously there's economies of scale
25 there, but if smaller organizations that have ties to
communities want to be able to participate; it makes
it harder if you, know.

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4 MARY ELLEN CLARK: Right. And the
5 contract terms are much more strict on this one, if
6 you don't place 80 percent of the people; you get
7 zero dollars and that's just not viable when
8 placement rates previously were much, much lower.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. Thank you.

10 MARY ELLEN CLARK: Thank you.

11 CARLYN COWEN: Good afternoon. My name
12 is Carlyn Cowen and I'm a Policy Analyst at the
13 Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies. I'd like
14 to thank the Council for the opportunity to testify
15 and for your leadership on issues that greatly affect
16 children and youth in New York City.

17 We encourage the Council to invest in
18 vital programs to ensure that all children and youth
19 in New York City have access to opportunity and
20 upward mobility. I know it's been a long day for all
21 and many people have said it better than I could in
22 testimony beforehand, so I'll just provide a brief
23 summary of our testimony and offer my full written
24 testimony as well.

25 We encourage the Council to invest in
these vital programs, including establishing salary
parity for Early Childhood Education teachers between

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4 the DOE and community-based organizations. Since the
5 launch of UPK in 2014, FPWA has sought feedback from
6 our membership agencies through focus groups and
7 interviews and one of the biggest issues that has
8 arisen has been the salary parity issue. FPWA
9 encourages ACS to bring the rest of their teachers
10 and staff in line with the salary levels without
11 which providers will not be able to maintain quality
12 teachers, director and staff.

13 An additional challenge is a lack of
14 sufficient financial support for Early Learn
15 providers. FPWA urges the Mayor and the City Council
16 to increase the Early Learn rate to support high-
17 quality programming and more adequately address
18 facility and maintenance costs and retain high-
19 quality staff.

20 In addition, FPWA recommends that ACS
21 decrease the threshold for full reimbursement to a
22 more realistic enrollment level.

23 FPWA also supports increasing investment
24 in our childhood welfare system; we represent more
25 than 30 child welfare agencies that operate numerous
programs throughout the city. FPWA strongly
recommends that the Mayor and the City Council fund

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4 community preventive services that are targeted to
5 at-risk families based on location and need and are
6 provided before there's an allegation of abuse or
7 neglect.

8 In addition to assisting families before
9 they reach crisis points, preventative services are
10 an extremely cost-effective measure. FPWA also
11 recommends that we restore the automatic discharge
12 grant for families reunifying from foster care and
13 youth [bell] aging out of foster care, adding \$5
14 million for post-adoption support services and adding
15 funding to increase the boarding rate for youth over
16 the age of 14. Thank you for the opportunity to
17 testify today.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much
19 for your testimony. Thank you.

20 MERBLE REAGON: I wanna thank the
21 Committee -- Thank you, David. My name is Merble
22 Reagon; I'm Executive Director at the Women's Center
23 for Education and Career Advancement. Over the years
24 we have provided a wide variety of services to help
25 more than 40,000 women prepare for jobs and careers
that supported their families adequately. In recent
years we focused on defining what it actually costs

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4 for New York City families to make ends meet and what
5 supports will help them to get there in the meantime.
6 We have produced four reports since the year 2000
7 that measure exactly how much income working families
8 actually need based on where they live in New York
9 City, the number of people in their families and the
10 ages of their children. We believe that now is a
11 great time to shift our public policy discussions
12 from just moving families above poverty to one that
13 addresses a more comprehensive way how to help
14 working families achieve economic stability, based on
15 a better understanding of what they really need to
16 make ends meet.

17 For example, we know that a three-person
18 Bronx family headed by a single parent with a 2-year-
19 old and a 7-year-old needs to earn almost \$70,000 a
20 year to cover all expenses with no help; this
21 includes monthly expenses of \$1700 for safe, reliable
22 licensed and regulated childcare, \$640 for food and
23 \$1200 for rent. The policy discussions we had and
24 the policy decisions we're going to be making very
25 soon as a community should be very different from
those when we were just talking about moving families

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above poverty. Because for that same family, that
would mean \$21,000 would take care of them.

By the way, an annual income of \$70,000
[bell] for a family translates to a wage of \$32.00 an
hour. Also, you all know that today a wage of \$15.00
an hour does not support any family of two or more in
any neighborhood in New York City. I'll be quick.

We calculated a bare bones budget for 152
family types in the five boroughs of New York City,
ranging from a family of 1 adult to families with 4
adults and 3 children in 7 New York City geographic
areas; 7 because we've divided Manhattan and Brooklyn
into two parts. Also, we vary the budgets based on
the ages of the children.

So we urge the Committees to consider
incorporating practical remedies that will help move
our low-wage working families along a steady road to
economic self-sufficiency. And I'll submit the rest
of my report in writing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you so much; I
look forward to reading that... [crosstalk]

MERBLE REAGON: And we've got it here...

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yes.

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4 MERBLE REAGON: and we are going to
5 e-mail to all of the committee members the very thick
6 charts of the 152 family types and the 7 geographic
7 areas.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That's great; I'll
9 help distribute it to every council member; make sure
10 we all have it, because in all of these conversations
11 that we have, we all -- you know, as council members,
12 we know -- we have some sense of what the reality is
13 in our respective districts, but being able to apply
14 that with data is very difficult and if there's so
15 many policy issues that come up that are tied to
16 family income levels that we -- it would be very
17 helpful, so I look forward to reading it.

18 MERBLE REAGON: Thank you for this
19 opportunity.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you for
21 presenting it.

22 DAVID NG: Good afternoon Council Member
23 Levin. My name is David; I'm here on behalf of the
24 Human Services Council, and last year when I came to
25 testify at this hearing, I had been asking for the
City Council to support a 10 percent cost of living
adjustment for human services sector; 5 percent for

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4 Fiscal Year 16 and 5 percent for Fiscal Year 17. So
5 we only got 2.5 percent increase for Fiscal Year 16,
6 which is a very tiny drop in the bucket and you know
7 the implementation process has been very arduous for
8 a lot of the provider and a lot of them still haven't
9 even gotten that 2.5 percent yet. So one of the
10 things we really want to work with the Council and
11 the Mayor on is actually making the process a lot
12 easier and streamlining it for a lot of the
13 organizations, because it's just -- you know,
14 although 2.5 percent is a very small amount, a lot of
15 organizations are still trying to get that 2.5
16 percent and it hasn't been easy.

17 But we are happy that this year, at the
18 beginning of the year, the Mayor announced the
19 minimum wage increase funded for the human services
20 sector, which brings it up to \$15.00 per hour, which
21 is wonderful; unfortunately, you know one of the next
22 things we really have to talk about is addressing
23 wage compression for those who are like at \$15.00 per
24 hour or slightly above \$15.00 per hour, because as
25 the wages of those who are below \$15.00 rise up to
\$15.00, you know organizations face an issue in which
their staff who are at \$15.00 or slightly above

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4 \$15.00 not seeing a pay increase and this will
5 greatly, greatly affect the organizations' staff
6 morale and also our own career ladder and making sure
7 that we're able to retain professional employees,
8 right. So that's something that we're hoping to work
9 with the Council in addressing for the upcoming
10 budget.

11 Some of the other things that we're
12 working on is, you know, we put out a report on a
13 commission that we started to examine the closure
14 [sic] and nonprofit organizations in which some of --
15 many who testified before me have spoken about to
16 kind of look into the way nonprofits work with
17 government and address some of the issues in that
18 relationship; in particular, [bell] contracting, so
19 there's some things we're hoping to work with the
20 Council on possibly during hearings in the future and
21 maybe examining the ways you know we can kind of
22 strengthen that relationship or better that
23 relationship. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, thank you
25 so much, David for your testimony and for the good
work that you do and thank you to this entire panel.
This has been very helpful; we have an opportunity

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4 through the budget process; this is why it's such a
5 long, drawn out process, over a number of months is
6 so that we're able to hear from the providers and
7 advocates and those that are seeing what's going on
8 on the ground and try to incorporate that as much as
9 possible into what we're doing here at the Council
10 and in the city. As my colleague Laurie Cumbo said
11 earlier, our budget is a reflection of our priorities
12 and you know, when times are bad and we are making
13 cuts, those cuts reflect our priorities and when
14 times are pretty good and we're adding funding to our
15 budget, those additions reflect our priorities as
16 well and so we need to make sure that our city's
17 budget reflects the priorities of individuals in need
18 in New York City, individuals that are working hard
19 and not making it or not quite making it and families
20 that are striving and doing their best and that we
21 have an obligation to stretch out a helping hand to.
22 I wanna thank you so much for your time and for your
23 patience, to everybody here for your patience; it's
24 been a very long day, but this has been a very good
25 hearing and we look forward to seeing you all over the
next several months and in May at the Executive
Budget Hearing and please feel free to reach out to

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4 my office if there's anything that we can be helpful
5 with or to follow up on all of the issues that we've
6 talked about today; we look forward to hearing from
7 all of you. Okay and with that, at 5:20 p.m., this
8 hearing is adjourned.

9 [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. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date April 14, 2016