

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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May 24, 2016
Start: 10:08 a.m.
Recess: 6:00 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Julissa Ferreras-Copeland
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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Jacques Jiha
Commissioner of Department of Finance

Michael Hyman
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Sharif Griggs
You Got to Believe

Katherine Rando
You Got to Believe

Rosie Williams
You Got to Believe

Anna Moss
You Got to Believe

Anna Sanchez
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You Got to Believe

Annie Keen [sp?]
You Got to Believe

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Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer

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Project Reach

Dan Kao
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David Calvert
YouthBuild

Maha Attieh
New York City of Health

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DC 37 Local 420 Political Action Commission
Board Seven

Constance Robinson Turner

Karen Jarett
New York State Nurses Association

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Community Health Food Advocate at Northeast
Housing Development

Naomi Goldberg Haas
Dances for a Variable Population

Pamela Stewart Martinez
Lunch for Learning

Celia Green
Lunch for Learning

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Kristina Erskine
Bushwick Campus Youth Food Policy

Natasha Rodriguez
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Academy of Urban Planning Bushwick

Di Greeman [sp?]

District 15 President Council

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Community Food Advocates

Alexis Posey

Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

Heidi Siegfried

Health Policy Director at Center for
Independence of Disabled in New York

Karen Jamie

HANAC

Mac Chuilli

Big Apple Greeter

Patricia Restrepo Cincos [sp?]

Voces Latinas

Tammy Yuen

YWCA Queens

Laura Jean Hawkins

Sports and Arts in School Foundation

Janet Poppendieck

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DeJohn Jones
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James James
New Settlement Apartments Parent Action
Committee

Jazmine Dugall
Academy for Young Writers East New York

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

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Teachers Unite

Anne Marie McFadyen
Restorative Justice Coordinator

Joseph Ferdinand
New Settlement Parent Action Committee

Sharese Crouther
Center for Court Innovation

Catherine McVay Hughes
Manhattan Community Board One

Patrick Kennell
Community Board One

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Stephanie Gendell
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Harvey Epstein
Urban Justice Center

Victor Gidarisingh
Bronx Health Reach

Rosa Concepcion
Communities for Healthy Food Advocate in West
Harlem

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

Niles French
Staten Island Historical Society

Thomas Cheng

Carlyn Cowen
FPWA

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Good

morning, and welcome to the City Council's 12th and final day of hearings on the Mayor's Executive Budget for Fiscal 2017. My name is Julissa Ferreras-Copeland. I am the Chair of the Committee. We've been joined by Minority Leader Matteo and Majority Leader Van Bramer. Today, we will first hear from the Office of Management and Budget, and then we will hear from the Department of Finance, the Department of Design and Construction, the New York City Comptroller, and the Independent Budget Office, and then the public. The public portion of today's testimony will begin approximately at 2:30 p.m. I want to remind everyone who wishes to testify to please fill out a witness slip with the Sergeant at Arms. For members of the public, the witness panels will be arranged by topic, so please indicate the topic of your testimony on your witness slip. We understand that many seniors or people with disabilities who wish to testify must leave at a certain time, so we will try to accommodate that need by putting you on some of the earlier witness panels. Any senior or person with disability who requires this accommodation, please make a note on your

witness slip so we know who you are. For members of the public who wish to testify but cannot do so at today's hearing for any reason you can email your testimony to the Finance Division at financetestimony@council.nyc.gov, and the staff will make it a part of the official record. We will be accepting testimony until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 28th. Before we get started, I'd like to thank the entire Finance Division individually for their terrific work in preparing for these hearings, the talented and dedicated members of the Finance Division are: Director Latonya McKinney, Deputy Director and Chief Economist Doctor Ray Majeski [sp?], Deputy Director Regina Poreda Ryan, Deputy Director Nathan Toth, Deputy Director Paul Simone [sp?], Asistnta Director Imra Edev [sp?], Committee Counsel Rebecca Chaisson [sp?], Unit Heads Isha Wright, Chima Obecheri [sp?], John Russell, Paul Stromm, Doheni Sampora [sp?], and Crilian Francisco. The Finance Analysts in alphabetical order: Jessica Ackermann [sp?], Alia Aleem [sp?], Maria Enoche [sp?], Ellen Eng, Sarah Gastelum [sp?], Kenny Grace, Elizabeth Hoffman, Sheila Johnson, William Cramating [sp?], Prince Mansa [sp?], Janet Merrill [sp?],

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2 Brittany Moressi [sp?], Namira Nazot [sp?], Jimmy
3 Raez [sp?], Steve Restler [sp?], John Seltzer [sp?],
4 Kendall Stephenson [sp?], James Sabudi [sp?], Brandon
5 West, Davis Winslow, and Roy Sue [sp?]. And of
6 course, the Finance Division Administrative Unit
7 Support: Nicole Anderson, Maria Pargan [sp?] and
8 Roberto Caterano [sp?] who pull everything together.
9 Next, I'd like to thank my staff Daniel Coates, Ivan
10 Acol [sp?], Selina Supera [sp?], Chiana Guayo [sp?],
11 and the District Office Team for which the reason why
12 I'm here, so I'm so grateful to them. I also want to
13 thank the Sergeant at Arms who keeps us safe here
14 evyer day, Director of Security Carl D'Abla [sp?],
15 Chief Sergeant at Arms Rafael Perez [sp?], John
16 Biando, Eddie Codazo [sp?], Gina Sharp, Colin Todd,
17 Raul Rosario, Alan Su, Dane Hope [sp?], Mohammad
18 Arshad [sp?], and Jessica Peligrino, and the film
19 crew and the New York City media who watch us all
20 day. They spend just as much time at these hearings
21 as we do, so I want to thank them for their hard
22 work. They have all done an excellent job during
23 these Executive Budget hearings. With that said, I
24 will begin with a timeline of the budget process.
25 So, for this year on January 21st, the Mayor de

Blasio released his Preliminary Budget for Fiscal 2017 totaling 82.1 billion. Throughout the entire month of March the Council heard testimony from over 50 agencies and the public about potential changes to the Preliminary Budget that should be incorporated in the Executive Budget. After careful consideration of the testimony that was presented to each of the Preliminary Budget hearings, the Council developed its budget response which contained a clear statement of the Council's priority. The response reiterated the Council's focus on addressing inequities on equality through responsible budgeting. This means addressing inequalities in the type, scale and accessibility of service and programs all while advancing long-term budget stability, efficiency and transparency in the City's operations. On April 26th, the Mayor released his Fiscal 2017 Executive Budget which totaled 82.2 billion dollars. The Council was pleased that the budget included a few of the Council's proposals from the budget responses, but as I stated in the first day of Executive Budget hearings, it was clear that the Executive Budget was the Mayor's budget rather than the budget that ensured that the shared priorities of both the

Administration and the Council were included. I can say today, after presiding over nearly 65 hours of Executive Budget hearings, that the testimony that we heard from the agency only reinforced this notion. Over the past two weeks we questioned each Commissioner about the items for the Council's budget response that were not included and were repeatedly told that they were just not a priority. In addition, we heard the refrain from the agencies that certain core agency functions were not based on the Executive Budget because it was assumed that the Council would fill the agency's budget gaps with its discretionary funding. The Council is extremely frustrated to hear about Commissioners who would not fight or advocate for what their agencies need because the message trickled down that the Council would pick up where their budgets left off. One of the most egregious examples that we encountered was in the budget of the Department of Youth and Community Development. For years, the Council has prioritized increasing funding of public programs for youth, and this year was no exception with our Budget Response clearly setting forth the areas in which the Preliminary Budget was lacking. In total, the Council presented 218 million

dollars of need for youth programming that was not included in the Executive Budget, but the Council has done its part to expand opportunities for youth. In Fiscal 16 alone the Council committed more than 83 million dollars for youth programming, comprising more than 12 percent of DYCD Fiscal Adopted Budget, and it is unacceptable for the Administration not to prioritize and baseline these core agency programs and instead rely on the Council to bear the responsibility of funding these services year after year. However, DYCD was not alone in failing to have its essential programs baselined, and we saw similar deficiencies in the budgets of the Department of Aging and the three library systems. While Council allocations are often critical for the expansion or enhancement of existing programs, the Council alone cannot bear the burden of supporting essential city services. Far too many city programs and services are not baselined, and as a result, many of the City's priorities are at risk of being inadequately funded or not funded at all. Yet at the same time we are hearing that there was insufficient funding to baseline these services we were learning further details about the nearly two billion dollars in City-

funded new needs since the adoption of Fiscal 2016.

These new needs include: 481.8 million dollars to

support and additional headcount of approximately

6,900 across the city agencies; 349.4 million dollars

to fund special projects at the Department of

Education, and 275.7 million dollars in the Executive

Budget alone to fund new needs related to homeless

services within the Human Resource Administration and

the Department of Homeless Services. While the

Council supports additional funding in these areas in

principle, remain concern that the Administration has

not put forth a plan for implementation to go with

the increased funding. For example, with respect to

Homeless Services, 77.8 million dollars of the new

needs are still assigned to holding codes rather than

being designated to specific program areas which

would help the Council understand how the

Administration intends to use these new dollars to

address shelter operations and combat the homeless

problem. Similarly, the Council questions the

determination to fund an additional 6,900 positions

in Fiscal 2017 when a significant portion of the

Citywide Savings Program is already attributed to

delays in hiring. If the Administration was unable

to meet its hiring target in Fiscal 2016, it is unclear how it will be able to meet an even higher target next year, and what we did not want and what we don't want for Fiscal 18 is to be back here again looking at Citywide Savings Program that has an even greater percentage of accruals because the Administration was unrealistic in its ability to implement a plan to spend the new needs. Examining the enormous new needs package through a lens of what is actually achievable and what is truly necessary spending is especially important at this point in time. As the City's economic growth slows after a dynamic five-year stretch, we gear up for the potential of a recession hitting the City in the next few years. It is imperative that we focus on shoring up our reserves. The Council remains concerned that the City is not saving at the level it needs to be in order to weather a recession. Even though the Executive Budget adds a billion dollars to the Budget Stabilization Account and 250 million dollars to the Retiree Health Benefit Fund, the City reserves remain flat at approximately seven billion dollars as compared to last year's end-of-year reserves. The Council estimates that a more significant investment

in our reserves would be responsible and we will continue to engage with OMB and the Administration to ensure that the stability of the budget is protected in the long-term. Lastly, throughout the budget process, the Council's ability to fulfill its Charter-mandated review and oversight role was hindered by the Administration's delay in providing vital information despite public assurances that documents and data would be provided promptly. For example, the Health & Hospitals Financial Plan was provided to the Council for the first time less than 24 hours before the budget hearing. As the budget negotiations continue I expect the Administration to provide all requested information expeditiously, and I hope that we can hear that commitment again from the Budget Director today. Before we begin, I'd like to remind my colleagues that the first round of questions will be limited to five minutes per Council Member, and if Council Members have additional questions we will have a second round of questions at three minutes per Council Member. Welcome, Director Dean Fuleihan. We will now hear from the Director as soon as you're sworn in by my Counsel.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm that your testimony will be truthful to the best of your knowledge, information and belief?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I do. Thank you. Thank you, Finance Chair Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, members of the Finance Committee, Members of the City Council for the opportunity to testify for the second time on the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2017 Executive Budget. I'm joined at the table today by Larian Angelo, the First Deputy Director at OMB. We have our talented staff here to assist me. I also want to thank Latonya McKinney and the Council Finance Staff for their continued partnership. As we have said before, the Mayor's strategic investments and disciplined fiscal management and cooperation with the Council are producing results. The City has reached a record of nearly 4.3 million jobs, including 249,000 jobs added in the past two years. Our economy continues to diversify, and every borough saw employment growth. Yet we are budgeting in a cautious manner as the world and US send us worrying signals. A few examples: US GDP grew at 0.5 percent in the first quarter of 2016; forecasters have been reducing overall outlook for 2016 annual growth,

lowering it to 1.8 percent; US employment appears to be slowing with monthly gains of just 160,000 in April; equity markets continue to be unstable with the S&P 500 up 0.4 percent and the Dow Jones also gaining 0.4 percent over the period. Meanwhile, the world economy's effects on our financial service community is reducing our forecasted tax revenue. The City monitors are also reflecting the same caution in their recent reports. We expect tax growth to be around 3.5 percent in Fiscal Year 2016 and 1.7 percent in Fiscal Year 2017 after having averaged nearly seven percent for the past five years. At the last hearing I outlined the important elements of the Executive Budget, and we spent significant time answering your questions. So I will provide today just a quick overview. Our Fiscal Year 2017 Executive Budget is 82.2 billion. Both the Fiscal Year 2017 budget and the Fiscal Year 2016 budget remain balanced with manageable out year gaps. Our targeted investments include: In Education funding for initiatives in the Mayor's Equity and Excellence Agenda, including Algebra for All and AP Classes for All. Further, we are investing more than 160 million a year to raise our schools to an average

of 91 percent of the Fair Student Funding Standard.

Homelessness: We're investing 66 million to help identify, engage and move homeless New Yorkers from the streets. This is offset by 38 million in savings derived from reorganizing DHS and HRA under one Commissioner. In Public Safety we're investing in a new precinct for Southeast Queens and 50 new ambulance tours for Queens and the Bronx. In Transportation, we're adding 276 million for bridge repair and 186 million to repave 1,300 lane miles of our roadways, as well as investing in snow-clearing equipment and our ferry system. Water and Sewer: We're correcting a longstanding wrong. We will no longer charge homeowners for the water rental payments, saving those homeowners 244 million in Fiscal Year 2017 and 268 million in Fiscal Year 2018. We are also investing 305 million in this Capital Budget and another 300 million in Fiscal Year 2022 to accelerate construction of the two shafts to Water Tunnel Three, bringing a secondary water supply to Brooklyn and Queens. On City Council priorities, we're funding key priorities that the Council requested including increased salaries for contracted case management social workers who care for our

seniors, baseline funding to cover rising rent costs at about 45 senior centers, increased seasonal staffing to enhance parks and playground maintenance, and allow comfort stations to be opened until dusk as well as additional resources for the Rockaway Boardwalk, increased funding for Beacon Community Centers, which provide services to about 70,000 youth and 65,000 adults annually. Funding will grow by 20 percent in Fiscal 2017 and 66 percent in Fiscal 2018. Increased special grants and discharge grants to improve the lives of foster families and foster youth. Increased resources to fight opioid drugs. Increased funding to purchase land and design two new full service animal shelters. In Health & Hospitals: Health and Hospitals, as you're well aware, the largest municipal system in the nation and the foundation of our entire healthcare network. In 2014, its 11 hospitals, more than 70 community-based clinics and other facilities received nearly 500 million patient visits and treated almost one in six New Yorkers. Of the 1.2 million, 45 percent have Medicaid and 30 percent are uninsured. Unfortunately, all healthcare institutions, particularly those that help large Medicaid and

uninsured populations, are facing growing financial pressures. Last year, Health & Hospitals began the process of transforming itself to better serve New York. In the Preliminary Budget together, we added 336 million. In this Executive Budget, the Mayor is providing additional funds to start developing the long-term plan for Health & Hospitals. This includes 160 million in Fiscal Year 16 and funding Health & Hospitals debt service on city bonds at between 170 and 203 million a year beginning in Fiscal Year 17. With our investments, Health & Hospitals faces even with our investments, Health & Hospitals faces an operating gap that grows to 1.8 billion in Fiscal Year 20. Our plan will close this gap through 700 million in expense savings and 1.1 billion in new revenues. We understand this will require cooperation from our partners in other levels of government and our employees, but we are confident we can achieve our goal. The vast majority of additional funding we are seeking will use city funds to draw down federal funds at no additional cost to the state. Something non-included was in our plan, but that we are fighting for in Washington is the postponement or elimination of federal charity care

cuts in 2018. That one cut costs Health & Hospitals 400 million dollars a year beginning in Fiscal Year 18. Fortunately, this cut has been postponed three times. While the Mayor committed to no lay-offs, there will be a reduction in thousands of workers through attrition and retraining for community-based care, and we will work with laborers. Our Administration has a proven track record with labor. Our agreement with the Municipal Labor Committee is creating the first significant structural changes to the City's health plans in decades, and bringing us closer to the 3.4 billion in healthcare savings through Fiscal Year 2018 and 1.3 billion a year after that. We have already met our Fiscal Year 2016 healthcare savings target of 700 million, and we will archive our Fiscal Year 17 goal of one billion. The Fiscal Year 2017 Preliminary Budget identified 1.1 billion agency and debt service savings and re-estimates, and the Executive Budget contains and additional 1.25 billion by the end of Fiscal Year 2017. Thus, the citywide savings program totals more than 2.3 billion, making it the largest such program in the last five years. It will pay for all of the Executive Budget new initiatives, and there's more to

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2 come because the Mayor's instructing the government
3 to find hundreds of millions more in savings by
4 November. Another foundation of our fiscal policy is
5 building and maintaining historic levels of reserves.
6 This year, we will add 250 million to the Retiree
7 Health Benefit Trust Fund to bring it to a total of
8 3.7 billion, the highest level ever. The city has
9 added to this fund three years in a row for the first
10 time. We're maintaining the general reserve at one
11 billion per year through Fiscal Year 20.
12 Traditionally, this reserve has been less than a
13 third of that, and we're now in the second year of
14 the City's first ever capital stabilization reserve
15 of 500 million dollars. In conclusion, this budget
16 continues the Mayor and the Council's shared
17 commitment to disciplined fiscal management and to
18 improve transparency working with the Council, we've
19 made our budget available in searchable form on the
20 New York City Open Data website. I want to thank you
21 again for the opportunity to testify today, and now I
22 look forward to your questions.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you.
24 Thank you, Director. Thank you for your testimony.
25 We've been joined by Council Member Chin. So I'm

going to have a couple of topics that I want to focus on and then I'm going to come back on the second round once I've given my colleagues an opportunity to ask their questions. I wanted to talk about delay in access to information and lack of transparency which has been a part of this entire process throughout all my hours of hearings with your different Commissioners. Throughout our budget hearings, there have been a number of areas where the Council has come across a lack of details or transparency in the budget, including in areas that are clear priorities for the Mayor such as Health & Hospitals and the citywide ferry service. So, while the Council in general supports many of these initiatives, this lack of transparency and clarity makes it difficult for us to support them as currently budgeted. I'm hoping you can provide substantive answers to the following questions. At the Health & Hospitals hearing, the Council was provided a cash plan with limited details to review with Doctor Raju. Part of the plan that was particularly concerning was the fact that the projections include 100 million dollars in development opportunities for Fiscal 2020. When asked what the value-- how the value was arrived at,

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2 it appeared that there was no clear direction for
3 those funds were made in advance. You know, in the
4 spirit of responsible budgeting, I think we've called
5 it that; you've called it that. At what point is the
6 City going to provide details for items such as a
7 development opportunities fund?

8 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, on Health &
9 Hospitals we have before us a road map that we do
10 believe closes the 1.8 billion dollar gap by 2020.
11 You have before you a cash plan that talks about how
12 we're going to achieve that on an annual basis which
13 includes a 100 million in development in Fiscal Year
14 2020, but we've also said, and I want to re-emphasize
15 this that we're going to need cooperation at every
16 level of government. We-- the significant amount of
17 accessing existing charitable care dollars is going
18 to require the cooperation, and we're in very good
19 conversations with the state right now without using
20 state resources, but leveraging city resources, and
21 we're having also very positive conversations with
22 the federal government. That's independent of that
23 other 400 million I just mentioned. On the expense
24 side and working with labor, this is going to be a
25 process, and it ramps up. We're very comfortable

what we can achieve in Fiscal Year 17, but we're going to need to work with our partners in labor about how we're going to find savings. The Mayor has established a group of outside advisors. We're going to be working with the Council. We are committed, and I'm committed to you that any additional information you need, any detail you need about that cash plan, any conversations about accruals that comes into the city, accrual plan, we're happy to provide. We will meet with the Council Finance Staff and any member as often as you need on what we know is a vital concern to everyone in this room. It's a vital concern to the Administration. It's a vital concern to the Council, and we believe we are actually on that path. On the development cost there are, we do know and the report that came out and identified, that there are clearly capacity issues at some health and hospital facilities. The exact nature of how we do that, we're going to have to work together to determine, but we do know there are other things that we can use with facilities. There are mental health needs. There are needs for supportive housing. There are many other needs that we have, and we believe, and the estimate was that by 2020 we

1 should be able without in any way harming any of the
2 services provided in Health & Hospitals to generate
3 100 million dollars, and once again, but that's going
4 to be a process working with you and the community.
5 That's why it was put out in fiscal year 2020.

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7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, and
8 you know, and I know that prior to this--and you and
9 I have talked for several times, and you know we're
10 going to be sitting down soon to get more details on
11 the H&H kind of plan and how we get there in 2020.
12 So you have been very open to engaging in those
13 conversations. So, I just wanted to put that on the
14 record. However, the difference is you have all the
15 information. We have some of the information. We
16 have oversight over you. So, it makes it very
17 difficult.

18 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I-- we are happy to
19 share, and we'll make sure that Health & Hospitals
20 participates with us. We're happy to share any
21 information we have on the plan and how we're
22 developing those numbers.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And we
24 just are asking, or you know-- yeah, we're asking
25

that whatever information you have, we should have also.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. In your--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] We're very much in this together on Health & Hospitals and how we transform this system.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I mean, it's part of the reason-- in this analysis I talked about the problems we're facing, but we're also recommending, and that's an important part of this, we're recommending an additional 100 million dollars to expand clinics. We know part of that transformation is more outpatient and more primary care that we can provide to both the Medicaid and uninsured population. That has to be a major part of that. We're investing an additional 200 million to strengthen what is a very old and antiquated system for how they track patients and how they track billing. That alone will have a huge improvement on the operations of the hospital system.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, just wanted to follow up. In your testimony you said we have postponed the 400 million dollar payments?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Well, we have not. The federal government--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] Right, the federal government.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: has three times actually since the Affordable Care Act. When the Affordable Care Act was enacted, there were, as we all know, savings associated that. It assumed that there would be a complete insured population. That obviously is not--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] Right.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: happening. Those hospitals, and Health & Hospitals be a prime example, with a huge portion of its population Medicaid and uninsured, and there are many hospitals in New York City, though, in the exact same position, and there are many other hospitals across this country in the exact same position. That 400 million cut has been postponed three times. We're actively engaged in Washington. The Mayor's very active in this to get

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2 it postponed again. We did not assume it in the
3 numbers to close the 1.8 as another safety factor,
4 but does it-- will it go a long way towards that?
5 Yes, it will.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So it's
7 not assumed in the 1.8, and when we say postponed, I
8 would think that it can be brought up for payment at
9 any point. It's not forgiven, or is it?

10 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Yes. So, in fiscal--
11 in Federal Fiscal Year 2018 the federal government
12 literally goes off a cliff on this charity care [sic]
13 dollars. They take it from the billions it is down
14 to zero. Health & Hospitals component alone is 400
15 million. So, they simply have a cliff. They post--
16 moved that date out three times. We're asking them--
17 we would love them actually to get rid of it and to
18 continue the charity care dollars because there's
19 clearly a need. This is simply-- what we're asking
20 for is either the elimination or pushing it further
21 back so Health & Hospitals and all those institutions
22 that have high Medicaid populations and high
23 uninsured populations continue to receive Federal
24 Charity Care dollars.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, just for clarity, are we pushing the 400 out or does every year it total 400 to 1.2 billion?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Every year, it's 400 million. Every single--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] So, we--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] Every single federal year.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, in the last three years-- so, the last three years what has been postponed is 1.2 billion.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: No, no, I apologize, and it's my fault. We have been receiving from the federal government 400 million dollars a year. That stops in Federal Fiscal Year 18. So, that 400-- I apologize.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: That 400 million stops. What we are asking them to do is to continue it.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Got you, oaky.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Let me do it in a better way. We're asking them to continue to it.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay, that was-- thank you for that clarifying point. The Executive Budget shows a large reduction in revenue at EDC, revenue that EDC returns to the City. Our understanding is that it's occurring largely because much of it is being kept by EDC to subsidy the operating cost of the citywide ferry service. Why was this decision made to remain within EDC's internal budget rather than having it flow through OMB? This makes it very difficult to track the revenue EDC would normally have returned to the City.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, two things happened. One, some of the EDC payments were simply a change in where they came into the city. So the pilot payments on 42nd Street were literally moved to the pilot payments. So we can go over and give you that detail. So that's a piece of it. The other piece was kept, excuse me, at EDC for the operation of the ferry system. EDC has already had the contract on the East River Ferries. This is really an expansion of that. We see this both as a transportation issue, but also very much as an

1
2 economic development issue, and we felt the best
3 place to continue that operation was at EDC. In
4 terms of transparency though, and we've had this
5 conversation with EDC, we're happy to sit down with
6 you and make sure that you get all the information
7 you need so you know exactly what the City subsidy
8 is, exactly what the operations are of the ferry
9 system. So, the goal--

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

11 [interposing] Right, because we just need to be able
12 to--

13 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] was

14 simply programmatic.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: follow the

16 cost.

17 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Right. The goal was

18 programmatic. It was-- and in terms of transparency,
19 we're happy to work with you and EDC on whatever
20 need.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

22 Both DHS and HRA's Executive Budget include new needs
23 funding that are currently in holding codes instead
24 of being assigned to the appropriate budget codes.
25 Specifically, in HRA 24.8 million for homeless

1
2 programmatic enhancement new needs are in holding
3 codes for Fiscal 2017, and 53 million in DHS are in
4 holding codes. The Council is hesitant to pass a
5 budget that doesn't reflect agency spending
6 accurately. Why is the funding still in holding
7 codes, and when will OMB reallocate this funding to
8 the appropriate budget code?

9 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, as you know, this
10 was part of a major review on how we deliver our
11 homeless services. It started in December. During
12 the 90-day review period new programs were initiated,
13 a whole new administration of how we function was
14 administered. The two agencies in addition to 66
15 million dollars of new program, we had 38 million of
16 continuing out-year savings. Those savings very real
17 and include the ability of joint operations. So, two
18 major things happened. One, there was a
19 rationalization of what services would be provided by
20 homeless services, by DHS and what services would be
21 provided by HRA. There had been many crossovers that
22 had built up over the years and was not an efficient
23 approach to providing this service and to addressing
24 the crisis. There are joint things where we are able
25 to find numerous savings, whether it be in

Administration in the Council's office in procurement, those add up to 38 million dollars annually. As part of this process we are looking for flexibility, so as we move forward, but we're happy to work with you on exactly how to lay this out as we-- this transformation of how we deliver homeless services. So we're happy to work with you on codes and the timeline so we can actually do this in an appropriate way given the transformation that's occurring at those two agencies.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right, because it's incredibly frustrating that this is all lumped up and we can't follow the program or the project, and there's really no detail.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: We want you to be able to follow the program. We want to be able to do the exact same thing. I'm quite sure working together we can achieve that.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. Since the budget adopted last summer, the Administration has added nearly two billion dollars in new needs to Fiscal 2017's budget. While this cost was largely offset by the Citywide Savings Plan as you testified, it still reflects substantial changes

in spending and setting of the City's priority.

Unfortunately, it does not appear that the Council's

budget response was an integral part of this

decision-making process. While you did highlight

some, it was not enough from our perspective. So

through these budget hearings, we have been trying to

get a better grasp of how the Administration made the

decision of what new needs to fund and at what level.

The Executive Plan added 3,160 new heads for new need

at the cost of 246.1 million dollars to the Fiscal

2017. In this same plan, there appears to be a number

of savings in Fiscal 2016 and 17 stemming from

personnel service accruals because the City was not

able to hire as fast as the budget would claim, and

then, after not hiring as anticipated, these delays

are chalked up as savings. How much of your savings

in Fiscal 2016 and 2017 is from personnel service

accruals and other unintentional delays in hiring?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, let's-- many parts

to that question. So let's start, the two billion

dollars as you point out, the net of course is much

lower than that. All the executive ads were paid for

by the Citywide Savings Program. The expense, if we

actually look at year to year growth, we know that

most of those expenses really we have very little ability to control. There are fringe benefit increases in there even though we're making significant improvements in healthcare. We still have significant-- we do still have growth in what we provide in healthcare. There are significant pension increases. When I testified the first time on the Preliminary Budget we talked about an increase in pension costs and the 600 million a year that was simply from the actuary appropriate, actuarial change on life expectancy of our workers. So there are many things in there that have to be done. There are also pieces in there that when the first testimony on the Executive Budget I talked about as health and safety measures, and I think everyone-- I think you share these, which are what we're spending on homeless shelter, on the population and what we're spending programmatically and what we're spending in improvements in Rikers, in what we're willing to put forward in other key areas in both the NYPD and Fire; these are health and safety issues. That makes up the vast majority. In terms of the workforce, if we look at significant increases in the workforce, much of that is in the Department of Education, and much

1 of that again is mandated. The vast majority of that
2 is in Special Education positions which are mandated
3 and had been neglected and we're making great strides
4 under this Administration to address those issues in
5 Special Education. There are other positions such as
6 CUNY where we actually have no control. We simply
7 take the positions and we increase them. On the
8 exact number that our-- with the accrual, you know, I
9 will get back to you right after the hearing. I don't
10 have that--

11
12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

13 [interposing] If you can.

14 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: number with me.

15 Absolutely.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We would
17 like that. So, just to highlight, and I'm just
18 trying to-- I was trying to get this example. So,
19 and I agree. I think health and safety is a great
20 focus and now we understand kind of where you were
21 going. In the budget response, we called for
22 corrections and a new training facility for
23 correction and a new training facility for EMS. They
24 weren't considered health and safety?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: No, they are, and we are looking at training facilities and sites, and we do agree that we need, that both need to be done. At this point we don't have-- we're not ready to put that forward, but it is something we're working on.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I just think that, you know, within the priorities that are set by this Administration there was a lot of things that could have been included from our budget response in the Executive Budget, and you know, the fact that they weren't is very concerning to us, and I know that the negotiations aren't over, and you know, we will aggressively push, but it would be great as we are partners through this process that more of our things are either baseline-- are included in the baselining.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Understood.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And I'm sure you're going to hear this from my colleagues. I have one more set of questions and then I'm going to open it up to my colleagues to ask theirs. Do the new needs for Fiscal 2017's budget account for how long it takes the agencies to recruit and hire

qualified staff for all the new positions, or are we looking at a preview of the November Savings Plan.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: we're not looking at a preview, but we're happy to work with you and sit down. We've actually-- I think that conversation has just started to actually go through agency by agency, and we're happy to do that with you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: It's just I've sat with a lot of Commissioners through these Executive Budget hearings, and while they remain hopeful at doing the hiring, they can only then-- it's juxtaposed to, "Well, we have all these savings because we couldn't hire all these people, but we're really excited to be hiring a whole bunch of people."

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Okay. So we're, once again, happy to work with you on the programs and how we're going to fill up these positions and how we're going to staff them, and we're happy to walk through that, and I believe we started that today with the staff.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yes. SYEP, and I'm going to just mention briefly DFTA, but I know that the Chair is here, so I don't want to-- I want to give her an opportunity to ask the questions,

even though she can have a whole bunch of other questions that are not related to DFTA only. In Fiscal 2016, the New York City Council provided 33.8 million dollars to support DFTA's core operating mission and 21 million to expand DYCD's Summer Youth Employment Program to meet demand. There are not new priorities of the Council. We have been providing sizable amount of funding to both these agencies for years. So, it is frustrating that at budget hearings for DFTA and DYCD, the Commissioners in both agencies mentioned that they looked forward to working with the Council to garner additional funding to meet core services for Fiscal 2017. Agencies should not be dependent on the Council's initiatives to fund their core missions. In our response, the Council called the Administration to baseline funding the Council provides for core DFTA services, including case management and core senior center operations. The question goes double for SYEP. The practice of waiting to add money at the adopted budget even though everyone knows that this is a council priority puts providers in an un-- in an in a terrible position of rushing through the placement of thousands of teenagers and young adults in summer job

opportunities best suited for their skills and interest. Would you agree that delays in determining the final SYP funding amount negatively impacts the service quality? If so, why? If so, because I'm assuming that you agree, did we see no movement from the Administration on the subject in the Executive Plan?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, on DFTA, many of the requests that were made to baseline are reflected in the Executive Budget. There are significant changes both in the salaries of the case managers which had not been done for years. In the rental payments, there are other significant investments that the Administration is making in seniors including senior housing. We also have increased DFTA's budget by 30 million dollars since this Administration began, reversing a trend that went back at least 10 years of reducing DFTA's budget.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] So, we've actually reached a higher level in DFTA. On DYCD-- okay.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Let me just--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] Talk about DFTA.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. And the Chair is here and I know she's going to have her set of questions and I don't want to take away from her questioning. However, when we sat with the Commissioner, there is this assumption that everything is great at the senior centers. When Council Members go and visit senior centers, and I actually want to invite you. I want you to come to a senior center in my district, one in Council Member Chin's district, and we'll pick a couple throughout the City.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Fine.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And you to hear the challenges that our senior centers are facing. Everything is not okay. They are short funding, and for whatever reason the Commissioner does not feel it necessary to add additional support, because they're assuming that the Council is going to come in and provide entertainment, provide meals, provide whatever it is the little essentials that are needed that are core to DFTA. We need a commission that's going to advocate to make sure that these

senior centers have all the services they need, not assume that the Council because it is senior services that we're always going to step up.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, again, I'm never going to assert that more money in any of these programmatic areas that you're identifying would not be a good thing to do. You know we're obviously making evaluations. We're going to be doing that with you in the adoption process. My point was clear though, we have changed the base line that occurred at DFTA which was to cut it year after year after year in the prior Administration and now to restore it to a level that it had not been at before, including adding 30 million more. That doesn't mean there are other things that we shouldn't be talking about DFTA, and we're going to be. In the increase in the salary base of case managers which had been years neglected as we've gone through the entire human service area where we've been addressing one after the other. The beacons, I mean, it's not directly on point.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: But the Beacons had been ignored for over what, two decades, and it

1 actually been declining to we're to get back to where
2 they were. In 1990 something we actually had to do a
3 two-year increase of over 70 percent. So we are
4 attempting in a thoughtful way to address these
5 issues. I'm never saying that we are not-- that there
6 isn't more that we could be doing or shouldn't be
7 doing, but we do have to balance that, and I can
8 assure you at least from my experience every one of
9 our commissioners is advocating for these areas.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. I'm
12 going to have-- can we talk about SYP?

13 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Sure. On DCYC, I once
14 again-- this Administration has reached a historical
15 level of funding in DYCD. Since the Administration
16 began working in partnership with you, there is
17 almost 250 million dollars in additional programs.
18 The middle school afterschool program is 160 million
19 dollars. It is doubling the capacity of what we were
20 reaching those middle school children at. We have
21 increased, we just talked about--

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
23 [interposing] But you've managed to--

24 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] We just
25 talked about--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] to leave the afterschool summer programs out, which--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] And that was--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And you know, and I think-- and we've been very clear that that's been a big priority, and while the investments, you have made investments, when you compare it to the other agencies it's minimal, and you know, I understand. The agency was completely practically decimated in prior Administrations and we have to ramp it up, but this is one program where baselining makes sense. To have providers scrambling at the last second and then for the Commissioner to come and testify that his staff has to work so hard because of the timeline, you know, it speaks to the lack of communication and just efficiency. It is not efficient to fund SYEP two weeks before the kids are supposed to start, and in some cases, assuming that we go to June 30th, the day before or a week before kids are supposed to start their new jobs.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Again, huge commitment and certainly significant compared to any

1 agencies, 250 million more actually, 160 million in
2 just middle school and afterschool programs. Never
3 saying this was not a good program. We said this was
4 not the Administration's priority, as you know, and I
5 understand that the Council wants this to be a
6 priority, and that's going to part of our
7 conversation.
8

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay,
10 we're going to fighting on this one. We're going to
11 hear from Majority Leader Van Bramer followed by
12 Council Member Chin.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you
14 very much, Madam Chair, and I was really fascinated
15 by that conversation about an agency that hadn't
16 really been a priority, but you had invested some
17 additional resources into that agency's budget, maybe
18 not enough, but you've done some stuff. I want to
19 talk about an agency where in your third budget, this
20 Administration if this budget were to be passed as
21 is, would not have allocated one additional dollar
22 that would go to nonprofit cultural organizations in
23 the City of New York. Of course, we're talking about
24 the Department of Cultural Affairs which has not been
25 a priority, and I'm very concerned about that, and I

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: As you know, we've done significant amounts of capital, so I don't want to negate that important component.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I do understand, but once again just as I'm trying to suggest that, you know, there are needs in the City throughout, we have been addressing those needs. There are many important needs in the City. It is a balance of how we do that. We did address over the past two years significant capital, requests in the cultural area, and I know we're going to continue this conversation and do adoption.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: So, let me just follow up on that. So, third budget, the

Administration is still not proposed even one additional dollar for cultural arts organizations on the expense side. If arts groups in the City of New York who arguably are among the most important in terms of generating tourism and revenue were to think that this was not a priority for this Administration, would they be wrong?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Yes. We again have worked with you. There were additional funds provided at adoption. There are significant commitments that have been made in capital. We are constantly in conversations to make sure that we're providing enough resources for all the very many facets of this City government.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Let me just-- you just said at adoption we voted to increase funding for the arts. I just want to point out that every single City Council cultural initiative has increased over the last two years under this Speaker, this Finance Chair and myself as the Chair of Cultural Affairs and Libraries, and we're very proud of that work, but funding on the part of the Administration for the very same things has been flat for now three years running. That's got to change.

Before I turn to libraries for a second I wanted to ask if this Administration has ever quantified the value of cultural organizations to the City of New York in terms of tourism, hotels, restaurants, all those fees and taxes that are generated on behalf of the City of New York that are derived almost specifically from culture and the arts?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, we know it's significant. I don't have the information in front of me. I'm quite sure we have studies that back up that statement [sic].

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Would you agree with me that it probably generates billions--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing]
Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: in revenue for the City of New York.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: And yet we have not had an increase of even one dollar for those organizations that generate billions in revenue for the City of New York. Very quickly going onto libraries. Six day service was in deed a huge accomplishment for all of us last year. The

Administration baselined half of that restoration to achieve six days service. It did not baseline all of it. In the past, you have said that was our share, but as last I recall this is our budget, and so why only baseline half of it when you could baseline all of it, and is losing six day service an acceptable outcome of this year's budget for you?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, we're in the middle of this budget process. We still have an adoption to go. You have priorities. We're going to work on those together. Six day service was a successful initiative, a one year initiative of both of us. We did baseline the Administration's portion of that. I'm quite sure we're going to continue this conversation within hours of this hearing.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: We shall, but I just want to say again, if losing six day service and closing those libraries that we just reopened several months ago is not an acceptable outcome for the Mayor of the City of New York and this Administration, then why propose a budget that does just that?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: We'll arrive at that conclusion together. We did make a commitment. It

was a one-year commitment. We agreed to, in the Executive Budget, we proposed to do-- to have the Administration adopt [sic].

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: I'm sure we will continue this discussion, and one of the reasons that we always have these discussions about culture and libraries is because we don't have enough changes that reflect them as priorities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you, Majority Leader. Council Member Chin followed by Council Member Rosenthal followed by Council Member Eugene. We've been joined by Council Member Eugene, Gibson and Kallos.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, Dean.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Good morning.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: How are you?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I'm fine thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well, now that after we have the Executive Budget hearing for Aging, I am not going to go easy on you. We still-- I know you talk about the Mayor's investment in senior services, and we're happy with that, because the previous Administration was all about cuts, and what we expect

1 from this Mayor is a little quicker and faster,
2 because the senior population, it's increasing. Even
3 for us to get the budget back to before the economic
4 crisis, it doesn't make sense, because the senior
5 population is growing. Recently a week ago I was at
6 a celebration in Queens. I usually don't go out of
7 my district, but I went all the way out in Queens to
8 celebrate with SelfHelp, celebrate with seniors who
9 are over 100 years old. So the seniors are living
10 longer and healthier, and if we continue our
11 investments in the services for them in our senior
12 center, in our home care program, in our case
13 management program, in our meals program, they're
14 going to be healthier and stronger, and I do invite
15 you-- and the Mayor's supposed to come and visit
16 senior center and we had-- he had to cancel, but I
17 want to make sure you and him come and see how lively
18 those centers are and the investment that the City
19 are making. But the fact is that a lot of those
20 centers, they are run by volunteers, and that is a
21 value the City has not taken into consideration. How
22 do you run a center with a budget that's just for the
23 Director and maybe an assistant and maybe the cook
24 that they have in the kitchen? Everything else is
25

1 volunteer. So, we are already saving the City a lot
2 of money, and meanwhile, you also have these pop-up
3 social adult daycare that we've been trying to have
4 oversight. They're raking in money from Medicaid
5 payment, and meanwhile, the senior who goes there,
6 they come back to our senior centers for services.
7 So, one of the biggest things that we've talking
8 about with you since last year is that seniors should
9 not be on any waiting list, and last year we were
10 able to work together, finally put into the Executive
11 Budget to eliminate the wait list for home care, but
12 that money was not baselined. So, I still cannot
13 understand how do we put all of those seniors-- we
14 got them home care services. A: They're stilling
15 living healthy. They're still here, and how can we
16 not put that money back in so that they can continue
17 to have that home care service that we provided last
18 year?

19
20 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, one of the -- one
21 of your requests in the Executive Budget which is in
22 there is the significant adjustment in the case
23 management salaries because there's been a hard--
24 it's been very difficult to maintain case managers.
25 One of the benefits of doing that, actually, is to

1
2 reduce the wait list. That's been part of the problem
3 that's created that. So we should--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] But
5 there's still a wait list in case management, Dean,
6 that you haven't dealt with, and the money that we
7 requested for the pay parody that could help wait
8 lists was 12 million dollars. That was the City
9 Council request, and all you put in there was 4.8.

10 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Right, and we are
11 happy to sit down with you to show you how that is
12 the comparable salary and how those numbers work.
13 I'm happy to do that. I believe the calculation's
14 accurate, but if you don't, we should actually have
15 that conversation.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well, that was what
17 we got from DFTA, right? So, it was 12 million and
18 all of a sudden what was put in the budget was 4.8.
19 Now, that is a big gap.

20 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: No, no, it was two
21 years. It was two years. It rises to about eight
22 million, eight million dollars in the second year.
23 So, we will--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] 7.3.

25 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Seven-- my apologies.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: But we want that-- that should be-- minimally 7.3 should be in this year, right?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, we're--

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] So, I think that's something that we really have to look at. Otherwise, the wait list is not going to go away, and furthermore, we need to increase DFTA's budget because it's less than one half of one percent of the city budget, and DFTA because of the City Council contribution of funding of more than 10 percent, they have to process over a thousand contract last year, and there were a lot of delays, which is unacceptable. So, we're asking that you need to look at that and put more money in to make sure that they going to process the discretionary contract or the contract, the money that we put in as quickly as possible.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Okay. On case managers, we believe we made the adjustments you requested. We should sit down with you and make sure that you understand that. You may want it sooner, I understand that, but we believe we've made that adjustment, and the two-year period was the right way

1
2 to do that. We believe that making adjustments in
3 case management will address the out-year issue on
4 the wait list. There is no waitlist now. We have
5 addressed that together. We should go through that
6 and make sure those numbers get to that point. If
7 they don't, then that is something that we should be
8 addressing and working with you on at adoption. In
9 terms of contracts and any problems you're having
10 with contracts, that's another issue that I'm happy
11 to have a conversation with you and see if there are
12 delays and if there are ways to address those delays.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Look, Dean, this is
14 nothing new. There's been delay in DFTA contract and
15 DYCD contract. There's not enough personnel there to
16 really help process the contracts. How do you expect
17 provider, you know, especially these are community
18 organizations, to be able to do all these services
19 and don't get paid? So, we will have to make sure
20 that they get money on a timely basis. But the
21 other thing, Chair, don't count on the three million
22 from the Council to take care of the waiting list for
23 case management. That money needs to come out of the
24 Administration.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Once again, we should look at the change that you requested that's in the Executive Budget on case manager salaries which are significant increases. That was part of the problem on the wait list. We should see if that's addressing in the out-years the waitlist issue.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you, Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We will now hear from Council Member Rosenthal followed by Council Member Eugene followed by Council Member Kallos. We've been joined by Council Member Cohen.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thanks so much, Chair. Nice to see you, Director Fuleihan. I want to do a just quick question to get this out of the way. I put some funding in the budget for Smart Boards at one of my high schools and middle schools, and it's my understanding that the money goes in July 1st, and they have access to the Smart Boards.

They'll be delivered in like April or May. We do have contracting problems for sure. For the third year in

1 a row, we're going to make a project of it, but
2 apparently the hitch on procurement for technology
3 like this is in OMB. So, could you go back just sort
4 of make a note of that and go back and check on it?
5 If I'm wrong, I'm happy to be wrong, but you would
6 think they would-- you know, when I do an OTPS order
7 for my office I just, you know, invoice Staples or,
8 you know.

10 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, let's go back and
11 find--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]
13 So it says [sic].

14 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: out why that's
15 happening.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so
17 much. Larger picture is, I want to talk, and we
18 don't have to be specific about numbers. We don't
19 have to get the exact numbers right, but if you have
20 roughly a two billion dollars saving plan, what-- how
21 many-- there are some things in there like the 35
22 million for merging two agencies. That will be a
23 change that hypothetically will be ongoing. You know,
24 we'll see over the course of the year whether or not
25 those savings can be achieved regardless. How much

of the two billion is like that? So, not an accrual, not debt reserve, you know, refinancing, not, you know, we didn't spend money on this after all. How much is an actual, you know-- we're changing the way government is, and it's a savings of x?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, the Citywide Savings Program, which is traditionally when the City has put plans like this together. It is included in many things. It is included debt service savings. Those are real--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]
No, no, no, that's not my question.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: No, no, no I'm going to answer.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I get it.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I'm going to answer.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: A PEG is a program, you know, to reduce the gap and there are revenues.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: There are expense savings. There are accruals.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: That's correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I want to cut through all that.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, if we look--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]
All I want to know is--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] If we looked at the gap sheet it's approximately 700 million that carries on through the out-years of the plan.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: What's the biggest chunk of the 700 million?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: The biggest chunk is a re-estimate on Medicaid.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Take that out, now what is it?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: It's 300. You're left with 400 million.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Four hundred million. What's the biggest chunk of the 400 million?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I-- you know what, I'll have to go back and-- I'm going to guess the biggest piece of that may be debt service, but we'll go back and delineate.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: No, no, if we take-- okay. So, let's take out debt service. Then what do you have?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Once again, agency by agency--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]
No, no, no, I want to know from the Budget Director of the City of New York what programmatic-- when you went to your commissioners and said think about your 100 million, 200 million dollar agency--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] I mean, the other major ones, which are agency directed, would be the Department of Law and their vertically integrated savings, which saves on--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]
Huge.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: the out-years about 38 million--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]
Huge, ginormous.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: And that's cautious [sic].

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay, so 38--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] And
that's cautious--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]
out of Law.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: the DHS, and the DHS-
-

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]
Thirty-five--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] And HRA
is another 36 million.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yep, we're up
to 70.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Things like that.
It's things-- I will give you the delineation.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: No, no, no,
this is the second meeting. We're not at the
preliminary review. We're at the second meeting now.
You know, this is-- you've already spoken with all
your commissioners. So, so far I've heard 70 million
of the two billion--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] You
know, we put out--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: dollars.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: As you know, we put out--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]
Is a real savings.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: We put out, which is very public, a Citywide Savings book. It has every single one of these--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]
Yes, it does.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: things that gets to the 1.4 billion--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]
Absolutely.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: and the 1.1.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: No, no, no, I'm not denying any of that. All that is beautiful.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Well, if--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]
All I'm asking is--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] They are also-- they are also legitimate offsets against spending.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Director Fuleihan, are you telling me that in the Department

of Transportation, the Department of Environmental Protection, in Department of Corrections that there are no efficiencies in the work they do? You feel confident there are no efficiencies?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Well, the Department of Transportation did have efficiencies, and they have been listed, and they are listed in that book.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I think they're accruals.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: There's--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing] They're not efficiencies.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: No, no, no, no, no, no--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing] Okay, those are for real.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: There was--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing] I take it back.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: There--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing] Stand corrected, but my point is, and I'll stop, thank you Chair, is that so far let's add in five million for DOT. I'm making that up. We haven't

even gotten to 100 million of real programmatic efficiencies, and I hope-- and I find that concerning. I'll leave it there.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I don't agree.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I find that very concerning.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I don't agree with the conclusion, but we should continue that conversation, but I don't agree with the conclusion. I don't agree that every savings that's listed is simply not going to continue and that some of those things can continue. So, we should continue that conversation.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: A definition of--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] Thank you, Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: efficiency does not include re-financing debt.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.
Thank you, Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Council Member Eugene followed by Council Member Kallos followed by Council Member Gibson.

COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Dean. Thank you for your testimony. Thank you very much. In Fiscal 2017 there's 1.1 billion in new needs because of city agencies, and we know that one of the agencies that I'm one, you know, I'm very concerned about and I like because this agency is doing a wonderful job providing services through the one of the most important portion of society, the children. I'm talking about DYCD. DYCD is a good institution that is providing so many important services to our children and our youth, and you know that all of us in New York city, we as a city, as a society, and we from the government we have the moral obligation to do everything that we can do to provide to DYCD, to school and to all the institution who are taking care of our children. We have the moral obligation to do everything that we can do provide them with the resources that they need to help the children and the youth, because we say that all the time the youth and the children are the future of this city. They are

the future of this nation, and when we invest in the young people, we invest in the youth, we are investing in the future of this city. My question to you, from the 1.1 billion why DYCD receive only 6.5 million?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, let's go back. I'm going to say it again. Since the beginning of this Administration, there is over 250 million dollars in new money that's been invested in DYCD. There is 160 million dollars in the middle school afterschool program that doubled the population of middle school children who are receiving afterschool services. There's a huge expansion in Beacon which had never been-- which had not been done before which is increasing it by over 70 percent the reimbursement rates in Beacon. There's another 120 million dollars that's been invested in those kinds of services. This Administration has made significant investment in DYCD, in youth services, in the Department of Education, in what they provide, in summer programs at the Department of Education. So, between both the Department of Education and DYCD this Administration has made in partnership with the Council huge strides and significant investments by any measure.

COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: I commend the Administration for that, and we are-- we, from the City Council, we are grateful and thankful to the Administration for that, but I believe, personally I believe, you know, with a budget of 82.2 billion we from the City of New York, we can do better than that, especially with the DYCD that has taken care of our children, the children of the hardworking people while working hard to sustain the finance to contribute to the finance of New York City. I think we can give DYCD more resources to take care of the children we believe who are the future of this city, and I do appreciate what the Administration is doing. That's great, but I think we can do better. My second question I'm going to very quick. The Mayor signature [sic] middle school afterschool program does not include a critical basic element of the afterschool program. I'm talking about, you know, summer program, the Sonic [sic], because we know that during the summer the children they are on vacation, but the parents are not on their vacation. They still have to go to continue to work, to bring food on their table for the children to eat. They have to pay for the rent, and life is so expensive in New

1 York City. They cannot afford to stay home to take
2 care of the children during the summer. That's when
3 those children they need a place to go to spend their
4 time during the summer. Summer programs for the
5 children are very, very important for any reason that
6 we all know. Number one, they keep the children in a
7 positive path. They keep them in a safe place. In
8 addition to that, this is an opportunity for the
9 children to continue to learn. SO my question to
10 you, will you or the Administration restore the
11 funding for the 34,000 slot for summer program for
12 the children?
13

14 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, again,
15 significant increases in the afterschool. The Sonic
16 Program you're talking about was an initiative of the
17 Administration and the Council working together to
18 double the capacity of what we're providing to middle
19 school children. It's 160 million dollars of
20 additional. It never had a summer component. There
21 are expansions of summer programs at the Department
22 of Education that we have put forward, but I do
23 understand it's a priority for you, and we're
24 obviously going to continue this conversation through
25 adoption.

COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Okay, but I know that is about-- I don't believe that is about budget. I think as you said it's about the priority, but the children should be part of our priorities, and they're our priorities in the City Council, because what the children are going to do, what the parents are going to do with the children--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] Council Member, if you can just wrap up your statement.

COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: And thank you, and once again, the expansion at DOE is actually about 30,000 children.

COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, before we hear from Council Member Kallos, Director, I wanted to ask some very specific revenue questions. Does the Executive Budget reflect all the estimated tax and non-tax revenues for their current fiscal year and the upcoming fiscal year?

1
2 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, obviously, those
3 came in after the Executive Budget which you're
4 referencing, but we would at this point not change
5 the revenue estimates for the current year, but we're
6 happy to sit down with your staff and make sure that
7 we're reviewing the same information and coming to
8 the same conclusions.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, I
10 think we should schedule that time, because we--

11 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] We
12 should do that.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: don't
14 want to do the--

15 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] Right, I
16 mean--

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
18 [interposing] We don't want to--

19 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] most of
20 the final returns are now in from the state, so we
21 should do that.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, I just
23 want to ask these questions just so we get it on the
24 record. Does the Executive Budget reflect all the
25

estimates of the other sources of funding available in the current and upcoming year?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: We believe it does.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

Does the Executive Budget reflect all the estimates of any final surplus in the current year and the upcoming year?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Again, we believe it does, but I'm happy to have conv--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] We believe it doesn't.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Okay, then. I had a feeling that was the case, and we should have a conversation about those differences.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. Are there any new budget needs from the coming fiscal year that are not previously identified in the Executive Budget? Have you identified all your new needs, or should-- you know, do you have any other new needs that you may want to include?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: At this time, I do not have new needs. Part of our conversation, there may be new needs appearing that we would actually as part of adoption, I'm quite sure he will be.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Well, we would hope that the two billion dollars took care of all of your new needs is what we would hope.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: The Executive Budget is the priorities of the Administration. There's no question about that. As we go to adoption, we have conversations. You know, we'll-- that is part of the process, but the Executive Budget is a reflection of the Administration's priorities.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Are there any other significant anticipated changes and adjustments that we can expect prior to the Adopted Budget on any part?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Not at this moment, no.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And not tomorrow?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Once again, something-- it's always possible that something happens and we'll have a conversation with you if that occurs.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: But there's no plan, right, any?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I have no plan to get to say here's an item, but something could obviously come up.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Of course, but I just want to make sure that there's no planned adjustments, major adjustments.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I have no-- nothing planned at this point.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Once again, that doesn't mean--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: [interposing] So, at this point we're only negotiating on things that the Council needs to baseline.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Well, we're negotiating on things the Council needs to baseline and things you're requesting to pick up [sic], I believe.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right. Okay. I just wanted to get it on the record. I want to be clear. Alright, thank you. We will now hear from Council Member Kallos followed by Council Member Gibson.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you to Chair Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, Latonya McKinney, Rebecca Chaisson [sp?], John Russell, James Saboodi [sp?], and Director Dean Fuleihan for your partnership in a more progressive and transparent budget. No pen necessary. We're going to try it a little bit differently this time. Department of Education has identified a need for 82,811 new seats citywide. However, it's only building 44,348 new seats, which is unchanged from last year. In the Executive Budget hearing the School Construction Authority said there was no new need on the Upper East Side. During the Department of Education hearing it was revealed that more than 2,500 four year olds on the Upper East Side applied for "Universal", and that's in quotes, pre-k, but we're only offered 515 seats with 2,000 children offered to commute an hour to schools here in the Financial District and elsewhere in the City that's over an hour. Does the Upper East Side need more school seats?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, as you know, this is a two-year process to get to Universal Pre-K, which was incredibly successful, and we should all

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: [interposing] I--

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And so it's little by little, but it's 2,000 seats. It means I would need to add 100 seats to every public school in my district. There's 18 public schools and that means putting UPK's in the high schools. It means putting them anywhere, and the only way we're going to get it is if we start building more schools on the east side. I have three empty lots. That would be great for schools, but the SCA is telling me no new need on the Upper East Side. I have DOE saying no new need at the same time as we have 2,000 four year olds with no place to go.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, I knew we were having conversations with you on the UPK seats. We

should continue that, and in terms of the broader school, I'm happy to have that conversation as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: If SCA can amend their position, we need this-- we need more schools so that we can have the seats that we need.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: But we should at least get you answer on that question.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Sure. Another key piece is during that same hearing we learned that the federal government gives 80 percent back of reimbursement rate on what we spend on school food. So, can-- and when we take federal dollars, that's money that comes into our economy for local food to pay for farms and things Upstate. It also supports school food employees. It supports the entire infrastructure that gets the food to us, and then that offsets and allows families to have more money to spend in the local economy. It has a huge impact. Can we please say yes to feeding 1.1 million children at least two meals a day, if not three, and ending hunger for children in our public schools? Can we just say yes to that money?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: We did the pilot program on lunch for standalone middle schools.

1 We're monitoring the results to see if that's where
2 to put our resources. In the interim, we did a
3 universal program for breakfast, which has been
4 incredibly successful and increased the rates by
5 something like 70 percent of the number of children
6 getting breakfast. So, I do think that was a huge
7 achievement, and we are on that road. We are looking
8 and reviewing the school lunch program which has not
9 had the same results.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: We fed thousands
12 and thousands of children. Breakfast was a success.
13 Let's do lunch. Let's make sure our kids don't have
14 to worry about hunger. On judgement and claims, which
15 is the amount the City pays out for lawsuits we lose
16 or settle. Thank you for reducing this year's
17 planned spending by 30 million dollars. Next year's
18 planned spending was reduced by 70 million dollars
19 and over the next five years it comes out to 400
20 million dollars in spending and it's actually
21 flattened out. And I guess, can OMB and Law
22 Department share how you came to this figure?

23 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Sure. We're happy to
24 do that. I mean, it is based-- it's the same way we
25 do estimates. It's based on information we're

1 getting form the Law Department. OMB does do the
2 evaluation. It's based on where we see historical
3 trends and a significant portion of it in the changes
4 that the Department of Law is making on how they
5 handle cases and the reductions they believed that
6 has achieved, because there was a pilot. We did
7 pilot a program. The pilot worked. We're now
8 expanding that program into the Bronx and Brooklyn.
9 That's a significant investment. That significant
10 investment is achieving almost 40 million dollars
11 minimum, almost 40 million dollars a year in savings
12 by both frivolous lawsuits and the amount of the
13 payouts.
14

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So, if you could
16 share that, and Chair, I have one last question which
17 you will probably answer, so if I could ask it, it'll
18 be quick.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I actually
20 have a host of questions, so if you want, you can
21 stay for--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: [interposing]
23 Second round, please.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Very good.
25 I have a question before Council Member Gibson, and

1 this is related to our first hearing that we had on
2 immigration issues. At the first Preliminary Budget
3 hearings on immigration held on March 28th, the City
4 Council's Immigration Committee, we heard from many
5 legal service providers that they were unable to
6 provide services to many immigrants because of lack
7 of city funding for the very-- for what they call
8 complex case representation. The Council learned
9 that two-thirds of the cases they turn away are
10 complex that require intense legal representation and
11 due to lack of funding, providers were left with long
12 waiting lists. The only funding for complex cases
13 are those who are detained or accompanied minors
14 because the Council's NYFUP [sic] and I Care [sic]
15 programs address those specific needs. In response to
16 the gap in vital services, the Council called on the
17 Administration to add 13.5 million to fund complex
18 legal representation. However, the Executive Budget
19 did not include any funding to this type of
20 representation. However, the Administration has been
21 focused on Action NYC, even though Action NYC does
22 not focus on these complex cases and also on for
23 filling the IOI RFP put out last year that was
24 criticized for leaving out most medium and small
25

groups. Giving the crushing need outlined in the March 28th hearing, what is the Administration's plan to support these types of complex cases and meet this overwhelming demand for Fiscal 17?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, as you know, we've together done an enormous increase in the amount of legal aid in this city that's approaching, I believe, in the out-years 60 million dollars that started at a single digit. So there's a huge increase in legal services that we've been providing to New Yorkers. On complex cases, I believe we have programs targeted to that. I'm going to have to get back to you exactly.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] I mean, I know--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] Right.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: our legal services budget--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] So, you don't--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: has increased 10-fold.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

So, you don't, and I believe that, and we've had this conversation with the Commissioner. The increase was also reflected in the baselining of IOI, and that was-- when you baselined the IOI, the definition was changed as to what the program would cover when it was under the Council's purview. So, what we are saying is that we are not adequately covering what is complex cases, which really are cases-- and why it would make sense for the Administration to fund as opposed to the Council, the logic is that these cases are often are about two, definitely longer than two years. Some between two to three years. So, if it's baselined in RFP as a program, then that nonprofit partner can really plan to represent different cases.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I know we have one program that does address this, Action NYC, but I think I need to continue--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] Right.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: this conversation with you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So we'll follow up. I think Action NYC, you know, we want to

1
2 make sure that it's flexible enough to be able to
3 include these cases, because it's currently not doing
4 enough when it comes to the--

5 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] Alright,
6 we're happy to have this conversation and with the
7 Commissioner as well. As you know, this has been a
8 high priority for us.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Of
10 course. Thank you, Director. Council Member Gibson?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very
12 much, Chair Ferreras-Copeland, and good afternoon,
13 Dean, to you and your staff. It's good to see you
14 again.

15 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Good to see you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I hope that you
17 have better news for me from our Preliminary hearing,
18 and we have some great things to share. So, I know
19 some of my colleagues have already talked about
20 Summer Youth and the impact of the Sonic and the
21 Compass programs and summer camp. So, I just, you
22 know, want to make sure you understand how important
23 that is for my children in the Bronx, the libraries
24 and cultural institutions, obviously. Do you have
25 any updates for us on the Emergency Food Assistance

Program that I talked about before? Are we going to give our food pantries and soup kitchens support this year in the budget?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Well, we do have a baseline support that's significant. I think what you're referring to is there have been federal cuts.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Yes.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: The Commissioner discussed this just the other day. There have been significant federal cuts in food service and you're asking for basically the City to backfill those--

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing] Absolutely. We have hungry New Yorkers across the City.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: And that, those-- that was not included in the Executive Budget, but we're happy to continue that conversation.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, great. We have made a significant investment in criminal justice reform. Last year we put 170 million into hire 1,300 new officers. We're doing an incredible amount of work with DOC and Rikers Island. What I fail to understand is in the Executive why we have a big whopping zero for the District Attorneys, five

1 DA's, five separate requests totaling 21 million
2 dollars. I think it's something we definitely need
3 to consider, specifically the fact that we have a
4 problem with opioid overdose in the City of New York,
5 specifically in Bronx and Staten Island, and those
6 two DA's need a significant amount of money to deal
7 with prevention, deal with more drug treatment as
8 well as staffing and court issues that we're having.

9
10 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, we've said with
11 the Executive Budget, I said it at the first hearing
12 on the Executive Budget that the DA's, that was not
13 the last piece of the conversation. We were going to
14 continue to work with the DA's.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right.

16 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: And that we are in
17 that process, that we met with the new two DA's, that
18 we needed time to actually have a dialogue with them
19 on what their priorities are; we're in that process.
20 So we do--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]
22 Okay.

23 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: We do believe that's
24 part of the Adopted Budget. In addition, on opioids,
25 you know that in the Executive Budget there was a

major initiative to address both prevention and care-

-

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]

Right.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: and get drug

treatment out.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right, and in

addition, I know our Minority Leader will also

mention it, but the TASC program in the Staten Island

DA's office, we have been funding it at 250,000

dollars for years. We need it to be baselined this

year for 250,000 dollars. So, I want to make sure

you understand how important that is for Staten

Island.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I do.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, great. I

wanted to ask a question on NYCHA and the 15 senior

centers that we are giving a one-year reprieve.

We're giving them another year of operation at three

million dollars. Do you know what the plan is, and

long term, are we looking to RFP and find a provider,

or do we see this still remaining under NYCHA's

authority? Do you have an idea of what's going to

happen?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, most of the senior centers and most of the community centers were transferred--

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]
Right, under DFTA.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: over the past several years to both DFTA and DYCD. Fifteen senior centers were not transferred. Last year the Council picked up the operation for the current fiscal year. This year, in the Executive Budget we picked it up as part of the Administration initiative with the understanding that we come to a conclusion about what that would be. I don't have that conclusion for you. Whether-- I know many ideas are out there, including whether we RFP it to see if there's providers who would like to provide that service--

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]
Okay.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: or if we are actually making the transfer.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: We're going to go back, do this assessment again, make sure it's done

properly and figure out working with you how we can best move forward.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right, and I mentioned--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] So, I don't have a conclusion.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: during Prelim-- right, I'm willing to help. I'm willing to help. I represent two of them.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Yeah, I know.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: So, I definitely want to make sure we can have a long term plan. You guys were given a proposal from MOCJ as I understand. The Anti-Gun Violence Cure Violence work that we have, there is a budget shortfall because there's some private funding that's going to be eliminated next month through YMI and Robert Wood Johnson, and I believe it's between two and four million dollars. I wanted to find out are you aware of this shortfall, and is there anything that you could offer Anti-Gun Violence Cure Violence?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I will get back to you about--

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]
Okay.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: the potential
shortfall--

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing] I
see your staff shaking their heads, so they may be
aware.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: from private piece,
and I'll get up to speed.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, great,
great. And then my last question, I wanted to ask
about the homeless shelter security. NYPD testified
yesterday. Chief O'Neill talked about the evaluation
process that they're starting.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: He gave us a six-
month time frame in which they will produce a series
of recommendations. So, what I wanted to find out
what are we doing within that six months in terms of
security within the shelters, and what are we doing
moving forward?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: We've added 45 million
dollars to security in--

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]

Right now, right?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: In the interim, yes, for the upcoming fiscal year. So we're maintaining the security enhancements that were part of the 90-day review. In addition, the NYPD is taking a very active role. While it will take them some time to do the complete evaluation, they are already taking an active role in training and in the security we're providing.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, great.

Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you, Council Member, and before we hear from Council Member Treyger who has joined us, I wanted to talk about the ACS pay parody and labor negotiations. We heard that the Administration gave daycare Council Members-- Council Member agencies a final offer on May 3rd that included wage increases, health insurance and SIRS [sic]. What is the status of the negotiations, and what are next steps if Daycare Council rejects this proposal?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, we're part of what is a complicated process with both the daycare

1 providers and the union and the City. As my
2 understanding is from our Office of Labor Relations
3 and the Commissioner is that this is moving very
4 positively. We're having very good conversations.
5 They are not at a conclusion, and but we're very
6 positive that we can bring this to a conclusion. As
7 you know, this Administration has now exercised a
8 great deal in human services that had been neglected
9 for years. In Early Learn prior, which is what we're
10 talking about on daycare, prior to any negotiation,
11 we changed the reimbursements so that we were
12 actually paying for expense which gave a huge relief
13 and we actually did that retroactively over several
14 years. In the human services area, I know you had
15 Commissioner Banks. We're talking about
16 reformulating and making really sense out of the
17 different disparate reimbursements we're providing in
18 our homeless shelters. So, we did the \$11.50 minimum
19 wage which we then in the Preliminary Budget raised
20 to 15 dollars. Last year, we did the two and a half
21 percent COLA, and not part of any agreement that
22 reached all these workers. So, all these are adding
23 up and are part of a broader context to treat this
24 community with the respect that we're treating our
25

own workforce, and we believe those conversations and the history of this Administration with this workforce is all very positive and it will get to a positive result.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, where are we with Early Learn and what we included in the budget response, or how are you engaging in those conversations with Early Learn?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Once again, there are negotiations going on right now. Those have not concluded. We're very hopeful.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. And I quickly wanted to talk about UPK, and we've been joined by Council Member Lander. So I after I ask these questions, you'll hear from Treyger followed by Lander. The tremendous growth of UPK program has been made possible by a flurry of rental and renovation and construction projects to add classroom space to schools and DOE UPK centers. A list of 53 UPK projects shown in the proposed amendment for 2015 and 2019 School Capital Plan shows that the Construction Authority has spent or plans to spend between 14,893 [sic] and 362,000 per UPK seat, with 23 projects having a cost per seat greater than

100,000 dollars. Did OMB approve the 18-seat UPK project for the lease site at 8501 Fifth Avenue in Brooklyn? What is the cost of the lease for this property?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I'll have to get back to you on specific site and the approval process.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, you know, we have an assessment that in other districts-- it just seems that we're finding that the cost for UPK seats are varying greatly. So, we can have a seat that cost 37 and a half thousand to seats that cost 362,000 dollars per seat.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, we'll get back to you on the specific and the variance. I'm not surprised, once again, that we over two years have reached the almost 68,000 four-year-olds and to find seats at various places in the City given the real estate in the City, there are going to be significant differences. To actually get back to you though and say what is this one and what is this one, I have to get back to you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So we'd like a--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] But I'm not surprised there's variation across the City.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right, and we expect variation, but that variation seems vast.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: What--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: [interposing] And at some point, you know, would you consider maybe capping spending, because we can easily get into a half a million dollars for a seat for a four-year-old.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, once again, you acknowledge and we agree there's going to be variation in this depending on where it is. We are trying, as we had one member just say, "I need more seats in the district, and there may not be space available." But on a specific site, I want to be careful. Let's come back to you and talk about why that specific site.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. We will follow up. Council Member Treyger followed by Council Member Lander. We've been joined by Council Member Cumbo.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you, Chair Ferreras-Copeland. Director Fuleihan, welcome and--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: last year at this very time you-- I asked the same question I'm about to ask you again, and I asked when will the NYCHA buildings in my district that were impacted by Super Storm Sandy get their boiler work started, and you testified last year that last summer work would begin. It is now the end of May. We've had a number of meetings with NYCHA, and Mike Rosen is a very nice person who just recently left NYCHA, but I will tell you that work has not officially begun yet, and I am asking now when will my constituents and others around the City who are impacted by the storm see work begin to replace the temporary boilers with permanent boilers and make the other critical repairs in resiliency investments?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, early work we believe has started. You seem to be telling me that may not be accurate, so I want to actually sit down with you afterwards and make sure that we are receiving the same information. We are told that

1 significant work will start this summer, that's
2 visible and that you'll be able to see, but I want to
3 make sure that we're actually going through that
4 list. So, why don't, you know, working with NYCHA
5 and you actually delineate what we believe has
6 occurred and when the next steps will occur.

7
8 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: So, with regards
9 to the boilers specifically, when will work on the
10 boilers begin?

11 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, I'm being told,
12 once again, we should go back, that the demolition
13 already started on the boiler.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I--

15 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] And
16 you're telling-- I'm getting what you're telling me.
17 That's why I think we should sit down and actually go
18 right through the entire checklist.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right. Usually
20 when NYCHA has a lot of work going on, you see
21 scaffoldings going up, and I have not seen that in my
22 district, so--

23 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] So,
24 let's make sure, I-- we should do this right after
25

1
2 this and make sure that we're getting-- that we--
3 that you have the exact timeline.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Again, I'm doing
5 this because I just want this work to get done like
6 yesterday.

7 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Yeah, I'm not
8 doubting that at all, and I want to get you the
9 answer you deserve.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And these are
11 not just boilers. These are new roofs. These are
12 back-up generators.

13 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Agreed.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Damage to their
15 community centers. I just want to-- Director
16 Fuleihan, I just want to again paint you a picture of
17 another summer in my district where we're down two
18 community centers, and so when you and the Mayor
19 announce investments for Cornerstone, investments for
20 these programs--

21 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] Yes.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I am short-
23 changed in my district in an area that actually needs
24 more programs and needs more recreational spaces, and
25 that's why I'll tell you I was disappointed in the

Administration for passing up an opportunity to put in a bid for the Feg's building which was on Surf [sic] Avenue. Feg's, as you know, went bankrupt and there was a property on Surf Avenue near West 33rd Street, and they passed up on the-- they did not even put in a bid, and it was purchased by John Catamatidies [sic] company, and that is a site that was historically a community resource, and the winning bid was about 7.7 million dollars. If the City of New York found 50 million dollars to build an indoor pool on Staten Island, which is nice, they could have found some resources to do something good for the west end of Coney Island as well. I also want to just ask about Coney Island Hospital. I know there's changes of leadership there. I look forward to meeting with the new director. It is still-- I'm not still 100 percent clear about when does major work begin there. I know we had a hearing recently and they gave me some anticipated timelines. I want to see if their timeline is in line with your timeline and when can we start seeing the critical repairs and the resiliency investments in Coney Island Hospital because we're seeing in the private

sector work moving at a much faster pace than in the public sector.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, I'm going to do the same thing because I believe some work has already begun, and I believe some work has begun on the emergency room, but let's do the exact same thing so that Health & Hospitals and OMB are telling you the exact same thing working with FEMA, that we're giving you the exact same timeline. So, I'm going to get together with them, and we'll give you the exact-

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COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: [interposing] And I would appreciate us sitting down going over these projects one by one.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I am happy to do that.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay, thank you very much. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you, Council Member. We will now hear from Council Member Cumbo followed by Council Member Treyger. I'm sorry, Council Member Lander followed by Council Member Cumbo. I have a follow-up question to Council Member Gibson's question. The 45 million for the shelter security is in a holding code. How are you

1
2 sure the amount of funding is accurate, especially
3 since NYPD testified that the assessment won't be
4 completed until six months from now?

5 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: We baseline what we
6 knew we had done as part of the 90-day review. The
7 piece of it, we baselined current funding. So, we
8 know exactly what we're doing, and the NYPD has
9 already stepped in giving directions. It's the
10 additional assessment that we were talking about that
11 the NYPD testified on yesterday that's going to take
12 a period of time. That may result in changes or in
13 new needs, but right now we're very comfortable of
14 what we have put forward waiting that assessment.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, this
16 is current funding?

17 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Which does include new
18 training and does include services at the shelters.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay,
20 thank you. Council Member Lander followed by Council
21 Member Cumbo.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you, Madam
23 Chair. Director Fuleihan, good as always to see you.
24 I want to focus my questions on infrastructure
25 spending and the capital budget. A couple of general

1 questions, and then hopefully I'll have time for some
2 specific projects, on the general side, both on
3 priority setting and implementation. Since the
4 Preliminary Budget questions were raised about the
5 next phase of City Water Tunnel Number Three and they
6 were resolved through this process to my
7 satisfaction, but it raised the question for me, is
8 there a process through which you or at some level
9 above the agencies look at mission critical
10 infrastructure projects. We heard about the BQE
11 Triple Cantilever. We have a lot of quite critical
12 sounding projects. How do we make sure collectively,
13 not just at the agency level? We've got the priority
14 setting right, and they're on path over the long
15 term, and then on the implementation side, we spoke
16 about this at the Preliminary Budget hearing, what
17 steps have you taken to start figuring out how to
18 address bottlenecks, get more efficiency out of our
19 capital projects, implementation, or you know, when
20 and how are you going to move forward? You sort of
21 committed to us during the Preliminary that that was
22 a process the Administration was getting to work on.
23

24 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: We do work closely
25 with the agencies to prioritize, to understand how

1 they're prioritizing. We do rely on the agency.
2 That's where the expertise is on those priorities, on
3 telling us as we did in this budget when we added
4 funds for bridge reconstruction. Those are coming
5 from the agency and their evaluation, and it's a very
6 detailed evaluation. The same really for DEP. We do
7 review. We do ask questions, and that's part of the
8 process to building up to this Capital Plan. In
9 terms of speeding up the process of finding out
10 bottlenecks. There's been a serious commitment on
11 the part of the Administration. Actually, agencies
12 have been improving. If we go back a couple years and
13 we look at the capital commitments that are going,
14 while there's much room to be done, the capital
15 commitments have increased significantly over prior
16 years. OMB has streamlined its process. So we're
17 doing CP approvals in a much quicker timeframe.
18 There's a citywide effort to look at procurement. We
19 have to be carefully, obviously, but there is a
20 citywide effort to look at other places we can
21 streamline. We've asked the state to give us the
22 same benefit that the state gives now I believe all
23 of its agencies, which is on design build. They have
24
25

chosen not to give that any local government, not just New York City.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So, I certainly-- you know, we support the design build approach. It would be great to see some data, some evidence, some reporting. I mean, we've been talking about this for a while, and I don't doubt that in individual conversations you push agencies. I think the Council has been asking and has yet to see some systematic approach to process--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] So, let-- I would suggest as part of the two-year process, because I actually think that's the more appropriate place to do it, and we did try to rationalize and working actually with Council staff last year when we did the 10-year strategy to say is there a more rational approach to how actually and the year we're putting the projects in so it's more realistic. So the next 10-year strategy is next year. We should be working with you on what those questions are and what you'd like to see.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay, alright. You just tempted me to put some more things in our terms and conditions proposal, because I think we haven't

1
2 gotten concrete about what those improvements look
3 like, and it will be helpful if we could find ways to
4 do that. I think we stay at this general level of--
5 we know that system needs to improve and then we can
6 ask about individual projects, but--

7 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] But we
8 actually got very specific on projects in the last
9 10-year strategy. We're happy to do that.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay. Alright.
11 I'm going to ask three questions and then turn it
12 back over to you just in the interest of time. On
13 this issue of implementation and tracking, OMB has
14 now at least put on the Open Data portal more
15 information about projects and timeline. We still
16 find it very hard to figure out what's going on with
17 the SCA and DOE because their Capital Plan and
18 projects are not put on the Open Data portal and
19 Excel in the same way. I'm hoping you can help us
20 make that happen, and then on two specific projects,
21 we've had some dialogue throughout this process about
22 air conditioning in our public schools complicated
23 because the wiring improvements are capital; the air
24 conditioners need to be done through expense. We've
25 asked for a more systematic approach, identification

1 of which buildings we think we actually need to
2 upgrade so the kids can learn. It's hotter every
3 June and every September sadly than it was 10 or 15
4 or 20 years ago. We're looking to you to work with
5 us on a comprehensive plan to get that done like we
6 did on school bathrooms, and I'm asking if OMB will
7 commit to working with the Council to get that
8 resolved, and then similarly on Citi Bike expansion.
9 We heard from Commissioner Trottenberg that it's time
10 to plan for phase three, that the time is now to
11 begin doing that, but it's one challenge in doing
12 that is that we need an updated understanding of how
13 Phase Three is going to be financed, whether there
14 will be public resources, how we work with Motivate
15 to make that happen, and I don't want to wait another
16 full year for next year's budget before we start
17 thinking it through because we'll be a year behind in
18 the planning work we need to do for the build-out.
19 So, again, will OMB commit to working with the
20 Council to figure that out during this budget cycle?

21 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: We're happy to work
22 with you on all three. We're happy to talk to SCA
23 and DOE about what they put out and how they put it
24
25

1 out in a way that you can make it more useful, and
2 we're happy to have these other conversations.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay.

4 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: The answer's yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Alright, alright.
6 Thank you. The way you guys put it out is good, so
7 if we could just-- we don't need to tell-- we'd like
8 them to do that on the DOE and SCA to be putting
9 their capital reporting out in the way that OMB has
10 begun to.

11 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Okay, we'll have a
12 conversation with them if there are any roadblocks or
13 issues that-- the technological issues. We'll come
14 back to you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Alright, and
16 we'll follow up both on air conditioning--

17 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] Yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: and Citi Bike
19 expansion.

20 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Yes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Hopefully make
22 progress on those before adoption.

23 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Right, I mean, there
24 is money in there obviously for wiring and air
25

conditioning, but I understand what you're asking.

I''s more comprehensive, so we'll come-- we need to have that conversation.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And on both of those, the agencies were receptive.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I mean, DOE and the SCA were receptive, and DOT as well, but I still think it's going to take help from OMB to help move us along before adoption to get both of those really moving forward.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Understood.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. Want to do a follow-up statement and then a question. Want to follow up to Council Member Gibson's question in regards to the Anti-Gun Violence Cure Violence providers. As you understand that four organizations that are in the portfolio are at risk of losing their funding. One is in my district, the Crown Heights SOS group, which is doing extraordinary work and just wanted to bring that to your attention and to also reiterate my support in terms of making sure that those organizations continue to do the critical work

because they are at the foundation of this work.

Also wanted to follow up on an issue around pay parody that was brought up by our Chairwoman, and what I want to ask is does the current contract right now offer established pay parody between UPK providers and Early Learn providers? So, does the current offer establish pay parody between UPK providers and Early Learn providers, and if not, why not?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, first question, first statement, thank you. We just learned of this potential cut in private funding, so we will follow up as you're doing as well. On the negotiations, I'm not going to obviously go into the detail on negotiations. I'm going to say again that we're having very positive and constructive conversations with the daycare community, with the union involved and the City, really a three-part negotiation. There are many things that happen in a labor negotiation as there were, the same way we have reached 95 percent of our workforce, the same way we achieved historic healthcare savings working with the MLC. We are having similar conversations with this community. We believe it will be very positive. So we believe the

outcome will be one that you'll be pleased with, and we will be pleased with in the community. Let's remember, I do want to restate that this Administration made dramatic changes, has made dramatic changes outside of any contractual negotiation. The two and a half percent COLA which wasn't part of a contractual arrangement, the \$11.50 minimum wage, then the 15-- in the Preliminary Budget, the 15 dollar minimum wage, the change in Early Learn which is directly in this community. The change in Early Learn reimbursement made dramatic changes for the providers by changing them to an expense base.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: And that's great, and I'm pleased about that, but at the same time we want to make sure that there's pay parity between UPK providers and Early Learn providers, and I am glad that you said I would please, and I'm hopeful that we won't be at this hearing this time next year having the same conversation that we've been having for the last three years on this issue.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: No, once again, I think it's fair to say we walked into, the Administration walked in with no labor contracts with

1 anyone, not just providers who had not had contracts
2 in years, but also any of our employees. In this
3 period of time we have achieved 95 percent of the
4 workforce. We have a pattern. I think most of the
5 union leaders will say they're very pleased with what
6 happened, and the respect and the arrangements we
7 made including the savings, significant savings we
8 did as part of that. We're having very productive
9 conversation with this community.
10

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Understood.

12 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: But I do want to state
13 that independent of those we made strides to
14 readdress things that had happened in the past that
15 needed to be dealt with even outside of a contract
16 discussion.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Well, I think that
18 95 percent is impressive. As Chair of the Women's
19 Issues Committee, as well as an African-American
20 woman, it's important that I continue to stand up for
21 this particular group of women who predominantly are
22 the workforce of Early Learn. So, I want to continue
23 to bring that forward and recognize that they are
24 that small margin that have not had a contract
25 negotiated at this time. So we just want to make

1 sure that that stays on your radar. The other issue
2 that I want to bring up is the 40 million dollars for
3 the cultural institutions. I know that Majority
4 Leader Jimmy Van Bramer has been adamantly pressing
5 about this, but as you know, many of the CIGS [sic]
6 are experiencing furloughs, lay-offs, buy-outs, and
7 are laying off staff. When Commissioner Finkelpearl
8 was here, it was noted that they didn't know how many
9 organizations were impacted by this, but it was
10 substantial. We know that there hasn't been an
11 increase since 2008 for the cultural institutions, and now we're
12 seeing the ramifications with lay-offs, furloughs and
13 many other aspects that are challenging their
14 workforce. In addition, to the IDNYC program. That's
15 amazing. It has brought forward many new visitors to
16 the museums, but they have seen no expansion of their
17 budget and it's having a devastating impact that we
18 don't even know the full ramifications of at this
19 time. Where are we with that 40 million dollars?
20 It's needed. They are the backbone of our city.
21 They breathe life, heart and soul into New York City,
22 and want to know, you know, there have been so many
23 agencies that have walked through here with
24 multimillion dollar increases, but the cultural institutions

1
2 which are a great investment for the City of New
3 York, we don't even know the full extent of the
4 return that the cultural institutions in all five
5 boroughs give to the city of New York. So, I'm
6 hopeful that there will be an increase.

7 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, I know this is
8 part of the adoption conversation. Everyone's made
9 that clear here at the table. I will add that in the
10 first hearing, you and the Chair and several others
11 had talked about the pension system, and we did reach
12 an accommodation with the cultural institutions and
13 the pension to study over the next two years to make
14 sure that we have-- the employees get what they need
15 in retirement as well. So, we did address that. We
16 put changes on hold, and in a process working with
17 them moving forward over the next two years.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
19 you, Director, and yes, we must acknowledge that you
20 worked tirelessly with us on that, and you made-- we
21 made great strides, but I'm confident that we can do
22 both.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Me too.
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25

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: SIRS and 40 million. I'm just suggesting. We will now hear from Council Member Rodriguez.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Chair. I just like to first of all thank you, say thank you for your work. Knowing that, again as we have said before, Vision Zero have been, you know, one of the great initiative of Mayor de Blasio. With Vision Zero we have seen the number of pedestrian killed being reduced big time. In 2015 lower from any times since we have started collecting data on pedestrian being killed by irresponsible drivers. As you know, I go back to the need to really put the money for the education awareness. I assume that we had not made any progress from the first day when you came to today. Right, there's no new money being identified for the education awareness campaign?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: No, but again, and you know this as well as anyone, there has been a significant investment really I think in every single budget I've seen in this Administration from the very first Preliminary Budget in the very first month on Vision Zero when we first announced it--

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: [interposing] I get that part, but--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] It was the initiative of that first Preliminary Budget.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: But this is-- look, I'm [sic] a great partner of moving our agenda, but you know, when you take a train there's a lot of advertising, education advertising related to the anti-smoking campaign, because the Department have been able to get some funding from the state Department and other sources to educate. So when we jump into the Two Train at 96th Street or the Four Train and people get to see that campaign going on in the bus charter, in the TV, in the radio, I think we make a big difference, and we cannot pretend that the Council will be the one putting the 2.5 million dollars if in the budget today there's zero dollar to buy art [sic], to buy air [sic], to put in the advertising, and I think that this is important. You know, and I believe that is critical to do what is at the goal of Vision Zero, to change the culture on how pedestrian, cyclists and drivers interact. So, I just hope that we don't take it for the 24 hours before the handshake, expecting that we'll do the

1 miracle identifying the funding and continue being
2 here saying, yeah we're doing great things, you know,
3 if we're fixing dangerous intersection, but still
4 there's no money to buy ad, to do anything on
5 education awareness campaign, and I just hope that
6 the conversation continue. We, the Council, we know
7 we need to find the money. I think New Yorkers is
8 not only transportation attendees [sic] at only
9 family [sic] 47th street [sic]. The average New
10 Yorker will need to know that the City is putting
11 money to buy air and TV and radio and putting the bus
12 charters [sic] in the train educating us all on the
13 importance of Vision Zero. My second concern is on
14 the Administration did not add any money from the
15 suggestion that we make. We made a suggestion on how
16 important it was, and this is the number that we sent
17 it to you guys. We made a suggestion to add 52.4
18 million dollars in expense for projects to address
19 dangerous priority location, 250 million dollars for
20 capital project for major artery [sic] redesigns, 2.5
21 million dollars for public awareness, and I just hope
22 that from here to the day when we finalize that
23 conversation for your team to look at those
24 recommendations that the Council has sent to you.
25

1
2 However, we came back with zero commitment to add any
3 dollars that we recommend in those three areas.

4 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: So, there was
5 significant capital added to Vision Zero in the
6 Executive Budget and in the Preliminary Budget. I
7 think we should both go over that list and see what
8 you believe is missing from that list. I'm not
9 arguing with you that the ad campaign is not funded
10 in 17. I understand your passion on that. We did
11 not do that, but we did significant investments in
12 Vision Zero, so we should go over that.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: My last 20
14 seconds about the Crash Investigation Squad. We only
15 have from 30 to 50 men and women in that
16 investigation unit. Forty-thousand hit-- that the
17 investigation unit that investigate hit and run.

18 DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]
20 As you know, last year we had 40,000 of those cases,
21 last one being in Staten Island where irresponsible
22 driver crash the pedestrian. He left the scene. And
23 to have from 30 to 50 member in that unit, we believe
24 that that number should be increased so that we can
25

respond to the 40,000 hit and run that we have in average every year.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: We'll, have a conversation with the NYPD.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you, Council Member. I have one question. In the Executive Budget hearings for DOC and ACS the question was asked to both Commissioners whether they had discussions about moving adolescents off Rikers Island. Was OMB a part of these conversations and what role will OMB play if adolescents were moved off Rikers Island?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: The answer is yes, and we put 170 million in. We do not have a location at this time, but it is something the conversation of a new setting and a new facility for adolescents is clearly something we'd like to achieve.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. And you said you're-- so you're going through the siting process now, or?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great.

Well, we have additional questions, but in the interest of time, and I know Commissioner Jiha is here, we will get them to you. We hope that you can respond to us expeditiously-

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] Will do.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: so that we can use them to negotiate with you.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: I look forward to it.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yes. We have one more ques-- a 20-second question--

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: from Council Member Chin.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I was going to ask about community school, but we can submit that. I was just curious that in the Department of Aging, the budget in the Executive Budget is 295 million. It's 15 million less than the adopted budget of last year, out of 78.5--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] And higher, higher than it had reached in the prior Administration--

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] Well,
but the thing is--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] and
there's significant--

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] my
question is to you is that is there any other agency
whose Executive Budget is less than last years
adopted budget besides the Department of Aging?

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Yes. Yes, I'm quite
sure there are, but once again I'm going to state
that we've done 30 million--

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] Well,
let me know if there are, but I--

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: [interposing] 30
million baseline increase in DFTA, a significant
increase in higher levels than it achieved in the
prior Administration. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I agree with you on
that, but it's not enough Dan, Dean, because the
senior population is growing.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

DIRECTOR FULEIHAN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: That was
more than 20 seconds. Thank you very much. We will

take a two minute break while we change documents,
and then we will hear from the Department of Finance.

[break]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We will
now resume the City Council's hearing on the Mayor's
Executive Budget for Fiscal 2017. We just heard from
the Office of Management and Budget, and we will now
hear from Jacques Jiha, the Commissioner of the
Department of Finance. Sorry, I just ran up here. In
the interest of time I will forgo making an opening
statement. You may begin your testimony,
Commissioner, once you are sworn in, and I apologize
for my delay, but I was meeting with the Speaker.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm that
your testimony will be truthful to the best of your
knowledge, information and belief?

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Yes, I do. Good
afternoon, Chairwoman Ferreras-Copeland and members
of the City Council Committee on Finance. I am
Jacques Jiha, Commissioner of the Department of
Finance. I am joined today by Michael Hyman, First
Deputy Commissioner, Jeffrey Shear, Deputy
Commissioner for Treasury and Payment Services, and
Samara Karasyk, Assistant Commissioner for

Intergovernmental. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on our Fiscal Year 2017 Executive Budget. Before I provide details on our achievements and the road ahead, I would like to give you a view of the City's finances. Through April, the City collected 48 billion dollars in tax revenue, representing a 5.1 percent increase from the same period last year. The City's average daily unrestricted cash balance for the first 10 months of the 2016 is 10.9 billion dollars, which exceeds the average for the same period last year by 1.3 billion dollars. Though at first glance, the City's finances are in good shape, there are some headwinds ahead, including softness in personal-income, property-transfer and hotel taxes. We will continue to monitor these indicators and update the Council with any new developments. I have been Commissioner of the Department of Finance for two years now. This is a great institution, but there are areas that need improvement. At this juncture, I am happy to report that work on those improvements is well underway and we have made significant progress toward my initial goal of creating a more customer-centric Agency. In my testimony today, I will share how our reforms and

1 initiatives are helping to make New York City more
2 competitive, both as a place to do business and in
3 which to live. During the past two years, we have
4 enforced the City's tax and revenue laws with our
5 guiding principles of fairness, efficiency,
6 transparency and excellent customer service at the
7 heart of everything we do. We believe that
8 implementing our work with integrity has enhanced the
9 Agency's role as an integral contributor to New York
10 City's business climate and to the City's overall
11 economic environment. Two years ago, we developed an
12 ambitious strategic plan that addressed not only the
13 City's macroeconomic environment, but also focused on
14 the Agency's policies and procedures. This includes
15 business tax reform, property tax initiatives, the
16 establishment of the independent Office of the
17 Taxpayer Advocate, process reengineering, technology
18 upgrades, and policy changes to the programs that we
19 administer. We modernized the City's outdated
20 business tax code to help attract and retain
21 businesses. With our new corporate tax structure,
22 companies that have employees and assets located in
23 New York City are no longer penalized because taxable
24 income is now based on the location of their
25

customers, rather than the location of their employees and assets. The new corporate tax structure also provides the tremendous benefit of reducing the tax rates of small businesses and manufacturers by as much as 50 percent. These reforms are making New York City an attractive environment for small businesses, and are promoting job growth in the City. In fact, last year the City saw its first significant increase in manufacturing jobs in 25 years. In support of the corporate tax reform law, we established a new Business Tax Services Unit to respond to legal, policy and procedural questions about the City's business taxes and provide support and guidance to the business community. Building on these accomplishments, we began phase two of the rollout of our new Business Tax System, BTS, e-Services website, which continues the overhaul of our 25-year-old computer system for business taxes. The new system will improve efficiency by allowing us to more quickly process customer transactions and respond to customer inquiries. Improving our property tax system is no less important than addressing business tax issues. We have been working simultaneously to increase

1 fairness and transparency for property owners, and to
2 reduce inefficiencies in our property tax systems.

3 While the changes we have made thus far are not as
4 publicly visible as the business tax reform, they
5 will produce positive results for New York City
6 property owners. Among these initiatives, we have

7 accomplished the following: We are refining the
8 process of property valuation by improving data
9 collection and the econometric models used to value
10 properties, and by leveraging technology and tools
11 such as global information systems and aerial
12 photography to collect and verify property data and
13 to ensure geographical consistency in valuing
14 properties. We combined one of the most complicated
15 methods of property assessment into easy-to-use
16 online property maps for Class One and Class Two

17 properties. These maps, which are available on our
18 website, provide property data and comparable sales
19 data to the public for all of New York City's
20 residential one, two and three-family homes,

21 residential condos, rental apartment buildings with
22 11 or more units, and all cooperative apartment
23 buildings. We created a new Real Property Income and

24 Expense short form that greatly reduces filing and
25

compliance burdens. Additionally, we are working on a property tax calculator, which will be available on our website, to help homeowners understand if they have a case for challenging their property values with the New York City Tax Commission and the Department of Finance. We know that the property tax system is not intuitive. The New York City Tax Commission will only reduce property values for Class One homes if the owner can prove that the market value on which their tax assessment is based is lower than a value derived from the tax law, which is confusing because the tax law value frequently is not the fair market value of a home. This calculator will show homeowners what changes to fair market value could trigger a reduction in their taxable value. This will in turn increase transparency and help property owners better understand our property-assessment process. We are listening to taxpayers and are becoming more responsive. For example, this year we lowered the market value on more properties than the year before in response to requests for review by property owners. Of 3,642 requests for review, we lowered the market value of 1,033 properties, up about 45 percent from the previous year. To improve

our assessment process, we are exploring the use of streetscape photography that would allow us to collect current, high-quality photos of every property in New York City. With this software, we would be able to determine the progress of construction or renovations at properties with building permits as well as the quality of that construction. In addition, we are conducting focus groups with New York City property owners to revamp the Notice of Property Value that we mail to more than one million property owners every year. We want to make sure we are communicating clearly with homeowners and incorporating their feedback into our efforts to keep them informed about their property value and how it is calculated. We have recently proposed a rule to clarify how we will administratively correct property assessments for clerical errors or errors in description, and to expand the categories of errors that the Agency may correct. Corrections would apply going forward, but could also go back up to six years from the date an application for correction is submitted. This rule also outlines the specific types of errors that are correctible. Any corrections made under the proposed

rule would be separate and apart from appeals to the New York City Tax Commission. Establishing the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate has also been a key part of our efforts to improve how we serve New York City residents. From October 19, 2015, the date the office opened for operation, through May 18, 2016, the Taxpayer Advocate successfully advocated for 188,000 dollars in refunds and 2.2 million dollars in abatements. The major initiatives outlined so far will continue to significantly improve the City's economic environment well into the future. Now, I'll turn to our efforts to improve the operations of the Department of Finance. Throughout the Agency, we have begun many initiatives to improve our performance, redefine the customer experience and re-engineer our processes. Many of the Agency core functional processes are not documented and are embedded with inefficiencies that result in errors, inconsistencies, long processing times and dissatisfied customers. In addition, like many government and private entities, we are facing an impending wave of retirements over the next five years that could potentially result in the loss of institutional knowledge. To address these issues, we

are mapping the critical processes of our core business functions with the goals of documenting and understanding what we do, improving how we do it and standardizing the way we do it. Let me give you some examples of the work we have been doing in areas that directly impact the public, starting with the City Register's Office. We are exploring the best use of optical character recognition technology to upgrade our widely recognized Automated City Register Information System, ACRIS. This would improve the accuracy of data while reducing the need for the public and title companies to manually enter data. This would also enhance searches by the public and by our staff to identify potential deed fraud. We are continuing to reach out to title companies, banks and attorneys about the Go Green initiative to increase the percentage of electronically submitted property-related documents. This will save the Agency time and money by eliminating the possibility of document loss, reducing the cost of returning documents and decreasing the time our employees spend scanning documents. We are also working to make our exemptions programs more accessible and transparent. Following a review of the SCRIE and DRIE programs, we

found that 42 percent of SCRIE applications and 76 percent of DRIE applications we receive are incomplete. This is an inefficient use of staff resources. We identified the main reasons as unclear, hard-to-understand applications, tenants' lack of income documentation, and their inability to get a copy of their lease from their landlord. To address these issues, we started with redesigning the applications. We have eliminated superfluous information, increased the font size to make the applications easier to read, provided more space for responses, and reduced the documentation burden on applicants. To reduce the paperwork required for enrollment, we engaged the Social Security Administration, the Internal Revenue Service and other governmental agencies to obtain automated information feeds for income data. This will allow us to quickly validate income and reduce the burden on applicants to provide documents that often are not easily found or obtained. We are also launching an online tool called the Landlord Express Access Portal, which will enable landlords to upload leases and file documents electronically, making paperwork submission and updating accounts much easier. These

efforts will result in faster application processing, fewer incomplete applications and help us to enroll as many eligible people in the programs as possible. To support our SCRIE and DRIE efforts, we have begun an aggressive outreach program in the 10 neighborhoods with the highest under-enrollment. We have taken a proactive role by creating a mobile unit to travel the five boroughs to help residents with the application process. We have established partnerships with senior and community centers; at their sites, our staff will process applications right then and there. We are closely tracking the number of applications received at these events, as well as the outcome of those applications to monitor the success of these efforts. We piloted this approach in Chinatown last year with great success. With that event as the model, we launched Flushing Senior Housing Month earlier this month with events in five locations in Flushing and will replicate this effort in other areas of the City. As you know, the Agency has been working with the Council on a Tax Lien Sale Task Force. Our priority as an Agency is to help homeowners resolve their debt before their lien is sold. We are making every effort to do so.

The lien sale is a last-resort collection tool.

Months before the lien is sold, we send the first of

five separate notices urging delinquent property

owners to take action. We also conduct dozens of

outreach sessions in local Council Districts. Our

efforts are beginning to bear fruit. In Fiscal Year

2015, we sold liens on less than 16 percent of the

properties that received our 90-day notice, warning

notice, down from 21 percent in 2014. This year we

implemented changes to improve our outreach and

responsiveness. For example, we took a customer

survey to better understand the reasons property

owners were not paying their taxes on time. We also

postponed enforcement action until the next lien sale

for not-for-profit properties that failed to obtain

exemptions when it appeared that the title and the

use of the property had not recently changed. We

look forward to working with the Council to making

further improvements in this area. We also have made

significant progress in our collection of debt

adjudicated by the Environmental Control Board and

referred to the Department of Finance. As a result

of our proactive outreach efforts, debt-segmentation

analysis and debt rotation program, we increased

collections by 31 percent in the last two years to a projected 55 million dollars in Fiscal Year 2016.

Technology is a major part of our efforts to re-engineer the Agency's business processes and to improve customer service. We are currently driving a number of initiatives to enhance mobile web-based services, in line with the recently released NYC Digital Playbook. Currently, one-quarter of the traffic on our website come from mobile devices, including smartphones and tablets. As a result, we are developing a mobile app that will allow the public to pay and contest parking tickets. At the same time, we are making our existing parking-ticket and property tax websites easier to use on mobile devices. In addition, we are continuing to work on our new property tax system and on the creation of a data warehouse, technology that will speed up our strategy to become a data-driven organization and provide timely analyses of current and future trends.

As you can see, we are doing as much work as we can with the tools that we have at our disposal to improve the lives of New Yorkers. However, in certain situations we do need to seek legislative action. Therefore, we are pursuing the following

legislation: We are working on legislation that would allow Rent Freeze Program participants back into the program at their old frozen rent if they are disqualified from the program for one lease term because their income increased temporarily but then they later re-qualified. We are introducing legislation to align our Offers in Compromise for business owners with the New York State statute to allow the Agency more flexibility in settling claims when the taxpayer is experiencing financial hardship. We are introducing legislation to help not-for-profit organizations that qualified for a current property tax exemption but failed to renew or apply. This legislation would allow us to go back three years from the date we grant them a not-for-profit exemption if the organization would have qualified during that earlier time. We have drafted legislation for the Industrial Commercial Abatement Program, ICAP, that would allow applicants who miss the filing deadline for the final application to pay a penalty rather than lose the abatement altogether. Currently, applicants must submit a final application for benefits within one year after the first building permit is issued. If they miss the deadline under

1 current law, they lose the abatement entirely. I
2 hope that my testimony today has given you some
3 insight into how far we have come and how far we have
4 yet to go. Our goal is to make the New York City
5 Department of Finance one of the most efficient
6 revenue collection agencies in the country. We
7 believe that we have gained tremendous ground in
8 promoting our underlying principles while laying the
9 groundwork for future improvements, all of which go
10 toward establishing the Department of Finance as an
11 integral part of making New York City a great place
12 to live and do business. Now, I'm happy to take any
13 questions you may have.
14

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
16 you, Commissioner. Thank you for your testimony. As
17 we've mentioned before, this Committee, it's really
18 been a pleasure to work with you and you've
19 highlighted a lot of the priorities and change that
20 you've been trying to make within your agency. I
21 wanted to talk about one of your increases or new
22 needs. The Fiscal 2017 Executive Budget includes 1.6
23 million in Fiscal 2017 and funding in the out-years
24 for the addition of 26 administrative staff to assist
25 with processing half a million homeowner tax

1 exemption renewals related to Senior Citizen
2 Homeowner Exemption, SCHE, and the Disabled
3 Homeowner's Exemption, Veterans Exemption, and Co-
4 operative and Condominium Tax. How did the
5 Department determine that these new headcount need
6 and what will be the duties and responsibilities of
7 your 26 new staff?

9 COMMISSIONER JIHA: As, you know, the
10 Department of Finance stopped doing renewals in 2005,
11 and as a result of that, we have been giving benefits
12 to a lot of people who are not qualified for the
13 benefits. So the purpose of hiring these people is
14 to help us start the renewal program again so that we
15 could start giving benefits to people who are
16 ineligible for the program, for these benefits. The
17 way we came up with the headcount, I mean, it's--
18 it's the beginning of the process. As we administer
19 the renewal program we will see if there's a need for
20 more resources, and if there's need for more
21 resources, we'll come back and ask the Council for
22 more resources to help us administer the program, but
23 basically what we currently believe we process about
24 two applications for initial applications and about
25 six renewal a day. So, this is a basic genesis that

we use to come up with the numbers that we need to process all the half a million applications that we do on an annual basis.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. I know that you mentioned the Taxpayer Advocate in your opening statement. According to the New York--

COMMISSIONER JIHA: [interposing] It's a two [sic]-- I'm sorry. We process two initial application per hour.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I was going to say, you know, I-- we were going to follow up on that. I was like, two applications all day--

COMMISSIONER JIHA: [interposing] No, no, no.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: would need 26 people?

COMMISSIONER JIHA: No, it's two applications--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: [interposing] But I was going to follow up off record.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: No, no, two application per hour, I'm sorry. I thought that said in a day, and six per hour for renewals.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you, Samara.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: That post-it, aren't you grateful for that post-it?

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: According to the New York City Taxpayer Advocate's annual report published on May 1st, taxpayers and property owners have repeatedly complained about DOF's lack of communication and accessibility while requesting information. You know, the Taxpayer Advocate was your concept. It is something that you believe in. Taxpayer is saying people don't know how to reach your office. What are we going to do about it?

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Well, as you know, we've been making and taking a number of steps to improve our communications with the public, and as you know, the entire purpose from my perspective of the Taxpayer Advocate is to hold our feet to the fire and to identify problems within the Agency and make accommodations, and we're taking these recommendations seriously. And as you-- as I mentioned in my testimony, one of the things that we

1 are working on currently is a survey with the
2 taxpayers on the property notice that we send
3 annually, okay, to taxpayers. So we're trying to get
4 input from them to make sure that this is our most
5 important documents that we mail out to a million
6 property owners annually. So we want to make sure
7 it's very clear to them, we're communicating exactly
8 what we want to communicate, you know, the message we
9 want to communicate to them that they understand
10 exactly. So, we're having surveys. We're working
11 with the public to take their input into account, and
12 as you know, as you can imagine this is-- it's a huge
13 agency. It's a big agency with a long history. It
14 takes some times to make changes within the culture
15 of the agency.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

18 COMMISSIONER JIHA: But as I said, we are
19 making significant efforts. The staff is very open
20 to suggestions and ideas in terms of our best to make
21 the agency customer-centric.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, do you
23 still believe that you don't need dedicated numbers?
24 You still confident that people should be calling 311
25 instead of having a dedicated number that says--

1 because this is the one thing that it's highlighted.
2 We can't reach you. So--

3 COMMISSIONER JIHA: [interposing] This is
4 a major issue.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: this is
6 usually resolved by an 800 number or some type of
7 number, but you seem to always focus on, you know,
8 this Administration's belief is that we need to all
9 go to 311 and be filtered at 311. I think the one
10 step in the right direction to add to all your other,
11 I guess, steps is getting a number that we're able to
12 just give people. You need-- you need a-- you need
13 to be taken out of 311. 311 is obviously not giving,
14 doing the justice for the work or the kind of the
15 attitude in just everything that you're changing at
16 DOF, it's not getting out to the constituents.

17 COMMISSIONER JIHA: Well, this is one of
18 the recommendations of the Taxpayer Advocate which is
19 the issue, and more importantly, the public sometimes
20 find it difficult to communicate their personal
21 information--

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
23 [interposing] Right.

24 COMMISSIONER JIHA: to a 311--
25

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] To a 311 operator.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: operator, because it's a per-- confidential information about their taxes, about--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] Well, Commissioner, maybe you should come on this side. You know, I'm telling you, you need the number. You seem to be testifying that you agree.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Well, this is an issue for us. I mean, to be honest with you, this is a major issue for us, but we're also trying to find some kind of a solution working with 311, but again, it's--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] It's been years. There's--

COMMISSIONER JIHA: part of a discussion.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: no

solution to be found in 311. I think 311 serves its purpose. It's too broad. As homeowners, we have to share a lot of information. We want to do it directly probably to you, but we'll speak to some of your staff. So, I would-- I want to continue to push

and advocate that you need, you know, at least several-- I'm not saying one line for everything, because then you're just going to create another bottleneck, but several lines to help, you know, address your number one complaint, which is communication. Agreed?

COMMISSIONER JIHA: yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great. OMB's forecast a steep 4.5 drop in corporate tax collections in Fiscal 2016. OMB explains the decline is stemming from the volatility in the financial markets which reduces corporate profits. The City's corporate tax reform enacted last year such as merging the Banking Corporation Tax into the general Corporation Tax has been presented as a revenue neutral. However, different components of the tax reform phase in with in different time frames, and there have been some delays in reformatting the new tax forms. Is some of the revenue decline attributed to the phasing in the tax reforms, and if so, how much do you believe?

COMMISSIONER JIHA: No, at this point in time it's too early to give you a good sense of why we're seeing softness in corporate taxes. One thing

1 for sure we know, it's we're witnessing some softness
2 in the economy in general, and it's not just
3 corporate taxes again which is showing some
4 indication of weakness. We're talking about personal
5 income tax is also weak, your City [sic] tax,
6 property transfer taxes. So I would say at this
7 point in time it's too early to tell, but I would
8 more or less go with the explanation of OMB with
9 respect to, you know-- because we know it's taking
10 place on Wall Street has some impact, has significant
11 impact on the city tax revenue. So the financial
12 sectors went through some challenges. We expect that
13 to have some impact on city taxes.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, when
16 do you think we could properly assess the impact the
17 reforms are having?

18 COMMISSIONER JIHA: The reforms were
19 designed to be revenue neutral, because we have a
20 number of what I call measures. We have a number of
21 things that we-- steps that we took to make sure that
22 the City's finances were not impacted. For instance,
23 we raised the capital base from a million dollars to
24 10 million dollars as an alternative base. We're
25 phasing out the single factor formula. It's, again,

1 we have a number of things that we put in place to
2 protect the City, so I'm not concerned about it's the
3 reform causing, because the State is having the same
4 issue with the corporate taxes and personal income
5 tax. It's all what I call the income sensitive taxes
6 are feeling some outer pressure. So I cannot say,
7 because personal income tax there was no reform.
8 There was no reform for utility [sic] taxes.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

11 COMMISSIONER JIHA: There was no reform
12 for property transfer taxes.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

14 COMMISSIONER JIHA: So, it is-- you know,
15 it's overall it's what I sense at this point in time.
16 It's some softness in the economy.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. On
18 page nine you mentioned several pieces of legislation
19 that you're looking-- you're working on. It sounds
20 like most are State legislation. Are you planning on
21 sharing this legislation with us before you go up to
22 Albany with them?

23 COMMISSIONER JIHA: Oh, I'll be more than
24 happy to. Samara will be more than happy to share
25 all the legislation with your office.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yes.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Yes, we will.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So that we
can assess-

COMMISSIONER JIHA: [interposing] Sure.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: if we do
resolutions, how would this be supportive?

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: You
mentioned you were in the process of revamping the
Notice of Property Value. What is the timeline of
this revamp, and will you share drafts of the new
NOPV before finalizing it?

COMMISSIONER JIHA: We will definitely
share with because our goal is to get feedback and
constructive criticism from the public and also from
elected officials, because as I said, this is the
most important documents that we mail out to a
million property owners annually.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: So we want to make
sure we get it right.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Because currently one of the complaints that we have is it's not clear, you know, in terms of what's been communicated.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: So, hopefully with the new, the redesign NOPV, and also with the calculator, the tax calculator we're developing we want to put on our website. That will definitely help property owners understand exactly how the tax is calculated. Also, Samara just tell me that we've asked Council Members to participate via email.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Via-- you've asked them already? Can you just state your name for the record?

SAMARA KARASYK: Yes, Samara Karasyk, Assistant Commissioner of External Affairs at the Department of Finance. We emailed last week to all the Council Members' email addresses to see if you want to participate yourselves, if you want send people either from the public or staff to participate, we'd love to do like a sort of Council-specific Notice of Property Value. So we sent that last week. We haven't had a chance to-- Beck [sic]

and I haven't had a chance to connect on that quite yet, because you guys have been busy with hearings.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, I mean we get tons of emails especially this time of the year. So, perhaps we should be working together because then I can ask members-- can we close the hearing room? We can ask-- we can work with you to get members to participate and staff.

SAMARA KARASYK: Okay, I'll follow up.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: But thank you for that, but you know, we've been a little busy here.

SAMARA KARASYK: I know.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. Thank you so much, Commissioner. We've been joined by Council Members Gibson, Matteo, Cumbo, Levine, Rodriguez, and Miller. We will hear from Council Member Matteo followed by Council Member Gibson.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. Welcome, Commissioner. One of the--and I'm glad you brought it up in your testimony on page three and four is property tax system and the frustration my constituents have on appealing, finding the fair market value, and you and I have

1 talked about this with your staff. So, I'm very
2 interested in discussing more on the calculator. Can
3 you please explain how that's going to work, time
4 frame, how it's going to make it easier for our
5 constituents to just do that? Is that going to help
6 them get their fair market value better? Because
7 whenever someone comes and get their appeal notice
8 that they can appeal, and then they come to us and
9 ask us what they need to do, it confuses them. It
10 takes a lot of our constituents out who don't then
11 pursue it, because it is a difficult convoluted
12 process. So, very interested to talk about the
13 calculator. If you could just explain where we are
14 and how that's going to help our constituents?

16 COMMISSIONER JIHA: I'm not sure if you're
17 aware that currently we have on our website maps for
18 Class One and Class Two properties that provide you
19 all kind of comparable service [sic] data that you
20 have so you can have a better sense as a taxpayer to
21 know comparable property values in your neighborhood,
22 in your areas. So, once you have that information
23 you could use that information to get a sense of your
24 property value and to see whether or not the
25 property-- the market value that assigned to you by

DOF is in line or out of line. So you would be able to use that information to plug into your calculator, and the calculator would, you know, give you what I call the effective market value, because at the end of the day, the Tax Commission will not take your case if the market value of your property is not below the effective market value. What the effective market value is what called the market value that is determined by law. There is a lot of legal things that go into that determination, CAPS [sic], and so on and so on.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Right.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: So, that would give you a sense of whether or not you should take, you know, a challenge to challenge your property with the value with the New York Tax Commission. With respect to development, I know we start to work on it, okay? I would provide you, because I don't have a timeline, a specific timeline exactly of exactly when it's going to be ready. I don't know if-- team, is it on? By the middle of the summer.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Middle of the summer?

COMMISSIONER JIHA: We will get the calculator up and running.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Good, because you know, as much information as we give those who contact our offices, there are some who don't even contact us, some who may call 311, may not get the relevant information. So, we, I think collectively we have to make sure we do a better job of getting whatever information is on the website currently going to be to our constituents and, you know, through your mailings. And I notice that you said that you have an increase of 45 percent from the previous year of lower market value. Can you explain why more people participating? You know, what's the phenomenon--

COMMISSIONER JIHA: [interposing] It's more people participating, but we also, again as I said, we're becoming more responsive in terms of looking at and reviewing, doing monitoring [sic] system [sic] of the review process that we go through, and you know, if we think that, you know, it's warranted, we will provide the reduction.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: So, do you think that past issues-- I mean, this is, you know, a 45

percent increase is pretty big increase. It's because of staffing levels, do you believe, or you think--

COMMISSIONER JIHA: [interposing] Again, as I said, we're becoming more customer-centric, more responsive in terms of the way we communicate with the public and the way we address the public's concerns. As you can see, one of the things that we-- one of the rules that we issued, we're working on, is a rule basically to fix errors in description and clerical errors, things that in the past we had a very limited interpretation and limited now interpretation of the way we dealt with the cases in the past. So, we're becoming more open in terms of our interpretation of things.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: I mean, you know, not to mention, you know, the property taxes. You know,, like I said, the frustrating part for my constituents are, and as the Chair pointed out, you know, sometimes just not having the right number to call, the right person to call, and when they call us and we go to their house or we bring them in and we make sure that they understand the process, but we're not getting to a lot of people. So, it's encouraging

to see the 45 percent increase. I want to do more.
So, I'd like to sit with you after the budget and
discuss how we can get the message out and work with
our constituents. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you, Council Member. We will now hear from Council
Member Gibson followed by Council Member Miller.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you, Madam
Chair. Good afternoon, Commissioner. Good to see
you and your team again. I first want to thank you
and acknowledge the partnerships that we've had
around SCRIE and DRIE enrollment. I am one of the 10
districts in the City that has a significant amount
of seniors and disabled New Yorkers that are not
enrolled. So, I know we have more to come, but I
appreciate the efforts that your agency is really
making to ensure that many seniors who are rent-
burdened right now in many of our districts,
including mine, are recognized as SCRIE and DRIE
program. So, I thank you for that. I wanted to ask
about the revenue that we received from red light and
speed cameras. While I know that the authorization
on the actual number of cameras we have around

1 schools is authorized by Albany, I wanted to find out
2 with all of the revenue we get, is there anything
3 that is set aside to promote more safety and
4 messaging to increase safety around schools?
5

6 COMMISSIONER JIHA: We're only brining
7 the revenue. We don't do the allocation. It's a
8 question for the Counsel at OMB. I don't--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]
10 Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER JIHA: We don't deal on the
12 allocation side.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. Just wanted
14 to make sure. I know the question--

15 COMMISSIONER JIHA: [interposing] Yeah, we
16 don't deal with the allocation--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: has come up.

18 COMMISSIONER JIHA: with the allocation.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. And there
20 is a big push, if you're not aware by many of the
21 advocates. While I know we have 140 as the
22 authorization of speed cameras are near schools,
23 there is a plan to go to Albany, and it has already
24 started, to ask for universal approach to make sure
25 that all 1,800 public schools throughout our City are

given those speed cameras around our schools. So, I just wanted to make sure you were aware of that.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, great. The other thing I wanted to ask very quickly was about the co-op abatement, the Co-op Tax Abatement Program. I represent several co-ops in my district in the Bronx, and I know that there was a comptroller report and released some findings on an audit. So, I wanted to find out for the future. Some of my shareholders have been asking me because they are entitled to an abatement, I believe, right? So, sometimes the information doesn't get to all the shareholders in a timely fashion. So is that your agency that sends out all of the notification, or is that another Department?

SAMARA KARASYK: Hi, so that's us.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: You can answer. Okay, so it's DOF.

SAMARA KARASYK: But what's confusing for co-ops is their boards allocate those abatements to each unit, so they're calculating whatever the maintenance and other costs are that are charging per unit, and then they put the abatement on. So we mail

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COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Oh, okay. That's very helpful. I appreciate that. So I probably will reach out, because I know, you know, not all of the boards are-- in terms of performance and operations, I think everyone is on a different level. So I think I have some challenges with some where the information isn't given to the shareholders in a timely fashion. Okay, great. So my last question. I had a tax lien event with DOF and I believe DEP and others, and I appreciate all the efforts that we undertake to really reach out to those property

owners that owe taxes to the City, but some of the concerns and inquiries that I have received are vacant homes where banks have taken possession because the owner may have passed away or moved on, and so banks are foreclosing on many of the vacant properties across the City, but for some reason the information isn't always getting to the City. So, I have the neighbors, like if it's a church or another homeowner that are complaining that, you know, obviously the house is not being maintained, but even more so, there are numerous notices that are constantly put on vacant properties, I assume DOF notices, ECB violations and other infractions from Sanitation. So how does all of that come together? What type of database do we have to identify those vacant buildings where a bank has the mortgage and there's still taxes that are owed on that property? How does that work? Because the residents are always complaining about buildings that are unkempt, sanitation and other issues that, you know, come to their properties as well.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: How does that work? Please help me.

UNIDENTIFIED: Sure, so at a high level we reach out to all of the banks to make sure if they are owning properties due to whatever reason foreclosure that we are sending them a centralized report of all of the outstanding ECD violations, and we deal directly with the Banks. If you have any situation where your constituents are complaining to you about particular vacant property, please forward it to our attention and we will look into it.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I will send it to you by the end of the hearing. Thank you very much.

UNIDENTIFIED: You're welcome.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you, Council Member. Council Member Miller?

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good to see you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Same here [sic].

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So, your deed fraud program and deed registry has been in effect for over two years now, is that pop [sic]? Could you speak to its effectiveness and how it's impacted communities? Obviously, there's been a lot of

1 conversation over the high rate of deed fraud in
2 transitions throughout the City, particularly in the
3 outer boroughs over the past few years, and I know
4 this program has been a great program. I'd like for
5 you to speak to the effectiveness, but one of the
6 things that I've had several conversations about, if
7 in fact we are reaching that target lower hanging
8 fruit audience, the seniors, because of their lack of
9 access to online access and email. Is it being
10 effective? If not, is there something that we can do
11 better to hit that target audience?

13 COMMISSIONER JIHA: We've been, as you
14 know, in my last testimony with the Sheriff sometime
15 about a month and a half ago, we've been making a lot
16 of progress with respect to deed fraud. This is
17 something which is of a high priority for us. The
18 Sheriff has, you know, has been making a lot of
19 progress arresting people, prosecuting people, but
20 currently-- and you know, we've been making some
21 progress. This is a major-- it's a big problem, and
22 it's not something that can be addressed overnight.
23 You know, get, you know, rid of overnight. We are
24 looking, seeking more tools. Actually, we have a
25 legislation in Albany to give us some of the tools

1 that we need, basically to fight back against
2 default. The legislation was introduced in the
3 Senate, and we secured-- we secured the support of
4 the [inaudible] Association. [inaudible] So, for the
5 entire thing, and hopefully we're going to have the
6 legislation introduced in the Assembly. So, again,
7 so far we've got about 1,230 complaints from the
8 cases. We closed 590. One hundred and 39 were
9 referred to the DA's office. We arrested 18, and we
10 have two completion pending and 16 [sic] are pending
11 [sic]. So we're making some progress. More
12 importantly to me is the education part, educational
13 part of these things, because we want to make sure
14 that homeowners know exactly what to do if they get--
15 somebody try to take the deed away from them.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: If you could give
18 us that data, that update--

19 COMMISSIONER JIHA: [interposing] Sure.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: and we could kind
21 of provide that. We do a weekly update to the
22 district, you know, majority homeowners, and at least
23 get them thinking and that way get them to sign up
24 for the program and add to the effectiveness. One of
25 the things that we had-- we did have the District

1 Attorney's on yesterday and we spoke about this
2 briefly, and they kind of threw the onus over to you
3 guys saying that, you know, they follow your lead
4 essentially, and so any tools that we could assist in
5 giving you, and even if it's a home row [sic], we
6 would certainly--

7
8 COMMISSIONER JIHA: [interposing] What
9 we'll do is we'll provide you the information, but
10 more importantly, we'll provide you with literature.
11 We have literature that we could, you know, we could
12 share with you. We'll share-- that we could share
13 with you so you could give out in your district.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Well, your team
15 has been great in coming out and being a part of our
16 community forums, homeowners, the lien sales, which
17 is a good Segway. I didn't see where we captured the
18 revenue generated through lien sales last year and
19 what this year looked like. Was that in your
20 document?

21 COMMISSIONER JIHA: No, it's not, but--
22 what is it? Last year was-- [off mic]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: And could you
24 identify whether or not they were private homes?
25 While you look at that, I do have a question that--

COMMISSIONER JIHA: [interposing] Why don't we-- why don't we send you because we could give it to you by district.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Yeah, absolutely [sic].

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Or so.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: That's very--

COMMISSIONER JIHA: [interposing] You know, and that would be even more useful for you.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Yeah, that is very important.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Okay, yeah. We'll provide the information to you after.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So, and finally, I wanted to talk about your savings plan and your reduction of two million dollars last year and planned another this year in salary accruals and what impact that has in hiring and retaining the best workers and qualified folks. I love your staff.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: We work with them often, and we want to make sure that they're properly compensated, so I'm putting my labor hat on. Please don't cut that budget. We can fight. With all of

these additional revenues, let's make sure that we have good books and that we're properly compensated.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Yeah, it's basically attrition and ideally it's in hiring. So we're not-- you know, it's not going to impact on staff.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Okay?

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you so much.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Alright, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you, Commissioner. We have additional questions that we're just going to forward to you in the interest of time. We have the public coming to testify today. I just wanted to, again, publicly acknowledge that your direction is completely different from the prior Administration. We're used to having a very adversarial relationship with the former Finance Commissioner, but it has really been a pleasure to work with you, and the fact that you not only listen but you immediately implement a lot of our recommendations, makes for a very fair and balanced partner. So, thank you.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: However,
we're still negotiating on the budget--

COMMISSIONER JIHA: [interposing] Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: and there
are things that we still need to fix. Alright.
Thank you very much. We need to get you a phone
number.

COMMISSIONER JIHA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you
very much, Commissioner. We're going to take a two-
minute break while we change documents, and we will
hear from DDC.

[break]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We will
now resume the City Council's hearing on the Mayor's
Executive Budget for Fiscal 2017. We just heard from
the Department of Finance, and now we will hear from
the Commissioner of the Department of Design and
Construction Feniosky Peña-Mora. In the interest of
time I will forgo making an opening statement. You
may begin your testimony after you're sworn in by my
Counsel.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm that your testimony will be truthful to the best of your knowledge, information and belief?

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: I affirm. Good afternoon, Chairperson Ferreras-Copeland and members of the Finance Committee. I am Doctor Feniosky Peña-Mora, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Design and Construction. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. As the City's primary capital construction delivery agency, the funding for our projects is provided by the 25 city agencies that we partner with. We value our relationships with these partner agencies very highly, and we do all we can to provide them and therefore, the people of New York City with the best level of service and efficiency. Ultimately, we seek to leave a legacy for future generations that this Administration and this Council can be proud of. In regards to the sake [sic] of the budget, DDC's fiscal year 17 total agency operating budget is 478.8 million. This includes 114.6 million for personnel services with a budgeted headcount of 1,376 and 364.2 million for other than personnel services. The funding breakdown of the Fiscal Year 17 operating

1 budget is as follows: 123.7 million in inter-fund
2 agreements funds, 347.7 million in federal funds, and
3 7.4 million in city funds. As you know, DDC is
4 currently managing a project portfolio that includes
5 1,287 active infrastructure and public building
6 projects valued at 5.7 billion dollars. I am pleased
7 to report that with one month remaining in Fiscal
8 Year 16, DDC expects to meet the major statistical
9 indicators that reflect our mission to deliver the
10 City's construction projects in a safe, expeditious,
11 responsive, cost-effective manner while maintaining
12 the highest degree of architectural engineering and
13 construction quality. Since my testimony before this
14 committee in March, DDC has completed two significant
15 projects that I want to briefly highlight: The
16 Staten Island Family Justice Center in downtown Saint
17 George [sic] and the new EMS 50 facility in Jamaica
18 Queens. The Family Justice Center constructed on
19 behalf of the Mayor's Office of Combat Domestic
20 violence is the first in Staten Island and we serve
21 as a single location providing social and legal
22 services as well as employment and computer training
23 to New Yorkers in need. It includes a hospitality
24 area and children's room in order to ease the process
25

of receiving assistance. The new Queens EMS 50 building is a combined EMS station and EMS division which provides comprehensive space for the logistical and operational support that will improve vital emergency responses in Queens. Concerning capital projects on non-city owned property, DDC continues to work with recipient [sic] organizations along with the Office of Management and Budget Taskforce to facilitate progress of these projects through the various stages of approval. This fiscal year, 26 projects have already been registered for a total of 13.3 million dollars, an additional 50 [sic] in value at 3.1 million adding various stages of approval. At present, we are working on a portfolio of about 200 projects with a total value of approximately 110 million. We continued to meet with recipient organizations, provide assistance and answer the questions as best as possible. I want to update you on what is going on with our esteemed program. As you know, this program provides a pipeline for New York City youth into the architecture, engineering, construction, and larger built environmental fields. STEM initiatives expose young people to engineering and design processes, shaping their lives and helping

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2 Viverito and her team, Nathan Toth and the Finance
3 Division for the continued support we receive. I
4 will also like to thank Mayor Bill de Blasio and his
5 legislative team as well as the Office of Management
6 and Budget for their hard work, diligence and
7 guidance. That concludes my remarks, and I'm happy
8 to answer any questions you and your colleagues may
9 have. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you
11 very much, Commissioner. So, we know you're
12 approaching your 20-year anniversary. I understand
13 that DDC's coming up or maybe thinking of
14 opportunities on how you're going to celebrate your
15 anniversary. So, wanted to know what your thoughts
16 were there, and as you know, the Council wrote the
17 law creating DDC back in 1995, and we have watched
18 closely over the years as the agency has grown. What
19 do you think-- considering the concept for us to
20 create DDC was to expedite projects, and it seems
21 that in this spirit or what has happened if you have
22 more and more agencies building projects that are
23 larger and larger. I don't know if that was the
24 inception, but what we have find [sic] is comparably
25 the smaller projects or the ones that we have more

1 challenges with are the ones that are taking much
2 longer. So, how do you envision that in the next 20
3 years we can begin to remediate this, because it is
4 the number one issue that comes up with every agency,
5 particularly in parks? Now you're often being--people
6 want to just create a whole separate authority if
7 they could to have parks projects done because of the
8 delays that DDC has endured. So, you know, while we
9 celebrate on one end that it's 20 years, you know,
10 how can we begin to plan or what do you feel are the
11 challenges that you're having why these projects
12 can't be expedited?

14 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Thank you, Madam
15 Chair, for that question. It's true. We are in the
16 planning of our 20th anniversary, and we are
17 identifying ways in which we are celebrating this
18 momentous occasion. In terms of how we are seeing
19 these time, it has given us opportunity to look back
20 and see how our process have actually changed or not
21 changed with evolution of the projects that we have
22 undertaken. It is true, our-- the type of work that
23 we have undertaken over these 20 years have changed.
24 We have undertaken projects that are bigger, have--
25 are undertaking more responsibility, and our process

1 sometimes have not changed with those different
2 projects, and we have followed the same process
3 almost for every single project. So, what we have
4 done is trying to identify ways in which our process
5 can be different for the different types of projects,
6 and one of the things that we have done is that for
7 those smaller projects that you have rightly so
8 identified that has been a little bit challenging for
9 the ways that we have managed them in which they have
10 taken a little bit longer than what everybody would
11 like to,--

12
13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

14 [interposing] A lot longer.

15 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: a lot longer
16 than what everybody would like to is to identify a
17 process that is more nimble and that is more
18 efficient, and as such, we have now identified two
19 different units that actually are going to be able to
20 help in reducing the duration for them. For example,
21 we just implemented a new unit called the Front End
22 Planning Unit that is going to identify the needs of
23 those projects, being able to identify the budget
24 requirements as well as the risks associated with
25 those projects, as well as the new unit called In-

House Design. Those projects used to be able to go through the same design process as some of our big projects, and we have identified in those cases you may not need the same design process.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Can you give me an example of what those would be? Who would-- what projects would be qualified for the Front End Planning Unit and which ones would go to the In-House Design?

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Well, actually a lot of the projects may go through the same-- those two units. For example, we have identified like roof replacements, ADA compliance, small renovations. Those will be going through some of our In-House Design.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So how much time does that expedite?

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: It can reduce the process by 18 months to 24 months in some cases, because our In-House Design would reduce at least by six to nine months, the design procurement, and also it may reduce by another six to nine months the whole design process.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: That would be huge, because I feel like, you know, it not only is about eliminating the time. Most Council Members' terms are four years. So, if these projects are taking six years, eight years, 10 years, 13 years, you know, in some cases, it'll be, you know, well beyond the term of a Council Member who may be appropriating the funding, but if you're able to eliminate it between 18 and 24 months, and it is the projects that you've identified-- our number issue has been libraries--

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: [interposing]
Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: and the challenges that they face. Almost-- and you know, and libraries have testified and we've seen that when they do it themselves, they do it better-- faster, not better. They do it faster. So, what would you say to that? Is it something that we should be considering? Should we take the library's smaller projects off your kind of que if they're able to do it faster, or are these internal mechanisms justifying that they should still go through DDC?

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: I will say it will depend on the library system. There are some of the library systems that have already robust mechanism to handle some of the projects, and they sometimes, they actually do. There are others that have been-- they may have some strains [sic] in their processes to manage some of the volume of work. Remember, the library system in our portfolio is the largest by number of projects, but these projects are not high-dollar values.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: They are just high in the number, and that's--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] But then they become high dollar because they take longer, and you know, I was trying not to go to--

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: [interposing]
Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: go to East Elmhurst, but now I'm going to go to East Elmhurst.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right?

So, we start off with a number. It took so long that, you know, we're still trying to get money to fund this library.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Actually, you--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] That's just one example of many.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Thanks to your attention last March when we had this, we have secured the funding necessary for it.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right, from the Borough President's Office.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yes, three more million dollars that were needed to accomplish that.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: That doesn't make your agency more efficient. You just found another--

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: [interposing]
However--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: elected official to give you the money.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: However, the truth is in the details. Not necessarily, a lot of times we take a lot of blame for what happens, but I

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2 can tell you that a lot of things that happen in the
3 project has to do with the selection of the scope,
4 the selection of what kind of finishes, what kind of
5 detail in the design was selected by the clients.
6 So, there is a lot of actions that we're taking in
7 that particular project, and what was it going to be
8 a wonderful project at the end.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: It better
10 be; it's expensive.

11 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: It is going to be
12 expensive, but it's going to be a great asset to the
13 community, and that's something that we have found
14 out, and each client work in a very different way.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

16 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: But I actually
17 will avoid mentioning the name, but one of our
18 clients have said something that I thought was very
19 illustrative [sic]. They said that working with us
20 sometimes can be a little bit challenging, but the
21 end product is an amazing product.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I agree. I
23 think you're very talented in that way, and it only
24 makes me more frustrated because I know that our
25 community can have a building that they deserve,--

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: [interposing]

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: something that is going-- they're going to be proud of. It's just that we can't get it built.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: And I will say that sometimes you have to bring all the stakeholders together and make sure that they understand that their decisions do have an impact.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Now, do you currently have a mechanism where that is readily accessible for people to see the updates on their projects?

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: That's one thing that now have started to become a lot more transparent. I don't know if you received our report in which we actually highlighting all the projects that we have, for example, in your district--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] Right.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: showing the duration as well as the cost--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] Yes.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: associated with those projects, and we can make those available in a more frequent manner if you so decide.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I think you should make it more available, but perhaps we can talk about identifying a place where anyone can see them, right? Like, I know you make them to me, and the mapping is fantastic and we get to see the DEP work versus the, you know, the School Construction work versus everything. So it kind of gives you a glimpse that DDC is everywhere in New York City, and I understand that, but maybe it's an opportunity for people to be able to access it, that you can put in your area and say, "Oh, wow, look at all these projects DDC is doing."

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: And we actually going to work. However, there is some sensitivity, sensitive information. Like, for example, a schedule and cost of projects that are already bid out is easy to make it available fully.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yeah, that's what I'm saying, not what you're negotiating.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: That would be--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] Yeah, no, no.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: impossible for us to share.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Not when you're negotiating, but I think it would be a huge step if everything that's already in the process.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We already know how much it's going to cost.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We already know who the winner is.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Those are absolutely, I think, what we should be highlighting.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: And thank you for that idea, we would--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] And I think it would also help for Community Boards for identifying, you know, there's going to be road closures or whatever the case is so that you at least know what's happening in your community. So, if you want to have, you know, some

type of event it's not overburdening the project that you're doing.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yeah, actually, we are right now in the process of looking for a CIO, Chief Information Officer that may help us think through those type of ideas. I know we will work with our colleagues in the Mayor's Office to think through how to make that available, for example, in apps in the phone so that people--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] Great.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: can make that information readily available to them.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: So we will work with our colleagues.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, if someone's watching and they want to be your CIO, they just have to go to your website to apply?

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yes, yes. We have right now a posting up that we are looking and we will be trying to hire somebody that can help us think through those type of ideas.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Excellent.

Well, I want to have my-- give an opportunity to my colleagues to ask you questions, Commissioner. We've been joined by Minority Leader Matteo, Rodriguez, Johnson, and Costa Constantinides. We will now hear from Rodriguez followed by Constantinides.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Chair. Commissioner, first of all, thank you again for your work, and I have my question first on how-- what challenges have you faced when you are, when your team get into the big projects and working on the underground? One idea that we've been discussing on the Council is the importance for the City to have a better plan to know what is exactly that we have underground so that when a big project's put in place for the private [sic] of the Agency not get into like the big surprise [sic] or finding, you know, cables or other things underground that you have not included in the-- in knowledge of those challenges that we have, and we know that big project for the Second Avenue to a small one to the Plaza, you know, sometimes there are delayed, sometimes they are not in schedule because beside the financial piece, the other piece is about challenges on infrastructure.

1 and I know that your agency working especially in
2 those projects done internally by your team, I assume
3 that there has to be some level of, you know,
4 challenges when it comes to what do we have
5 underground. So, what is the typical experience that
6 you see the agency having when it comes to knowing
7 exactly what we have underground or challenges to be
8 better knowledgeable on what we have?
9

10 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Thank you,
11 Council Member Rodriguez. Actually, that's, in the
12 whole area of construction, that is the biggest
13 unknown. We have a saying in construction that until
14 you are off the ground, all the bets are off.
15 Because underground there is so much uncertainty on
16 what you will find in terms of soil conditions, but
17 in here, in New York City is the amount of
18 interference that you may find for all the different
19 utilities that you can find, and here are from the
20 private utilities, the public utilities as well as
21 the transportation, the MTA as well as others. And
22 remember, some of our utilities can be more than a
23 century old. We have actually are replacing water
24 mains that are from the 1800's, and we don't know
25 where they are really located. So, that when we open

up the streets, we are for a big surprise. So we are actually trying to understand better and doing a better mapping of what we actually are putting in place now and keep that for the future so that when new repairs or new reconstruction have to occur, people know better what we are putting in place, but that doesn't mean that we know what was put in place before, and that's something that is very important, and I think there is now new efforts being coordinated by the Mayor's Office of Resiliency and Recovery. They're looking at how to map better the utilities that we have in place in the City of New York. So, that will be very helpful. And I think when you were asking the question, I thought that you were also asking a question in terms of some of the procurement methods that will be very helpful for us. Like, for example, we have been now going to Albany to ask them to support us in getting some of the tools that already the state have like, for example, the design build mentor [sic]. That will be very helpful for some of our projects, large projects. Like, for example, some of the Council Members that Chair Ferreras have in her district, like the Pasarella [sic] Bridge. That is something that we

could have used, the Design Build Mentor to accelerate the process to design and build that project. So that will also be something that will be very helpful for us in accelerating and reducing the cost.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Second question is on STEM.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: First of all, I know that that is a great initiative. Myself as a former teacher and my whole family including wife we are very into like supporting technology throughout the City, and here we are with an agency that has started their own initiative. How can you, or have you started conversation with those construction private sector that you are working with in the agency to also get the private sector engaged in the STEM initiative?

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Right now we have actually worked with our partners in the public sector like DYCD, the Department of Education as well as ACS, and these have been our major partners together with SCA. However, we do have one of our programs that is with the private sector that is AC

1 mentor, the ACE [sic] mentorship which actually
2 involve the private sector, and that's one of the
3 ones. However, in our regular STEM program that which
4 we have internships as well as middle school, we have
5 not brought in the private sector from the
6 construction. We are now working with the Mayor's
7 Office fund to be able to raise funds for supporting.
8 Like, for example, for the middle school enrichment
9 program, we were able to secure some funding that was
10 provided by them from a private donation, but not
11 with a construction or design company. That's
12 something that we will explore, and we will explore
13 the legality and any conflict of interest that may be
14 perceived, because remember, some of those companies
15 work with us and they actually have contract with us,
16 and we have to be extremely careful in any perceived
17 conflict that may be associated with it. So, we have
18 to-- we will have to explore that.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
21 you, Council Member. Council Member Constantinides
22 followed by Council Member Miller.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES:
24 Commissioner, how are you?

25 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: How are you?

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Good. I just need to ask a few questions. I think you've communicated some of my grievances, so I will speak to them today. You know, number one, when it comes to 21st Street in Astoria, you know, this a street that is very heavily traveled that is seeing over 1,000 cars an hour, but is also a residential street. You have co-ops there. You have senior centers. You have the Variety Boys and Girls Club, and yet, for some reason we are still in year three of our tenure not able to pave that street. Can you give me something that I can tell my constituents that live on 21st Street that expect to see this street paved year after year, and tell me why again I'm supposed to tell them-- I feel like the Cubs, "Just wait 'til next year." You know, at some point that has to end.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Unfortunate, the answer still has to be you have to wait until next year. However, this time the answer is accurate. The challenge that we have had in this particular street is that we require permit from the State DOT. The challenge in the City is that sometimes of our streets require permit from the State. Sometimes we as a City has full control of our streets, and in

1 this case we need a permit from the State DOT, and
2 there were some changes in the process for getting
3 the permit, and that was-- caused certain delays. We
4 finally got the permit recently as I believe two
5 weeks ago, and now we have the permit and we can
6 actually complete the process and be able to start,
7 but I will have my Deputy Commissioner Erin McFarland
8 [sic] to give you more--

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES:

10 [interposing] But can't we figure out a way here to
11 expedite? I mean, this is in all honesty, I mean at
12 some point there needs to be-- isn't there something
13 we can do in the system? There's obviously a flaw
14 here that we need to rectify, right? I mean, there
15 are too many projects like this that happen, and
16 there has to be some sort of circuit breaker
17 somewhere along the way that we can expedite certain
18 projects or recognize that these-- that the time that
19 we're taking to do a library or a street is just too
20 long, and how do we fix that? I mean, I guess-- we're
21 talking-- I'm talking about 21st Street individually,
22 but there seems to be a larger issue here that I want
23 to sort of delve into, is that how do we eventually
24 evaluate our timelines and look at them objectively
25

and say this is just taking too long? What can we put into place that'll make it better? Because some of these projects are just going on for too long?

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: I agree, and I can see your frustration, and I can tell you that it is similar to my frustration, and that's why I have looked very deeply into some of our process and trying to identify the generalities of what certain things are happen and trying to dig deeper how we can look at removing some of those obstacles. And I will say that, you know, you received our report, and it's bringing that transparency that you can see, because sometimes we have so many projects going. We have actually around 1,200 projects going on right now in our agency, and sometimes it's difficult to be able to see all at once, but by bringing light to all of them by sharing that information with all of you, because you care about all those projects. You can highlight certain things that are important to you that we can all look together, and maybe by actually bringing those forward and trying to have a conversation and joining forces in trying to identify how we can remove barriers, because sometimes what I feel is that the process that we follow is almost

1 like an onion. Something happens. Somebody did
2 something wrong and we added a layer of obstacle in
3 order to cut. Somebody else doing some wrong again,
4 and then somebody did something wrong and we added
5 another layer, another layer. We created so many
6 layer that sometimes we almost freeze [sic] each
7 other and it's difficult to move. So maybe we have to
8 go back and ask, "Do we need all these layers? Do we
9 really need those?" Because we may not need it, and
10 I think those conversations have to happen in order
11 to move things. I can tell you there are things that
12 doesn't really make sense, but they are still in the
13 books, and I cannot change it. You can change--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES:

15 [interposing] If you can identify those, I think-- I
16 don't want to put words in all of my colleague's
17 mouths, but I'm happy to be part of that
18 conversation, because frankly, you know, it's on a
19 common sense level.

20 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: You know,
22 so this is all, you know, all these layers, and I
23 agree with you. Sometimes we sort of build these
24 layers around ourselves, but at the end of the day,
25

the average constituent who lives on 21st Street or lives near their library will look at that project and say, "Why is it taking this long?" And to them, it's not about inside baseball [sic], but hey I just want my street paved.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Okay. Like, for example, something that I just also-- at times, as you can see, the layers sometimes come not only from us. Like I mentioned, the State was involved [sic], and in this particular project the federal government is involved, because the federal government is putting some money on that particular street. So, those conversations have to happen, and I would like to-- actually, I think we have a meeting scheduled on--

CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: [interposing]
We do. We do.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Thursday.

CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And I'm looking forward to it.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: And I'm looking forward to bring that to you and have that conversation, and let us see how we can move this forward, and that's something that we saw when we

1 actually generated this report, to have those
2 conversations with all of you and see how we can move
3 this far. We don't want those-- let me tell you, for
4 us as an agency, it's no gain for us to have projects
5 stopped. That's why we created this band [sic] that
6 we're calling this new unit Front End Planning. How
7 do we identify early on the risk with these projects?
8 How do we identify the roadblocks that these projects
9 will have so that we can remove them and move it
10 forward? We really-- let me tell you, of the 1,300
11 of people that work in our agency, more than 90
12 percent are New Yorkers living in New York. They
13 feel. They are affected by these projects. They
14 want to move these projects forward. They are as
15 frustrated as you and I. So, the more we can remove
16 roadblocks, the better we all are. So, definitely I
17 look forward to removing that, and having projects
18 faster, we really would love to do that.

19
20 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Well,
21 Commissioner--

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
23 [interposing] Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I appreciate
25 your passion, and I'm glad to see that passion

1 because I am-- I wear my heart on my sleeve in the
2 same way. I have that same similar passion. I'm
3 sorry, Madam Chair. But I look forward to working
4 with you on a real partnership and if there are
5 roadblocks, we can identify and get them off the
6 books that we can see things more seamlessly. I look
7 forward to that partnership and working together.
8 Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Thank you.

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you.

13 I just want to remind colleagues that we are starting
14 the public portion of the hearings. We still have
15 two agencies at 2:30. So we've been joined by
16 Council Member Miller, Council Member Gibson. If we
17 can just stay within our five minutes, I would really
18 appreciate it.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you, Madam
20 Chair. Good afternoon, Commissioner, to you and your
21 team, and--

22 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: [interposing]
23 Good afternoon.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I want to commend
25 you for the enormous task that you've undertaken,

1 obviously, as we look at this massive Capital Budget
2 and the portfolio that you're managing for other
3 agencies as well.

4
5 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: It's my honor.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: And I think one
7 of those challenges that I think that we're all
8 trying to get, wrap our hands around here is that
9 collaboration with other agencies. I'm sure that is
10 difficult in doing that. Obviously, in southeast
11 Queens we're doing about one and a quarter billion
12 dollars of infrastructure to address our decade long
13 flooding issue, and it is more than welcomed, but it
14 is often not going well. One of the questions that I
15 have is, with this increase that we see in your
16 budget and other agencies around capital improvement
17 there, the headcount remains the same. How do we
18 address these issues and we're not increasing our
19 headcount? And in particular that we're doing--
20 we're undertaking more work than we have ever done
21 before.

22 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: I'm actually are
23 having conversation with our taskforce at OMB in
24 trying to identify ways that we can look at the
25 increase work load that we have in our agency, and at

1
2 the same time we are also looking at the efficiencies
3 that we can gain in our agency and looking at the
4 processes. Like I mentioned to Chairwoman Ferreras in
5 terms of the different projects and the process that
6 they go through. Are they real process that they
7 should go through? Can we gain efficiencies? So
8 we're looking at this at two fronts from the
9 processes as well as the efficiencies as well as the
10 number of people that we need to bring into our
11 agency. So, those conversations are happening in
12 parallel.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So, as we analyze
14 what needs to be done to that, I would hope that
15 we're doing a kind of cost analysis on what could be
16 done in house and whether before we go to outside
17 contractors and start looking at those vendors, and I
18 know that there are a number of outside cont-- and
19 it's very important in my labor hat that we are able
20 to create real jobs here and make sure that those
21 qualified folks have an opportunity for real careers
22 within the City agencies here. So, that, number one,
23 but as we deal with the outside vendors and
24 contractors we want to talk about what that process
25

is, what the RFP's look like and then ultimately what does that mean for MWBE vendors.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: I will agree, and as I mentioned before, one of the things that I'm looking is at the whole process holistically, and as I mentioned before, I have created some in-house unit that are taking some work to be done by city worker, like for example, In-House Design. Before, all those designs were done by consultants, and it took long time for them to do it, because it would take six months to procure and then six months for them to do the work. Now, by this work being now done design by city workers and really high quality design. We just opened our horse riding arena in Staten Island that is just superb, and that was done all by our own In-House Design Team. We are trying to bring some of that design to be done by our own people, our city workers. At the same time, when we are actually asking our consultants to work, we have a new office, the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer, that makes sure that we bring highly qualified, the great talent that we have in our MWBE community, and we have increased their participation significantly. So we are looking at it from all the angles on how to bring

the best minds of New York to participate in our endeavors.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you, Commissioner, and if we could get, just if you could send us the updates of what's going on in southeast Queens and take a look at and be able to prioritize some of those of projects, but I'm really encouraged by your words about your in-house operations and what you've been doing there. So, I'm really encouraged looking forward to working with you in the future. Thank you, Madam Chair.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yeah, I will set up a meeting with your office to be able to bring that information to you.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you, Council Member. Council Member Gibson?

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Sure. I'll be quick. Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Good afternoon, Councilwoman.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Nice to see you and the DDC team. I just had two very quick questions, and I recognize, first, I want to thank you for the STEAM program. You and I several months ago were at Middle School 22 in District Nine in the Bronx.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: And we're doing a summer program there--

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing] Yes, and--

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: that I expect to be fabulous.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: it's amazing. So, I appreciate the work we're doing around science, technology and engineering, arts and mathematics. I think I got the acronym right.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yes, architecture also for the "A".

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Architecture, yes. I wanted to ask, and one of your staff Lee Alambalas [sp?] knows very, very well how passionate that I am about pushing forward the project for the Bronx Children's Museum, and you know, there was state money that was put in the state budget, two million

dollars, and there's a request this year. So I wanted to find out, in terms of some of the hitches and challenges we find with procurement, with bidding, do you see this project up and running? Are we on time? Do you anticipate any potential delays?

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Right now we are in the final phases of the design. We expect that we were having a challenge similar to the challenge that we were having with Chairwoman Ferreras' East Elmhurst Library of funding shortfall, but thank you to your championship as well as Borough President Ruben Diaz, as well as House Speaker Hastings [sic], we were able-- or you were able to secure this funding shortfall, and since in that shortfall you take in consideration some of the escalation costs, I do not see at this point a challenge. However, I don't have a crystal ball, and with the market being as hard as it is right now, we don't know how the bids are going to come. So I cannot say that we are totally out of the woods, but so far as we understand, we feel that we are okay [sic], but I would like Associate Commissioner Christine Flaherty to elaborate.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Hi.

CHRISTINE FLAHERTY: Good afternoon. So, the Commissioner outlined very well kind of the--

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing] Is your microphone on?

CHRISTINE FLAHERTY: Hi, Christine Flaherty. The Commissioner outlined some of the key risks that hasn't occurred yet, and that includes that the project is nearing design completion right now and then will go into procurement. We anticipated procurement cycle initiating this summer into the fall.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

CHRISTINE FLAHERTY: The market right now is very hot [sic], as we know, but we can work with your office and local elected to let them know when the bid goes out so that we can make sure the more contractors that are looking at the bid and come to the bid walk-through--

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing] Right.

CHRISTINE FLAHERTY: we find that to result in a more competitive bid price because they see that there's competition and they might sharpen their pencil. When we see the bids come in, that's

1 when we're really going to know if there's a
2 challenge. We've been working very closely and
3 collaboratively through the design process, and there
4 have been changes that have been made to accommodate
5 the museum which have resulted in some of the
6 increases in this budget, but we'll continue to work
7 very closely as the procurement occurs, and let you
8 know when the bid data is set so that we can follow
9 up with you and make you aware of any issues along
10 the way.
11

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, great.

13 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: And I would like
14 to add-- thank you to Christine-- to say that we have
15 partnered with some of the local elected officials
16 and Council Member and district in getting the word
17 out for contractors to bidding projects to ensure
18 that the prices are competitive in these hot markets.
19 So, I really look forward working with you in
20 ensuring that communication goes out to the local
21 contractors.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Oh, great. We
23 will continue to work together, because we will
24 finally have every borough of this city with a
25 Children's Museum.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I know it's in the pipeline, and whatever we can do to expedite it, I think that would be such a tremendous look for the City and especially the Bronx. So, I thank you for that. And my last question, I have to take you to the borough of Staten Island.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: The Family Justice Center, and find out what the timeline is. Staten Island DA McMahon was here yesterday and he told us that we're looking to open in June, and I wanted to make sure are we on timeline, and is that accurate?

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: The project, the part from DDC is what we call substantially complete.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Right now, our sister agency from domestic violence--

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]
Yeah--

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: is working on doing their final fit out. We are coordinating with them, the opening. Right now, we don't have any

specific date, but Christine, can you elaborate a little bit more?

CHRISTINE FLAHERTY: I'm actually going there right after this hearing to walk it with our end-user client to ensure that they have everything they need so that we can be ready the beginning of June as planned.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Oh, great.

CHRISTINE FLAHERTY: But so we could quickly, I think in the next few days, get back to you to reconfirm the date, but we have had all of the key milestones met. We do have an FDNY inspection that's tomorrow, which is our last piece.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

CHRISTINE FLAHERTY: Which is the second time they've come, but we have a honed sense on this project and the importance of it to Staten Island, and I'll be visiting it this afternoon.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Great. Madam Chair, we have to let her go so she can get to Staten Island. Thank you very much, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: It looks wonderful, by the way. You all should visit it.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you. Thank you. Thank you. Again, a reminder we
have scheduled to start with the public at 2:30. We
still have to hear from the Comptroller and IBO. We
will now hear from Council Member Johnson before we
close this hearing out.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam
Chair. Good to see you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Good to see you.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: I wanted to ask
a few questions about some significant local
projects. The water tunnel road construction
projects on Ninth Avenue have now stretched down
further into the West 20's. I want to just get an
update on when we believe both the Hell's Kitchen,
the Times Square, and now the Chelsea portions of
those water tunnel projects are going to be complete.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yeah. I can
give you-- set up a meeting with your office and give
you more detail. The challenge that has happened
with those projects is that the scope has increased

1
2 some of the projects that we were planning to
3 complete. After looking at the Adia [sic], there
4 were determinations to add more work and we can
5 actually go and explain to you what that was and
6 explain to you in more detail if that is okay with
7 you?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Yeah, but do we
9 have a timeline on any of these, when we believe
10 they'll be finished?

11 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: I will ask
12 Commissioner.

13 ERIC MACFARLANE: Eric Macfarlane, Deputy
14 Commissioner for Infrastructure. As far as Times
15 Square is concerned, we basically planned to have
16 substantial [sic] completion by the end of this year.
17 We are-- as you know, it's very challenging to
18 actually, to do that work at Times Square as all the
19 activities are continuing. As far as Ninth Avenue is
20 concerned, as the Commissioner mentioned, we had
21 discovered old water main between-- in between part--
22 there are many projects on that avenue. So, in
23 between some projects we found that there are many
24 blocks, and we'll have the details for you when we
25 meet you, had old water main in them, and there was

1
2 no point in coming back with a new project since we
3 had significant amount of money left on the original
4 contracts that we could do this work. So, that's how
5 the scope was added to this-- to Ninth Avenue. Right
6 now, what's happening, continuing down-- I'm sure--
7 are you concerned about 10th Avenue also?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Talking about
9 Ninth Avenue and 30th Street.

10 ERIC MACFARLANE: That is-- that is--
11 that's the Ginsberg [sic]. Is that the Ginsberg
12 area? That is the Ginsberg area, yeah. So, that
13 project, I would say we are about maybe 30 percent
14 complete. We just-- it's still going on.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

16 ERIC MACFARLANE: So, but we'll have more
17 details for you when we meet with you--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: [interposing] It
19 would be helpful if we could sit down and get the
20 timeline, and the Chelsea STD Clinic, where-- are we
21 on schedule?

22 ERIC MACFARLANE: We are still on
23 schedule for October of 2017.
24
25

COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Okay, and I'd love to have the opportunity to speak with you about that as well.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yeah, And we are providing you with the monthly updates to your office.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Yes, that's very helpful, from Louise [sp?].

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yeah, yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: She's right here and she's providing you every month.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Louise is great to work with.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: I'm glad to hear.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: She's fantastic.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: And your office is also--

COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: [interposing] No, you're very lucky to have her. She does a great job communicating with my office.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Thank you.

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE 210

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: And then lastly,
3 I wanted to ask about demolition at Gansevoort
4 Peninsula.

5 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: That's also on a
6 schedule as we have indicated to your office.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: When do we
8 expect it to be complete?

9 CHRISTINE FLAHERTY: That would be late
10 winter of-- so, into 2017.

11 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: 17, yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: So, the end of--
13 of next year?

14 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yeah.

15 CHRISTINE FLAHERTY: Beginning of 2017.

16 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: In the winter of
17 2017.

18 CHRISTINE FLAHERTY: Yeah.

19 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Like around
20 February or March.

21 CHRISTINE FLAHERTY: February/March.

22 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Of 2017.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: So, about a year
24 from now?

25 CHRISTINE FLAHERTY: Less than a year.

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE 211

2 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Less than a
3 year.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Less than a year
5 from now.

6 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Less than a
7 year. Like, I would say February to March 2017.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Okay, thank you
9 very much.

10 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Remember, that's
11 a very delicate, delicated [sic] demolition.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: I would like to
13 sit down and go over all.

14 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Yeah, we will go
15 over all those details.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam
17 Chair.

18 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Madam Chair, I
19 just want to note it, I don't know if you overheard,
20 but one of the projects had a lot of money left, and
21 we are actually doing extra work.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I did.

23 COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: That usually
24 don't take note, but I just want to highlight that.

25

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I did.

Maybe we should have put some of that money in East Elmhurst.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: It's a street work.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Fair enough. Thank you very much for your testimony today. I'm looking forward to continue engaging with you throughout this year to figure out if your set goal of shortening projects by 18 to 24 percent is achieved. You know, I think it's like a great accomplishment that the agency is going through its 20th year of existence. However, I want to make sure that we're going in the right direction, and that you're not overburdened with too many projects which then makes you inefficient. So we want to make sure that you have all the resources that you need to be an efficient agency.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you. We're going to have additional questions if you could get back to us as soon as possible because we'll be using them for negotiating purposes.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you for coming to testify.

COMMISSIONER PENA-MORA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We're going to take a two-minute break so we can allow the Comptroller to walk down the aisle so that we can begin our Comptroller's testimony.

[break]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Executive Budget for Fiscal 2017. We just heard from the Department of Design and Construction, and now we will hear from the New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer. In the interest of time I will forgo making an opening statement. You may begin your testimony.

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Well, thank you Chairwoman Ferreras and members of the Finance Committee. I want you to know that joining me once again is our Deputy Comptroller for Budget Tim Mulligan. Today my office is releasing an analysis of the City's FY 17 Executive Budget, and I welcome the opportunity to share our findings. The Mayor has proposed an 82.2 billion dollar budget for FY 2017. Adjusting for the roll of prior-year resources and

reserves, the FY 2017 budget totals 84.1 billion, or two percent larger than in FY 2016. The city-funded portion of the budget will grow 3.6 percent. Clearly the continued economic recovery has greatly benefited New York City, but we all know our ability to expand the budget and improve vital services depends on continued growth. While there is no indication of a near-term recession, there are some signs of a potential slowdown. Profits on Wall Street are down, and both venture capital investment and commercial real estate leasing activity showed weakness in the first quarter. Strong job growth continues to be a defining characteristic of the city's recovery. However, while the city saw record job creation in the first quarter of this year, nearly half of those new jobs were in low-wage sectors, such as retail and food service. These jobs do not pay enough for most New Yorkers to move up to the middle class. For too many people living or working here, a recovering economy has not provided a larger paycheck or tangible improvements to daily life. Average weekly earnings of private-sector employees have increased at an unacceptably low 1.0 percent annual rate since the recession, failing to keep pace with the cost of

1 living. The impact has been most severe for young
2 people who were just beginning their working lives
3 when the recession hit. Our office recently found
4 the city's millennials, age 19 to 31, are earning
5 about 20 percent less in real terms than the prior
6 generation. The City's tax revenue growth is also
7 slowing. At this point last year, estimated tax
8 revenues were up 2.4 billion ahead of adopted budget
9 projections. Now we're up only 1.5 billion. As long
10 as wage stagnation and the dominance of low-wage jobs
11 continues, economic expansion is likely to be muted,
12 making the city economy more vulnerable to external
13 shocks. Both the Administration and my office
14 similarly assume continued moderate growth in the
15 economy. Overall, our office sees modestly higher
16 revenue collections. We project higher collections
17 for property taxes, personal income taxes, and sales
18 taxes but lower business and real-estate-related tax
19 collections than forecasted in the Executive Budget.
20 Turning to the spending side of the budget, I am
21 pleased to see a number of targeted new initiatives.
22 Particularly, funds were included to expand physical
23 education in elementary schools that lack legally
24 mandated programs, a problem highlighted by my office
25

last year. Additional new spending would boost career and technical education programs, implement a promising new summer school curriculum, and improve NYCHA senior centers. To offset new costs and build reserves for the future, my office, the City Council, and other monitors have encouraged the Administration to identify efficiencies in city agencies. The Preliminary Budget included a Citywide Savings Plan, and now the Executive Budget proposes additional measures. However, the current plan is too dependent on savings that would have occurred regardless. It's important to repeat that. The current plan is too dependent on savings that would have occurred regardless. These items include re-estimates, debt service savings from low interest rates, and spending and hiring delays. Over the next two years, only 25 percent of the savings in the plan would come from agency actions, and even less from true efficiencies and productivity. I am pleased to report the Administration partially addressed some risks identified by my office in March, including adult homeless shelter operating costs and support for Health & Hospitals. Nonetheless, my office found remaining risks, plus new risks, would result in city

1 spending that exceeds current assumptions by about
2 900 million in FY 2020. Now we've also identified a
3 revenue risk from the future sale of taxi medallions.
4 Unless there is further clarity on the taxi medallion
5 market, all of these prospective revenues remain
6 uncertain. In total, I project budget gaps would
7 grow to 3.8 billion in FY 2019. In February, I
8 reported that combined citywide spending on
9 homelessness among three city agencies was projected
10 to be 1.7 billion this year. Since then, the
11 Administration has proposed additional city support
12 for shelters, including much needed security. By FY
13 2017, the cost of homeless services is now projected
14 to reach 1.9 billion, an increase of 61 percent in
15 three years. Because a significant portion of the
16 new funding does not extend to future years, my
17 office estimates that the City will need an
18 additional 130 million annually to maintain shelter
19 operations, even if the census stabilizes. I know
20 the City is engaged in a concerted effort to
21 restructure and improve homeless services, especially
22 after my audit in December. I support these efforts,
23 but for 1.9 billion a year we need to start seeing
24 results soon. This past month, an average of 35,000
25

adults and 23,000 children slept in our shelters each night, despite the deplorable living conditions at many shelters. And just last week, the number of families living in shelters reached a record of nearly 14,700. We have to bring that number down immediately, and ensure that each of those families has a fair shot to get back on their feet. In March I reported the largest risk to the Preliminary Budget was the financial condition of NYC Health & Hospitals. The Administration has pledged an additional 497 million in cash and other assistance over the course of the current year, plus 735 million in assistance over the next four years. Yet, despite the unprecedented level of assistance and the release of a broad turnaround plan, substantial risks remain. The current strategy for restoring Health & Hospitals to financial health relies heavily on securing additional state and federal revenue, increasing patient market share, and implementing efficiencies, all of which have been historically proving challenging. For this reason, we forecast additional risks to the City of 365 million in 2017, and anticipates needing greater resources in future years to support the essential services of the public

hospital system. We all must work together to urge the federal government to rescind scheduled cuts for 2018 that will further undermine the public hospital safety net. Controlling overtime also continues to be a challenge. In the last decade, overtime has grown at an average rate of 6.5 percent per year, more than revenues and the budget as a whole. In the current year the City is on track to exceed budgeted overtime expenses by at least 96 million dollars, despite significant increases in the uniformed headcount. Last year's adopted budget agreement included a plan to hire 1,300 more police officers but cap overtime to partially offset the new costs. With just over five weeks left in the fiscal year, the most recent data shows the number of uniformed police has increased by more than 1,700 while overtime is on track to exceed the adopted target by 58 million dollars. Based on current trends, annual overtime expenses will be 300 million higher than assumed by the Administration in FY 2017 and 250 million annually in the out-years. The Executive Budget also includes a large increase in the five-year Capital Commitment Plan, now totaling 67 billion, or 17 percent higher than last year's

equivalent. With revenue collections slowing and signs of a potential economic slowdown, I remain concerned about our budget cushion. Last August, my office determined that the City's budget cushion must be 12 to 18 percent of adjusted expenditures, in order to stave off service cuts and layoffs in the event of a downturn. Because our budget has grown, we need to add more than 300 million to the cushion to simply hold our ground. So far, the Mayor has only committed to adding 250 million. Through the end of the fiscal year, we must do more. Today I've given you a lot of numbers and data, but the city budget is about much more. It's about giving New Yorkers a fair chance to make it here, from providing a quality education to all of our children, to ensuring that people in our shelter system have a decent place to sleep at night. This economic recovery has been robust, but it hasn't reached the wallets of all New Yorkers. We must continue investing in our city while our tax revenues are growing, but also set aside resources so our most vulnerable residents are not at risk if the good times end. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and to work together to craft a responsible budget

[applause]

[applause]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We love
 here. So, you actually answered my first
 which was specific on the reserves and, you
 ing the alarm that we don't have enough,
 with our spending rising. I brought it up

1
2 to the OMB director today where, you know, of course
3 they felt that they put enough. So we're going to
4 continue negotiating and pushing, but your reports
5 and your words help us to navigate and negotiate and
6 push back on the Administration. So, I just wanted
7 to acknowledge and appreciate that. I wanted to talk
8 about the hedge funds. I would like to ask you a few
9 questions about the City's pension and the recent
10 decision for NYCERS to exit the hedge fund. As
11 advisor to our pension fund, could you please explain
12 or remind the Council why the decision was made to
13 disinvest in the hedge fund?

14 COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Well, we didn't--
15 we recently divested from hedge funds with one of our
16 pension boards at NYCERS, and the board, the trustees
17 and we concurred, believed that with our asset
18 allocation process ongoing that we would have an
19 excellent chance of hitting our actuarial targets in
20 the long term without hedge funds which have been
21 pretty flat as has the rest of the market.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, do
23 you believe that other pension systems, FDNY, do you
24 believe that they too should go in that direction, or
25

1
2 is this something that we should just see how it
3 works out?

4 COMPTROLLER STRINGER: we're going to
5 look to see, you know, talk to our trustees at the
6 Fire Department and Police Department. We have a
7 very robust asset allocation process that we're
8 engaging in as we speak, and we'll certainly listen
9 to what they have to say. You know, not every
10 pension board is aligned. One of the things I think
11 is making a tremendous difference is the success of
12 our common investment meeting now, which has given
13 the Bureau of Asset Management time to have the kind
14 of discussions we should have been having for
15 decades, but we were so consumed with the five
16 separate meetings, the 55 meetings a year. Now that
17 we're down to six meetings, we're actually able to
18 delve deeper into the direction of the pension funds
19 as it relates to asset allocation.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, it
21 goes perfectly with my next question which is, back
22 in December you released an assessment and reform
23 plan of the management and operations of the Bureau
24 of Asset Management. Since taking office you've been
25 working to strengthen the Bureau. Can you please

update us on the implementation of the road map which was developed to reorganize BAM, and is everything going to plan? When can we expect an update?

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Well, I think you're about to get an update right now.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Alright. I'm glad I came today.

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: No, it's an important question. I want to thank you and the Council Members for following this work because it's very significant. You know, when I came into office two and a half years ago, believe or it not, there was no Risk Officer. There were no Compliance Officers. There was no risk plan, compliance plan. It was obviously very unnerving. I immediately took measure to create a reform plan that would make sure that the Bureau of Asset Management and those pension dollars that the retirees rely on were protected, and over the last two and a half years we've done a number of significant work. We now have that part of the plan in place. We have raised the salaries of the Bureau of the Asset Management. We were in the bottom quartile of public pension funds around the country. So, attracting and maintaining talent, and I

1 don't mean taking people from Wall Street. Just to
2 be competitive in the pension fund world, we weren't,
3 and thanks to the wisdom of the trustees and all the
4 elected officials who serve on the pension fund, we
5 were able to just move to the middle quartile. So
6 we're not paying excessive money. We just moved to
7 the middle which has made a difference. The third
8 thing we did, obviously, was the common investment
9 meeting. Never before in the history of the pension
10 fund do we now meet all at once to go over our
11 investment votes and strategies. Ninety-six percent
12 of investments are the same with the five boards, but
13 the amount of time it took to get those votes and get
14 those approvals meant that very often we missed the
15 positive moments in the market when we should have
16 moved a little quicker and been more nimble, and we
17 also obviously took great risk when we couldn't, you
18 know, we couldn't look when the downturn was coming.
19 The common investment meeting is the cornerstone to
20 our reform plan, but Council Member, we didn't stop
21 there. We needed to take a view of the Bureau of
22 Asset Management and look at ways to make sure that
23 this system is fail-safe, and the Funston [sic]
24 Report, which we have shared with anyone who's asked
25

1 in the trustees, looked at hundreds of
2 recommendations to make the Bureau of Asset
3 Management better. They identified 14 that we had to
4 look at, and I'm proud to tell you today that report
5 I think has been about less than a year. Just a few
6 months--

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

9 [interposing] Yeah, in December.

10 COMPTROLLER STRINGER: In December. So,
11 after six months, five months of work, I can tell you
12 that we have implemented 12 of the 14 serious
13 recommendations. Now, some of this work started
14 before the Funston Report. So, look, we are subject
15 to the downturns of the pension system, the stock
16 market, the bond market, and we are doing as best as
17 we can give what's happening without economy from
18 China to Britain. There are factors beyond our
19 control, but we believe strongly that by instituting
20 these reforms, we not only protect the integrity of
21 the system, we not only make the system more
22 transparent, but we get an edge whether it's a half a
23 point or a quarter point, whatever we do that gives
24 us just a little extra could mean hundreds of
25 millions of dollars in savings that could go to

1 schools and daycare centers, and I'm just working
2 every day to make sure that this pension system is
3 reformed, it's transparent and it's stable. And I
4 want to just make this very clear, we can't do this
5 alone. The 58 trustees who have worked day and night
6 with us get great credit. Many of these trustees
7 represent their unions, and they take this so
8 seriously as if it's their, you know,-- it is their
9 own money, but they watch out for the retirement
10 security of their brother and sister city workers,
11 and I think we all benefit, the cops, the teachers,
12 the firefighters, the city workers who run this town
13 in the best possible way.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yes, and I
16 think, you know, as I have two retired parents from--
17 one from DC 37 and another one from TWU, so you know,
18 this stability is essential to make sure they put in
19 their work and now the City needs to make sure that
20 they're able to retire in peace and have stability.

21 COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Absolutely right.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, what
23 you're doing is amazing. What are the two points out
24 of the 14? Are they obstacles, challenge, you don't
25 agree? What do you find?

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: I think we're going to get there, and you know, I'd be happy to send you the updated--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] Yeah, that would nice.

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: You know, because I think it would be constructive so that we could continue to talk about it, and again, I-- you know, you're also asking the right questions of us, because I think it's important that we do report to the people on the work that we're doing.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: It's a good story, but we also want the retirees to know through these hearings that we do understand the challenges.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great. I just wanted to ask quickly about debt service. What is your take on the City's Fiscal 2016 bond issuance? What are some of the reasons for using GEO [sic] for refunding and TFA for new money?

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Well, these are the two mechanism we use, GEO and alike. It's pretty standardized. You know, we're looking to in addition-- we're always looking at low interest rates

1 to refinance debt, so we are saving the City billions
2 of dollars. Do we have-- maybe I can give you-- I
3 mean, at the end of the day, this is about just
4 maximizing savings in what is still a good period, as
5 long as interest rates are low, we want to make sure
6 that we look at refunding, you know, as much as
7 possible, and we work very closely with OMB and our
8 office. We can't do it without them. They can't do
9 it without us, so it really is a common view to get
10 this right.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, I
13 wanted to talk about the cash. We understand that
14 part of this year's capital spending was funded by
15 reducing cash balances accumulated for earlier
16 borrowing. Is this correct, and how and why did the
17 City accumulate these cash balances?

18 COMPTROLLER STRINGER: I'm going to ask
19 our Deputy Comptroller for Budget to talk about that.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Can you
21 just state your name for the record?

22 TIM MULLIGAN: Tim Mulligan.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you.

24 TIM MULLIGAN: Deputy Comptroller for
25 Budget. The City borrows money, and capital spending

1 actually done with the general fund and then the
2 proceeds from the public financing and borrowing is
3 used to pay back the general fund for that spending,
4 and usually there's a buffer in case there's a delay
5 in getting to the market, a disruption in the access
6 to the market, and because the City accumulated large
7 cash balance over the last really two years, the City
8 drew down some of that sort of buffer between the
9 borrowing in the market and the spending, and that
10 allowed us to be a little bit more efficient with our
11 borrowing. Hasn't negatively affected our cash
12 balance; still very strong. Still very high by
13 historic standards. So it hasn't negatively impacted
14 our cash balance.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, I
17 guess from our perspective, we were wondering do we
18 have too much cash on hand.

19 TIM MULLIGAN: No, the cash that we have,
20 you know, is invested and managed, and it produces
21 some income, right?

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

23 TIM MULLIGAN: But healthy cash balance is
24 a sign of fiscal health, right?

25 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

1
2 TIM MULLIGAN: You also develop a cash
3 balance when your revenue collections are exceeding
4 your projections, and that's a good healthy that we
5 all want to have.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I guess we
7 were trying to understand is that we have cash
8 because our capital projects aren't moving as quickly
9 as we expected, or are we completely misinterpreting
10 that?

11 TIM MULLIGAN: You know, there is an issue
12 on how much of what is planned to be committed to the
13 capital budget gets commuted in a given year, and we
14 put out a report on that looking at the actuals for
15 14. We have the data to update that for 15. It's
16 somewhat of a good story. There's improvement on the
17 rate of commitment in Fiscal Year 15. Part of that
18 is because the goals were a little bit lower, but
19 that wasn't the only reason. Overall, the amount of
20 commitments, the level of dollar commitments also
21 grew from 14 to 15. So, that's one of the factors,
22 but it's not the dominant factor of the cash balance.

23 COMPTROLLER STRINGER: And we will, if
24 you'd like and I think it would be useful if we could
25 update you on the actual capital spend by agency,

because I think you did-- I thought it was useful for us to take a snapshot.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yes, please. Thank you. Council Member Miller?

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Comptroller, so good to see you. How are you?

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Great to see you.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Good, good. Obviously, a couple of question in your role and responsibility as fiduciary [sic] to NYCER [sic]. So, want to talk about-- well, your predecessor had some ideas about re-orging [sic], and--

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: [interposing] By what?

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Your predecessor--

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: [interposing] Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: had some ideas about re-orging [sic].

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Reorganizing.

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: The board, and how that would impact your ability to invest and what it would look like then as opposed to what we are currently seeing, and did you have any thoughts on that? As well as want to talk about the-- do you see any savings in doing it that way, in the amount of monies that we are actually spending on third parties, investors?

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: So, are you talking about the Bloomberg/Lieu Plan?

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I'm talking about Comptroller Lieu's plan?

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Well, it was both.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: With Bloomberg, yes.

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Yeah, okay, okay. So, so-- we were able, and I explained it before, but I'm happy to do it again. So, part of what we all agreed we needed to do was better align the five pension boards. We used to have 55 meetings a year to basically have five boards talk about the same investments which was really dragging the Bureau of Asset Management. We weren't able to make timely investments. In good times that hurt us, but in bad

times that hurt us as well. The previous plan was more of a good intention press release, but there wasn't the political will to do it, and we worked for the last two years to create a common investment meeting, raise the salaries of City workers in the Public Pension Fund so now we can attract talent from other pension funds, and we now have time to actually go about the business of reforming the pension fund. When I got there, there was no risk management, no compliance officer. So this is really a important reform that has never been accomplished before, and again, before you got here it wasn't just my work or the Bureau of Asset Management or our CIO Scott Evans, but the 58 trustees, most of them union trustees, worked with us in a collaborative way to come up with a plan that they would feel worked and we are now in the process of bearing the fruit of that labor. We're now in an asset allocation process that I think is robust and thoughtful, and I think the governance of the pension fund has reached a new level of transparency. We've got a long way to go. We're fighting to reduce fees. We're fighting to make sure that we implement a consultant's report so that there's no danger ever to our pension fund. I'm

not saying there is, but you want to make it fail-safe. And so we've had a lot of success.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So, has this actually-- have we recognized a savings in that? And one of the things I was getting at was the amount of consultants and the fees involved over there, and you did say that you were looking to reduce fees, not in necessarily being able to negotiate lower fees, but just the fact that we've kind of cut out the middle man.

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Well, we have-- I think I was the first Comptroller to actually expose the amount of fees we were paying, and now we are negotiating and renegotiating fees. We've got a long way to go. We are still digging out from years of not truly knowing what the pension fund was paying to these money managers, and we were paying out all this money, but it was gross net-a-fee [sic], meaning they got paid whether they did well or not, and Scott Evans is now working, our CIO, on this very issue, but we're also working nationally on this issue with other large public pension funds around the country.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Comptroller. I am-- because we are behind time

and we have some stuff that the Chair is going to mail to you, and I'm sure you'll get it back to us.

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: I want to thank you, because I know how concerned you are about public pension funds and the work that you do, Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Alright, thank you.

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: So, thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I do want to-- could you include your work on the private pension that we did hearings on, and so we want to expedite that. I know it's kind of stuck in its state, but any lift that you--

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: [interposing] No, no, let me-- so let me just clarify. Nothing is stuck.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Yes.

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Nothing is stuck. Sometimes it's better to study an issue to find a real solution than just do a quick press release. So we're coming back to you with a plan that is going to be probably one of the most thoughtful plan on retirement security because of the academics and the

1
2 people we're working with. So, I'm not doing a quick
3 hit on this. We're going to come back and have a
4 discussion. We're going to lead the country on
5 retirement security by the time we're done. I believe
6 that.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you. We
8 met with a group of seniors here last week. They
9 were excited about it, and we're looking forward to
10 it.

11 COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Thank you. I'll
12 get on it, sir.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you,
14 Council Member Miller. Thank you, Comptroller for
15 coming to testify today.

16 COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We do have
18 some additional questions. In the interest of time
19 I'm going to forward them to you. If you can get
20 them back to us just to help us with negotiating for
21 the budget.

22 COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Absolutely.
23 Whatever we can do, and thank you for the continuing
24 collaboration. I think all of you really asked the
25 right questions, the tough questions, and we'll

certainly go back and make sure all your questions are answered. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you very much, and thank you to your team.

COMPTROLLER STRINGER: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We're going to take a two-minute break while we transition to IBO before we begin the public portion of our hearing.

[break]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: WE will now continue the City Council's Hearing on the Mayor's Executive Budget for Fiscal 2017. We just heard from the Comptroller, and now we will hear from the Director of the Independent Budget Office, Ronnie Lowenstein. In the interest of time I will forgo making an opening statement. You may begin your testimony.

RONNIE LOWENTSTEIN: First of all, thank you very much for the opportunity to testify, Madam Chairman, other Council Members. I'm here with George Sweeting, IBO's Deputy Director. In the interest of time, we're not going to do a long prepared statement. You've got the budget report we

put out last week, and we're always available to answer your questions. So, I'm just going to make a few broad points. By far, the biggest is the bottom line. If you look at the forecast of the Independent Budget Office, Council Finance and the Office of Management and Budget, there's a remarkable amount of convergence. We're all anticipating that local economic growth will slow. We're all anticipating that tax revenue growth will slow. Despite that, IBO is looking at a situation where we're expecting next fiscal year not to end in balance as OMB projects, but rather with a surplus of 800 million dollars. Beyond that we see two years of budget gaps that we would class as manageable, budget gaps of about 2.2 billion dollars each year. That's about 3.5 percent of City-generated revenues. And yeah, we would call them manageable particularly in light of the City's rising reserves. So, that's what I want you to take away from all of this. If I spend a minute on the economic forecast, the US forecasts the first quarter real growth in the first quarter after adjusting for inflation was pretty anemic at best, but we're anticipating that growth will firm in the second half of the year and in next year, largely because tighter

labor markets. More and more hires have finally started to push up wages and salaries, and those rising wages and salaries we expect will fuel more consumption growth and more growth overall. So we're expecting real growth for the US to ultimately be two percent for the current calendar year and three percent for next year, which is not great, but it's okay. Turning to the City forecast, though. Like the Office of Management and Budget, like Council Finance, we're expecting local employment growth to slow from the record pace we've enjoyed over the last couple of years. We're expecting that this year the City will add 85,000 jobs, which is relatively strong. It just pales in comparison to the 130,000 jobs we got two years ago and the nearly 120,000 jobs we enjoyed last year. But by any other measure, 85 is fine. Although we do expect it to then slow more dramatically for the remainder of the forecast. We're expecting this job growth slowing, this slowing to take place basically across every major industry sector except for government, and I think there are two big factors that are prompting that. The first is we've been talking about global weakness for a long time. We've been talking about the strength of

1 the dollar for a long time, and it seems to be
2 finally coming home to roost. It had a big impact on
3 employment and the leisure and hospitality industry,
4 in particularly in food and accommodations, food and
5 hotels. And if you look at employment in retail
6 sector, it's actually been declining since last
7 summer. So something is changing. We're still
8 getting tourists. The international tourists are
9 spending less. Seems like a lot of other people are
10 spending less as well and things are slowing that
11 way. Another source of the weakness that we see has
12 been in the securities industry. The, we'll call it
13 Wall Street, but it's New York Stock Exchange,
14 broker, dealers collectively lost money in the fourth
15 quarter of last year, last calendar year, and based
16 upon the earnings reports we're seeing in the papers,
17 the first quarter of this year doesn't look a whole
18 lot better than that. Moreover, the recent bonus
19 season that we saw, which is largely December through
20 March, was also fairly anemic. So, for those two
21 large reasons, the global slowing and what's
22 happening in the securities industry and the strength
23 of the dollar, you know, we're expecting all of that
24 to generate slower employment growth that we've
25

1 enjoyed in the last couple of years. But there are
2 reasons for optimism as well. It's not all bad news.
3 Just as it happened on the US level, tighter local
4 labor markets are also generating wage increases
5 locally even after you adjust for inflation.
6 Moreover, a large share of the employment gains we do
7 have are coming from professional and business
8 services and from health sectors, which pay
9 relatively way. If you remember, you know, a couple
10 of years ago we were decrying the fact how many jobs
11 were coming out of retail, and it'd be nice to add
12 some jobs in retail at this point, but you know,
13 we're not expecting the growth there at all. This
14 economic forecast translates into a revenue forecast,
15 of course. For the current year, we're expecting
16 revenues to be just slightly more than we had
17 anticipated. But we have reduced our tax forecast
18 for fiscal years 17 through 20. We now expect tax
19 revenues for the-- I'm sorry, for Fiscal 17, for next
20 fiscal year to rise just 2.8 percent for the year,
21 which is a full percentage point below the growth we
22 expect this year. OMB and Council Finance have also
23 brought their forecast down. Still, there are
24 significant differences between the forecasts. Our
25

forecasts exceeds OMB's for next year by 700 million with a smaller difference with Council Finance. So, Council Finance is sort of in between the two other forecasts, but overall the forecasts have tended to converge, particularly in the short-run. There are differences in spending as well, but in dollar terms they're much smaller. We're expecting more spending on overtime in the Administration, more spending on shelters from 18 on. Lower Medicaid reimbursements for children in Special Education who need services. Conversely, we're expecting less spending on debt service, particularly since we don't expect any short term borrowing to be needed since we haven't done any in the last decade. And putting it all together, it leaves us where we started. We're expecting that next year will end with a surplus, compared with OMB's estimate that next year we'll be in balance. We're facing a gap of 2.2 billion dollars the year after and the year after that, which is about three and a half percent of city-generated revenues. We've dealt with gaps that are far larger, and particularly given the City's reserves at this point, these appear manageable to us. So, thank you very much for the

1
2 opportunity, and I'd be glad to answer your
3 questions.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
5 you. Why does IBO anticipate overtime for Police,
6 Fire and Corrections Department will be higher than
7 budgeted by the City?

8 RONNIE LOWENSTEIN: That's become a
9 standard. George, do you want to? You know, it's
10 been happening year and year round. I know there have
11 been efforts made to deal with it. For years we were
12 saying, well the Fire Department overtime is because
13 they haven't been able to hire, but now they've been
14 able to hire and we're still seeing the overtime, and
15 it's-- we've even tried some fairly sophisticated
16 analytical techniques to look at the relationship
17 between overtime and staffing, and it varies from
18 period to period, and we've not been able to get a,
19 you know, a sophisticated analysis that explains
20 exactly why it's happening.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Now, you
22 also have an increase on families into shelters or
23 people, New Yorkers having to seek shelter or seek
24 assistance in the shelter system, which is higher
25

than the Administration's projections. How did you get to that assessment?

RONNIE LOWENSTEIN: Well, I believe, and correct me if I'm wrong, we're antic-- the Administration added money for next year--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] Right.

RONNIE LOWENSTEIN: to deal with the caseloads. I think we're anticipating a small decline in the case loads, but the Administration didn't add additional monies for 18 and on. So, they focused on next year, but didn't bring up their spending estimates for the subsequent years, perhaps because they anticipated a much smaller shelter census.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

RONNIE LOWENSTEIN: Or perhaps, you know, they haven't gotten to that yet.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. And can you explain why IBO expects continued shortfalls in the reimbursement of this Special Education System Information System even though the Administration has planned to fix this system? Is there something-- did you take into consideration that the Administration

has proposed to fix this system? Are you stating that even after the system is fixed we're still going to have a shortfall?

RONNIE LOWENSTEIN: No, I think the Administration's actually working at this point very hard to fix the system. We just have seen them working for quite some time. It'll be great if they actually-- when they fix the system, but we're not assuming that they get it fixed right away.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay, great. Well, thank you so much for coming to testify today. We will now begin the portion of the public. I just wanted to-- [off mic]. Thank you again. We will now begin the public session of the Council's Fiscal 2017 Executive Budget Hearings. As a reminder to all members of the public who wish to testify, please be sure to fill out a witness slip with the Sergeant at Arms. The public witness panel will be arranged by topic, so please indicate the topic of your testimony on your witness slip. We understand that many seniors or people with disabilities who wish to testify must leave by a certain time, so we will try to accommodate the need for putting you on some of the earlier witness panels. Any senior or

person with disability who requires this accommodation, please make a note on your witness slip so we know who you are. In addition, in the interest of time and fairness to all those who wish to testify, and we have a full house today, members of the public will each have two minutes to testify, and we ask you to please be respectful of the clock. For people who cannot testify at today's hearing for any reason, but who would like to submit testimony, you may email your testimony to financetestimony@council.nyc.gov, and the Finance Division will make it a part of the official record. Testimony will be accepted through 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 28th. We're going to take a two-minute break while the Sergeant at Arms move the clock so that you can see the clock as you're speaking so we can stay on time. And while we do that, my Counsel, Rebecca Chaisson will call up the first panel while we move the clock.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The first panel will be John Hyslop, Ralph Palladino, Jackie Febrillet, Ron Barber [sp?], Joe Puleo, Michael Malgrew [sp?], and Kassie Preut [sp?]. One more time, the panel will be John Hyslop from DC 37, Ralph Palladino from

DC 37, Jackie Febrillet from DC 37, Ron Barber from DC 37, Joe Puleo from DC 37, Michael Mulgrew from the UFT, and Kassie Preut [sp?] from the UFT.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Again, as a reminder, if you have testimony that's longer than two minutes, please take this time while you wait to edit it so that we can make sure we get your public record-- I mean, your testimony in within the two minutes. And also, you may submit the entirety of your testimony, which will be added to the record. So even if you're not able to read your entire testimony, it will be submitted in the record. Did it stop raining out there? Oh, good, I haven't been out there. It's probably beautiful now. Oh, no, well hopefully it won't be.

JOE PULEO: Okay, make sure the mic's on. Okay, thank you. Thank you for hearing us so quickly this time. My name is Joe Puleo. I'm President of Local 93, District Council 37. As most of you know, we represent a variety of titles from traffic agents to urban park rangers, the high pressure plant tenders. I'm not going to go through all the titles, but the purpose of me being here today is to talk about the Parks budget. Okay, each year we go

1 through this. You know, sometimes we're more
2 fortunate than others as far as the funding. What I
3 urge City Council to do is to match the Mayor's five
4 million with the six million that's on the agenda,
5 and also to use 1.8 million dollars to keep our PEP
6 officers from dissipating. The reason I say that is
7 they're on a 35-hour work week. If they were on a
8 40-hour work week, it would increase their salary by
9 15 percent. They make a bare minimum amount of money
10 for the work that they do. Their requirements are
11 high. I mean, we go as far as Bachelor Degrees is
12 like a minimum now for some of these people to be
13 hired. The problem we have is retention. Seventy-
14 five percent of our people leave. They go on
15 elsewhere. They go on to NYPD. They go to Deputy
16 Sheriff's Office. They go to Corrections and they go
17 to federal and state law enforcement. If we increase
18 them from 35 hours to 40 hours, we would actually
19 save money. The reason I say that is you would hire
20 less people. It would give a 15 percent raise, and
21 we wouldn't have this retention problem. Right now
22 there are two academy classes in parks for PEP
23 officers. By the time they get out into the field,
24 the summer is over. Again, there is no initiative
25

for them to stay. For the work that they do, you know, they could easily do it elsewhere for double the amount that they're getting today. Thank you.

JACQUELINE FEBRILLET: Thank you. My name is Jackie Febrillet. I'm the Political Director for Local 372. I'll be as brief as possible. I'm here representing Local 372 and our 23,000 DOE employees which include school crossing guards, SAPIS, school aides, parent coordinators, and school lunch workers. I just want to speak on a few issues, basically the SAPIS. The SAPIS provide substance abuse prevention and intervention in the schools. Yesterday I listened to some of the-- at the Public Safety hearing and they were talking about the incidences of substance abuse and overdose in Staten Island. Our substance abuse SAPIS counselors provide those kinds of services, prevention services in the schools. We were fortunate to receive two million from the state, and in the Mayor's Budget there was another two million, but we're asking the City Council to please provide us with another three million. This three million will provide us with an additional 100 positions for the SAPIS. Unfortunately, drugs and alcohol abuse starts in the

1 schools, and if we can-- we have the adequate staff
2 to prevent this, that would help prevent these
3 deaths, this unfortunate deaths. Something else I
4 want to touch is-- touch on are is the school
5 crossing guards. I want to thank the Council for
6 everything they've done for the Local 372 school
7 crossing guards, but the fact of the matter is school
8 crossing guards only work five hours a day, because
9 of the extended days in the schools, because there
10 are afterschool programs. You have late dismissals.
11 You have so many things going on in the schools. You
12 should have someone out there crossing the kids. The
13 school crossing guards only work five hours a day.
14 That's two and a half in the morning, two and a half
15 in the afternoon. You have middle schoolers going
16 out for lunch. The streets are dangerous. As
17 parents, we know that. Our neighbors, we know that.
18 We're asking the City Council to please provide
19 funding for annualizing of the school crossing
20 guards. Something else we're asking is the school
21 lunch. Our members provide breakfast in the
22 classroom and work with universal lunch. It's a
23 wonderful program. As long as our kids are fed, that
24 is all that matters, but we cannot feed the kids
25

1 without appropriate staffing. We're asking that the
2 City Council provide additional funding for staffing
3 in the cafeterias, because these are community
4 people. They work-- that work in the schools. They
5 feed their kids, their grandkids, they feed our kids
6 and your kids, but if they don't have enough staffing
7 to work in the cafeterias, they're not going to do
8 their job appropriately. Thank you for your time.

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10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
11 you.

12 RON BARBER: Good afternoon. My name is
13 Ron Barber. I'm the delegate from Local 1482,
14 Brooklyn Library Guild, DC 37, and I'm here to just
15 ask of you the need of the increase of money for the
16 libraries. I know we have all testified before. This
17 is my first time here, and I thank you for this
18 opportunity. But we need the increase, and I'll tell
19 you a little story why. I'm a computer technician at
20 the Brooklyn Public Library, and I service almost all
21 59 branches in the borough of Brooklyn, and once I
22 finish repairing the technology to serve our
23 community, I also offer my services to the patrons.
24 It is not my job, but I do it because there's a need
25 in the branches of staffing. And so this particular

time I was in a branch, finished my work, and I helped one lady; she speak no English. She's Spanish. I don't look it. I'm Latino also, but I helped her to develop--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] We come in all shades.

RON BARBER: Amen, amen, amen. So, I help her develop a resume, look for work site, submit it, created an email address, and all of these things and only because there wasn't enough staffing in order to help all the patrons that was there. Immediately after, I helped a lady. She's a senior. She was deaf and mute, and so I help her also to be able to fax and email some documents that she was really desperate to do, and I say all of that is because if we get-- we already have-- thank you for the money that we got that help us to do the six-day service, but if we get the increase this time, we'll be able to provide more staffing to accommodate our community needs. So, I thank you for, you know, lending me this time to be able to present this case to you. Thank you so much.

JOHN HYSLOP: My name is John-- my name is John Hyslop, I'm the President-- damn it. My name

1 is John Hyslop. I'm the President of Local 1321
2 Queens Library Guild, and like Ron I am testifying
3 about the importance of libraries and the increase in
4 funding that we need. Thank you for allowing us to
5 testify today, and thank you for the significant
6 increase that you gave us last year. But we do need
7 more. To meet this crazy demand of six-day service,
8 the library has hired frontline staff, librarians,
9 custodians, clerks, maintainers, drivers. This
10 hiring has been a boon to library staff, library
11 customers. However, the library's users demand more,
12 and I can attest that we barely meet this demand. We
13 have branches that do not have custodians to clean
14 the branches. We have branches that are open with
15 three day-- for three people. Additionally, the
16 current level of staffing does not address our
17 patron's demand for more free services, afterschool
18 programs, Wi-Fi, internet, homework help, story time,
19 books and digital media, programs of all ages, career
20 services, adult learning classes. The six-day
21 service has been great for our library system with
22 more people connecting with our libraries everywhere.
23 Queens Library has developed new services, provides
24 new technologies and provides more programs. We
25

1 maintain our superior standing in every neighborhood
2 and Council District in the City, and are a paradigm
3 [sic] of public space and sometimes the only free
4 space in the every-- in the neighborhoods. The
5 Fiscal Year 2016 demand for six-day service and the
6 amount of money elected officials gave us, as
7 historic an increase as it was, strains our system,
8 causing hardship on all the staff. If our elected
9 officials want their constituents and our patrons to
10 continue to receive the current inadequate services
11 and recommit the funding. If our elected officials
12 want to make our life-- make the lives better for
13 library staff, the patrons, improve and expand
14 library services, then they must give the library
15 system the 65 million dollars we need. Thank you.

17 MICHAEL MULGREW: Good afternoon. I want
18 to first thank all the Council Members in here,
19 especially Council Member Ferreras, the Chair, and
20 for holding these hearings. My name is Michael
21 Mulgrew. I'm the President of the United Federation
22 of Teachers. This year, we went up once again and
23 did the lion share of the lobbying on behalf of our
24 school system in the-- during the Albany budget
25 session. We're very happy that we were able to

1 increase significantly the funding for our school
2 system, but once again, I will say what I have said
3 for the past seven years. When we receive funding
4 for the school system, it should be for the schools
5 and not for anywhere else. And with that in mind,
6 going into next year's budget session, I would like
7 to ask City Council why I'm here today to remind them
8 that coming into next year that GEA is now
9 eliminating and next year is the year we should push
10 finally for the big down payment that we are owed
11 under CFE, the three main pieces I would like to ask
12 for in this budget besides what we have submitted in
13 testimony. First, teacher's choice: Ten years ago,
14 we were giving teachers 250 dollar each. Now, last
15 year we gave them 122, and while we do appreciate
16 City Council working with us on this, the reality is
17 that teachers are spending more and more, between 500
18 and 1,000 dollars each out of pocket, and we're not
19 talking about glue sticks and crayons. We're talking
20 about jackets. We're talking about food. We're
21 talking about books, software programs. That is what
22 we are buying our students. So, and we would also
23 like to work with City Council to try to somehow make
24 this a permanent part of the city budget instead of
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1 Council for your support around the NYPD issues in
2 our local and for the City increasing the numbers of
3 people in the 911 system that we heard yesterday
4 that's going to happen because of the new center as
5 well as keeping up with the attrition that goes on
6 with the 911. Overtime has been cut because of it.
7 Just be mindful that if there are new tasks to be
8 done like texting and things like that, the
9 consideration of new staff for that as well. On the
10 issue of civilianization, we heard from the NYPD
11 about the ideas to civilianize. It's still-- the
12 numbers still do not equal what they should. We have
13 won a grievance on this for police administrative
14 aides. It is irresponsible not to the taxpayers of
15 New York, and we represent 15,000 taxpayers and
16 members of 1549, that civilianization be done. A
17 grievance was won and hasn't been settled yet, and we
18 thank the City Council for putting in numbers for the
19 police administrative aides, but the bulk of my
20 testimony deals with the issue of public hospitals in
21 the City. On page there's the number of asks that we
22 have. Public hospitals is about public health. Only
23 the public system is going to be going to areas of
24 the City that need healthcare the most. The private

1 hospitals, the big institutions do not do it. We're
2 supportive of the Mayor's plan for additional
3 funding. It's at nine percent of the budget right
4 now. I remind people that it used to be 33 percent,
5 and under Dave Dinkins it was 10 percent. So, that's
6 excellent. The movement towards primary care to the
7 communities is what we've always advocated as
8 advocates for public health. The integrated of
9 social service systems, we're ready to work on that.
10 We've advocated for it. Our members are in HRA as
11 well and other agencies, and we will work with the
12 City on that. The downsizing is not good. Four of
13 the pages that I have here document this, especially
14 in the area of clericals on dealing on how clerical
15 staff is related to access, which is now a problem in
16 HHC, and I will tell you as a patient that's the
17 issue, including with me, and the other thing is that
18 it's the issue of income on the relationship with
19 that. Downsizing is counterproductive to access.
20 So, we're asking for you to work with us on that and
21 support the Mayor on most of the plan, but oppose
22 that. We think that the Commission that he's sending
23 up needs to be fully inclusive of all the advocates,
24 unions and people working in the City of New York and
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not just heads of top hospitals in the City of New York that are private. And also, we think that hearing should be held for transparency as you brought up today, Madam Councilwoman, as well as supporting the Gottfried Hannan [sic] bills in the State Legislature that redefines the safety net. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great.

RALPH PALLADINO: Sorry, to run over.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I think we can speak on behalf of all Council Members. It is really difficult to not be sitting there with you because we're always shoulder to shoulder with you. I think it's important that we put this in the record, but know that this Council very much believes in every priority that you've listed and mention, and we are your biggest advocates and staunchest supporters. So, hopefully we will bring this budget into a resolution that we can all be proud of. So thank you all for coming to testify today. Now, for the public, don't do what Ray Rondino just did and run over his time, not going to do that.

RAPH PALLADINO: I did apologize.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: It's okay.

Thank you very much for coming to testify today.

We'll call up the next panel.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will be Jim Fouratt from Seniors Take Action, Tom Connor from Greenwich House, Sonja Versherin [sp?] Korean American Senior Citizen's Society, Audrey Carr, Legal Services NYC, Joe Hunt, Veterans Mental Health Coalition, Dustin Shryock, the Headstrong Project, and Kevin Fisher, The Bridge.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: The Council, while everyone settles in, we're going to call the next panel so that you know to be in que and you can start making your way.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will be Anna Moss [sp?] from You Got to Believe, Anna Sanchez [sp?], You Got to Believe, Sharif Griggs, You Got to Believe, Katherine Rando, You Got to Believe, Brianna Hayes [sp?], You Got to Believe, Rosie Williams, You Got to Believe, and Annie Keen [sp?], You Got to Believe.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So basically--[off mic]. If you have testimony that you want to submit, please make sure that the Sergeant at

Arms has a copy of your testimony, and we can start in the order that I guess you're seated. So, you want to begin here? Yes.

JIM FOURATT: Hello, City Council people. My name is Jim Fouratt and I'm here representing seniors and an organization called Seniors Take Action and a national organization called the Circle of Lesbian and Gay Elders, which is made up of activists over the age of 65 from around the country, but I'm here to talk specifically about the Department of Aging and the budgeting. Please, go back and look at this very carefully. One real serious area is the social workers. I go to Hudson Guild and Washington Square part of the Greenwich House Senior Community, and our social workers are incredibly over-worked. We have increasing population of people coming of age as seniors, and because of the economic conditions in Manhattan, in particular, but in New York City, more and more seniors are now having to use the services of the senior centers and of the very responsible, very hard working social workers that are at the two places that I am. I have asked the social workers if there is anything that they wanted their clients, members

1 of the centers to ask at these kinds of hearings, and
2 very politely they said the same thing, "We need more
3 workers." It's not enough just to have students come
4 in, social work students, which we think is very,
5 very important in training, but many of the issues
6 that seniors have, they really need to have
7 experienced people that they can trust, and that
8 level of trust is not a negative about younger
9 people. It's just that when you're in your 70's and
10 your 80's and your 90's you want to be able to talk
11 to someone who you think may understand what you have
12 to say. Thank you.

14 DUSTIN SHRYOCK: Hello. My name is
15 Dustin Shryock. I'm here representing the Headstrong
16 Project in partnership with Weill Cornell Medical.
17 I'm a military veteran myself, and our mission is to
18 provide cost-free, stigma-free and bureaucracy-free
19 mental healthcare to post 9/11 veterans. Over
20 300,000 post 9/11 veterans report symptoms of post-
21 traumatic stress. The VA estimates that we currently
22 lose up to 22 military veterans a day by suicide.
23 What's going on is we're having increases in
24 dangerous and destructive behavior among veterans,
25 domestic abuse, substance abuse, unemployment, and

1 homelessness. In following with our tenants of
2 treatment, we stabilize military veterans, we process
3 traumatic memory and we re-integrate military
4 veterans back into the community. And I'll now speak
5 for the rest of the time about my process into
6 becoming a client at Headstrong. I found that I was
7 experience the fog of war, more or less, and I wasn't
8 operating as successfully as I could. Headstrong
9 allowed me to come in as any combat veteran. We come
10 into the door, and there is no stigma attached to the
11 treatment we get. There's no minimum treatment and
12 there's no maximum treatment. It's about creating a
13 healthy veteran and reintegrating that veteran
14 successfully back into their society. So, very
15 seriously, it's going to save lives. In mentioning
16 that we have military veterans committing suicide,
17 Headstrong is addressing this mental health issue in
18 a very positive way, and I'll just say that an
19 investment in New York City is truly an investment in
20 her military veterans. Again, thank you for allowing
21 us to speak, and I'll yield back my time.

22
23 KEVIN FISHER: Council Members, my name
24 is Kevin Fisher. I am a retired Master Sergeant from
25 the United States Airforce, and I currently serve as

Director of Veteran Services at The Bridge, a Manhattan based nonprofit. For over 60 years, The Bridge has served citizens who experience homelessness, substance abuse and mental health issues. Through our supportive housing program, more than 800 men and women call The Bridge home. One of the City's great housing accomplishments has been the significant reduction in numbers of homeless veterans who experience both chronic homelessness and serious mental illness. The Mayor, the City Council and agency leaders have quickly and resolutely addressed this issue. Today, however, I would like to highlight one major service gap in supportive housing that affects our veterans. New York, New York three supportive housing programs categorize applicants into nine population groups. Population E provides for homeless single adults with substance abuse disorder. Population F assists homeless single adults who have completed a substance abuse program. According to point in time data from February, there were 822 Population E and 743 Population F units on line. There were, however, only 38 Population E vacancies and 42 for Population F. That means that waiting to fill these combined 80 vacancies, there

are 661 clients approved for both housing categories.

As we are aware, substance abuse disorders exist in

the homeless veteran population. I work closely with

the Ed Thompson Veteran Center operated about

Samaritan Village in Queens where veterans who turn

their lives around by successfully completing a

program are on years' long waiting lists for

supportive housing. Those veterans approved and many

more in the pipeline form part the 284 Population F

clients who would fill 42 vacancies. We are

requesting City Council consider creating flexibility

for homeless veterans with behavioral health

disorders that would allow them to be placed in all

of New York, New York three housing program

regardless of their eligibility category. I

respectfully request your attention to this matter.

JOE HUNT: Good afternoon, Council

Members. My name's Joe Hunt. I'm the Director of

Veterans Mental Health Coalition of New York City.

I'm also a Vietnam Veteran. The Veterans Mental

Health, Co-founded by the Mental Health Association

of New York City and NAMI NYC Metro, is a diverse

cross-section of over 800 members including

providers, government representatives, academics,

researchers, veterans, and veterans' family members who are dedicated to working collaboratively to address the mental health needs of veterans and their families. The Coalition serves a broad-base, credible, go-to resource for information, education and comprehensive array of services for improving access to and the quality of veteran's mental health care. We all know the statistics. According to a Rand Study, more than half of New York State service members return to civilian life with psychological injuries. However, only one-third of the veterans in need seek mental health treatment. The same study reveals that nearly half of the New York State veterans prefer to receive their care not from the VA, but through civilian-based providers in their own communities. Veterans, just like everybody else, want to be able to choose where they get their care, and in doing so, they should be able to depend on the providers that have skills they need to meet their needs. With the Council's generous support, the Veterans Mental Health Coalition's Education Committee has been able to deliver a best practices, educational and lecture series to better equip community providers with the skills they need to

1 identify and address the needs of veterans facing
2 mental health challenges. Our education and training
3 series will reach 370 separate providing
4 organizations this year, equipping civilian workforce
5 to better serve the City's veterans. We're deeply
6 grateful to the Council's leadership and commitment
7 to financing the Veterans Service Initiative, and
8 urge the Council to continue its critical role in
9 funding these much needed community supports. We
10 also appreciate Mayor de Blasio and the First Lady's
11 commitment to providing mental health. Thank you.

12
13 AUDREY CARR: Good afternoon.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I'm sorry,
15 is your microphone on?

16 AUDREY CARR: Oh, sorry. Okay, I'll
17 start again. Good--

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
19 [interposing] Just bring your mic up a little bit
20 closer just to--

21 AUDREY CARR: Is this better?

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: That's
23 much better.

24 AUDREY CARR: Alright. Good afternoon.
25 I'm Audrey Carr, the Director of the Veterans Project

at Legal Services NYC. Our Veterans Justice Project represents veterans, active duty service members and their families with their civil legal needs such as avoiding eviction, obtaining public benefits and resolving consumer debt problems, for example.

Despite the City announcing last year that it had ended veterans' homelessness, the housing situation for veterans is still very dire. Recently, we have become aware of a disturbing trend where housing providers that receive funding through their supportive services for veterans' families and the grants per-diem program are taking advantage of veterans by housing them in substandard housing.

There's inadequate housing for female veterans and for veterans with children. Many female veterans are survivors of military sexual trauma and do not want to be housed with men. The lone female-only housing program is run by the Samaritan Village, but this program is only open to female veterans with substance abuse problems and is located two hours away from the City. Landlord are also attempting to force veterans out of their rent regulated apartments where they have lived for many years. We just won a case involving a landlord who was seeking to evict an

elderly veteran from his apartment in Brooklyn where he had lived for almost 50 years. The landlord claimed that the veteran did not reside on the property, but instead lived with his sister on Long Island. After trial, the judge ruled that the veteran had provided sufficient proof of his residency in Brooklyn and denied the landlord's request to evict him. We regularly represent veterans facing eviction for nonpayment of rent. Many of these veterans are underemployed or disabled. Their sole source of income comes from the Social Security Administration or from the Veterans Administration in the forms of service-connected disability benefits or disability pension. This money is not enough to find affordable housing in the City. Pending before the Council right now is legislation that would provide rental assistance to disabled veterans residing in apartments with rent at or below the fair market rent amount set by HUD. Veterans who receive a disability pension or service connected to disability benefits from the VA at 50 percent or higher disability rating would qualify for this rental subsidy, and a veteran's combined earned and unearned income could also not surpass 200 percent of the federal poverty

level, neither could their resources exceed the requisite limit for public assistance restrictions in New York State.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] Can you please just wrap up your statement.

AUDREY CARR: I will. Veterans who need these-- who qualify for more-- would not qualify to pay more than 30 percent of the monthly income towards this rent, and we also want to advocate for having lawyers in Housing Court, much as a veteran can get representation if they're in the criminal justice system. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you.

TOM CONNOR: Hi, my name is Tom Connor.

I'm the Chairman of the Senior Advisory Board at the Greenwich House Senior Centers. I support the budget that you are allocating for the Department for the Aging, but I'm very concerned about the mental health issue. My colleague spoke before about the need for social workers; however, it seems to be badly mismanaged by the Department for the Aging. I have three documents I just want to briefly read to you. This is for the year report and it says, "Was the

1 case assist [sic] and service provided?" And 85
2 percent or more, "No." [sic]. It was 48 percent
3 "less than expected." That's at one senior center.
4 The next senior center it says, "Was case assistance
5 provided at 85 percent? No, program was
6 underutilized by 22 percent." The third is, "Was
7 case assistance provided? Yes. How many? It was
8 below 44.8 percent." So there, there's money that
9 you're providing to the senior center to DFTA to
10 provide this service. The commissioner came here and
11 I was shocked to hear her say she needed a lot money
12 for mental health services when they're not even
13 using what they're getting now. I was further shocked
14 when I asked what is the assessment process for the
15 social worker? I received a letter from the FOIA
16 officer of DFTA saying, "The Department for the Aging
17 does not conduct an annual assessment of social work
18 services." There's basically something wrong, and
19 perhaps the mental health services should be taken
20 away from DFTA and given to a mental health agency.
21 They're not really doing the job that they're
22 supposed to. I guess that's the bottom line. The
23 seniors are really-- you're giving the money, but
24
25

it's not going where it's supposed to go and it's not being spent in a wise way. Thank you.

SONJA VERSHERIN: Hi, I'm Sonja Versherin [sp?]. I'm Assistant Director to the Korean American Senior Society of Greater New York. I've been asked to appear here because we have a serious issue in our senior center. The Korean American Senior Center of Greater New York is located at 4565 162nd Street in Flushing. We just moved there last April to a larger location, and with the larger location and quarters, we have an opportunity to buy food and have Korean lunch for all our members, but I've been asking Department of Aging to refer us to someone that can help us with the lunch program, but nothing has been panned out. They feel that we should file request for proposal to get the monies we want for food. However, I researched the request and for proposals and no mention of food-- no mention of a food program, not even the HS Accelerator Program, which most contracts in DFTA have to be part of. The Department of Aging also advised us to write our Councilman in person [sic]. Agency serves about 100 to 150 people daily and we need extra money to keep the service running. We have all I have in the

breakdown of what we spent last year for 2015, and I have in there the lunch program that we spent for this year alone with a deficit of 29,576, and plus we have other programs that we need help with because everything, you need instructor or programs or whatever or computer programs and expertise in this regard. So, I have this attached also, our program calendar.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you.

And you can--

SONJA VERSHERIN: [interposing] I

appreciate your--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] You can hand it into the Sergeant at Arms. We've been joined by Council Members Miller, Minority Leader Matteo, Council Member Chin, Rodriguez, and Ulrich. Again, your testimony is very important. It is now part of the official record. We just held a very important hearing with our first Veteran Affairs Commissioner, and it was a very proud moment. So I'm glad that you all came to testify. And as for the Aging, with our Committee Chair, you know she is the staunchest advocate and was very, very aggressive with OMB Director today so that we're

1
2 able to get those resources. So thank you very much
3 for coming to testify. We're going to remind
4 everyone on the next panel, and we'll call the panel
5 right after the next panel so that you're at least in
6 que so that you'll be closer to the front. So this
7 is the next panel now.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: So, to come up right
9 now is Annie Keen, Rosie Williams, Brianna Hayes,
10 Katherine Rando, Sharif Griggs, Anna Sanchez, and
11 Anna Moss. The panel following that one will be
12 Vladimir Martinez from the Manhattan Borough
13 President's Office, Kayla Wilson [sp?] from Project
14 Reach, Olivia Walter Logan, Project Reach, Mei Fung
15 [sp?] Project Reach, Katherine Chambers, Project
16 Reach, Don Kao, Project Reach, and David Calvert,
17 Youth Build NYC Collaborative.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: You may
19 begin your testimony.

20 SHARIF GRIGGS: Good afternoon. My name
21 is Sharif Griggs. I'm just going to read a little bit
22 from mine. I'm testifying today in hope that older
23 youth in foster care will continue to be given a shot
24 at finding forever families. Youths' lives are just
25 like mine who are in danger of the lack of support

1 from a major resource that helps them find permanent
2 homes. It's called You Got to Believe. I entered
3 foster care at the age of 13 because my adoptive mom
4 voluntarily placed me back into care. Then I
5 remained in care until I was 18 moving through a few
6 group homes and then an RTC [sic]. The only goal I
7 saw for myself was independent living or returning to
8 another RTC, and because that was all that I was
9 offered. I didn't feel safe or comfortable there,
10 and so therefore, I did the only thing I could do
11 which was self-advocate for a family. I did so, and I
12 was adopted at the age of 19. Now, I'm going to say
13 that I'm a minority, because most of the people in my
14 situation don't have the courage to do so. This
15 program is great because they do this for you. If
16 you're willing to do this, they connect you to people
17 who are actually going to care for you well past the
18 age of 21, which as you guys know is the limit for
19 foster care. Now I spend my time advocating for
20 others because like I said, I feel like this is a
21 very important issue and I feel like it's glossed
22 over a lot in the system, and if people were
23 supported, I think it would do a lot better work.
24
25

ANNIE KEEN: Hi, my name is Annie Keen. I also put in a written testimony, and I'm also here to ask for City Council to consider funding You Got to Believe and its mission. You Got to Believe's mission is-- You Got to Believe is a Brooklyn-based organization that helps older youth in care in New York City. Not only that, they work with the longest-waiting kids. They work with the kids who are the oldest kids, and they also work with the hard-to-place youth that are in the-- that's in the foster care system, who they are in danger of aging out to no one but themselves, and we all know the dire outcomes of a youth aging out of care with no supports. I myself am a product of the foster-- the New York City Foster Care Agency, the foster care system, and I was lucky to have a parent to unconditionally commit to me before I age out of the foster care system. And I am-- it's so unfortunate that You Got to Believe is not getting funding through City Council at this time. So, you know, I have a written testimony if you need more information.

BRIANNA HAYES: Hi, my name is Brianna Hayes. Can you hear me? Okay. So, hi, my name is

1 Brianna Hayes. I'm also here part of You Got to
2 Believe Nobody Ages Out Collaborative for the Youth.
3 I'm speaking to you today in the hope that you can
4 assist older youth in care who just like me have a
5 day where they're going to be aging out soon. And in
6 my personal experience, aging out has meant to me
7 losing your agency, but still feeling like you're in
8 foster care. I say this because you always have to go
9 from like house to house and like live on someone's
10 couch or hope that you don't have to walk on egg
11 shells today to see, like, if you're going to be
12 homeless or whatever, and I feel like my aging out
13 experience has always been trying to survive and
14 figure out where I'm going to stay and what I'm going
15 to eat tomorrow. So, when I think about all of the
16 kids that are going to age out of foster care, I
17 think about them having to go through hardships and
18 having to do things to survive, and I don't think
19 it's safe. I feel like if you got-- if it wasn't for
20 You Got to Believe, I wouldn't have a lot of things.
21 I wouldn't be able to be the strong woman I am today.
22 I wouldn't be able to love others the way I love
23 others now, because if it wasn't for the two women in
24 my life showing me how to love one another, I
25

1 wouldn't be able to give love to others. If it
2 wasn't for their affection, I wouldn't be able to be
3 as like open and bubbly as I am. If it wasn't-- if
4 it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be able to get my GED
5 or like do things like go get a doctor's appointment
6 or how to pay a bill. I feel like this-- we're in
7 dire need of this because our kids are going to age
8 out and they're going to be doing things like having
9 survival sex, having to run from place to place and
10 live in other people's couches. So, I ask you guys
11 to please fund You Got to Believe, because if we
12 don't, this one resource that we have as an agency to
13 help older youth in care, it would just go to waste,
14 and I feel like-- okay. Please fund You Got to
15 Believe, guys.

17 ROSIE WILLIAMS: Hi, my name is Rosie
18 Williams and I'm speaking to you today on behalf of
19 these youth that are still in foster care, that still
20 don't have a forever family or permanency. Since
21 April 1st, 2015, no agency had provided an adoption
22 recruitment for older youth and young adults. My
23 life in care, I was considered a paycheck. I was
24 considered somebody who was a burden on the next
25 person when I walked into their home, and when I

1 speak to youth now, it's still the same thing. I
2 want to change that because now youth in care don't
3 even know that family is their right. I wanted to
4 ask you guys, you know, when you got your PHD and
5 when you got your Master's, where did you go when you
6 finished school? You guys went back home, right?
7 Most likely 90 percent went back home, so why we not
8 giving these-- that choice to some of these kids
9 that's in care. These kids, all they want is
10 somebody to love. All they want is somebody to say,
11 hey, I did good on a test and to cry on their
12 shoulder and they don't have that. I urge the City
13 Council to fund You Got to Believe, because without
14 You Got to Believe, I wouldn't have found my mother,
15 the one person's who's unconditionally committed to
16 me, the one person who helped me throughout my whole
17 life. Without her I would be in jail or I would be
18 homeless out in the streets. And I just wanted to
19 say a lot of kids today is aging out. April 1st,
20 2015-- it's 2016 now, so through that whole year kids
21 been aging out to homelessness. Kids been sleeping
22 on 14th Street and West Fourth, and why are we
23 allowing that when it's in the right of foster care
24 to be temporary. It's in a right of foster care to

1
2 find us family and nobody's doing that. So, I urge
3 you to fund You Got to Believe, because that's the
4 only agency that I know that actually cares for the
5 kids and have experience and know what they're doing
6 in finding families and forever families.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: And before we move onto
8 the next speaker, I just want to let you guys know
9 that is a panelist of four foster alum who have been--
10 - who found a home at 20, found his home at 19. I
11 found-- I moved in at 17, but I was legally adopted
12 at 24, and Brianna found her family at 21. So we're
13 not only talking from personal experience and work
14 experience. This is really important to us. So we
15 just wanted to let you guys know the work that has
16 been done so far.

17 ANNA MOSS: Dear, Chairman Ferreras--
18 Copeland. Good afternoon. Dear, Chairman Ferreras--
19 Copeland and distinguished members of the Committee.
20 My husband Cameron and I are certified, about to be
21 certified as adoptive parents with You Got to
22 Believe. We've been foster parents before with a
23 different agency. A passionate 17-year-old named
24 George entered our family last year, and he worked--
25 he left in the worst way possible. He took his own

1 life in November. In and out of 10 foster homes over
2 a lifetime, he had occurred-- a lot had occurred for
3 him before he moved in, but our former agency failed
4 to disclose George's extensive medical history and
5 mental health history. They didn't respond to his
6 stated needs or provide comprehensive care and
7 alternatives to therapy when that fell short for him.
8 Our training lacked any information on the most
9 important issues, his trauma, substance abuse and
10 suicidal ideation. You Got to Believe knows that
11 this is deeply wrong. They have been forging a
12 critically important path toward family permanency
13 for 20 years. They know without an extensive
14 individualized long-term plan for care, lives are
15 actually in danger. You Got to Believe works
16 tirelessly to close the gap between youth,
17 compassionate staff and permanent families. They
18 understand that isolation can be destructive, and
19 they're serious about building the agency's
20 conversation off of the voice of the youth
21 themselves. For them, youth are the experts in the
22 system, and their wellbeing is the only metric for
23 success. When we started working with them, we were
24 blown away by their empathy. They're the most
25

1
2 compassionate people I've ever met. They've
3 redefined the standard for care, and they show the
4 dream is real if a community works hard enough and is
5 truly connected. Their training is trauma-informed
6 and their scope is long-term. This approach should
7 not be unusual. It is carefully crafted and urgently
8 needed. It is the only method that honors the rights
9 of these youth, truly. Their contribution to these
10 kids cannot be measured because it cannot be
11 contained. It is forever expanding. It is
12 unconscionable that with 700 youth aging out every
13 year, there is no current funding for this deeply
14 needed service. The good news is that the foster
15 care agencies like our former agency is seeking out
16 the help of You Got to Believe, and I urge you to
17 fund them.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
19 you. Can you just state your name for the record?

20 ANNA MOSS: Yes, it's Anna Lynette Moss.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
22 you. Thank you all for testifying. Thank you for
23 making it a part of the public record, and we will
24 take all of this in for negotiating on our budget.
25 Thanks again. We will call up the next panel, and

you will hear the panel after that so you can be in
que.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel is
Vladimir Martinez, David Calvert, Don Kao, Katherine
Chambers, Mei Fung, Olivia Walter Logan, and Akayla
Wilson [sp?]. The panel following this one will be
Naomi Goldberg Haas, Alfred Grant, Connie Turner,
Karen Jarett, Anthony Feliciano, Maha Attieh, and
Bianca Bockman.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: You may
begin your testimony. Vladimir?

VLADIMIR MARTINEZ: Good afternoon. Oh,
that's loud. My name is Vladimir. I'm the Director
of Budget and Capital Projects for Manhattan Borough
President Gale Brewer, and I will be giving testimony
on her behalf today. I will focus my comments on two
specific areas where this budget can be improved, and
to that end, strengthen our neighborhoods and
families. That is Community Boards and our schools.
In this budget, Manhattans 12 Community Boards have
been allocated around four million dollars to account
for personal services and other than personal
services cost, including rent. That means that on
average, these crucial government offices will

operate on a budget of about 340,000 dollars. This funding level does not represent the commitment on behalf of the City to foster successful, engaged and connected Community Boards. I am recommending that we increase the budgets of each of the 12 Manhattan Community Boards to 400,000 dollars to cover those costs not including rent. That means that each Community Board will receive roughly 167,000 additional dollars for a total of about two million dollars for the entire borough. While two million dollars may represent a drop in the bucket in a budget totaling over 82 billion dollars, it represents the transformative investment in our hyper-local operations. Next, no discussion of additional resources for our neighborhoods would be complete without addressing the state of our schools. But with capital investment and brick and mortar as well as expense investment in school-based mental health services which improve the school's entire environment. It has become customary for elected officials to allocate millions of dollars to school projects that are important, but in most cases should be paid for the Department of Education or the School Construction Authority, specifically, the upkeep of

restrooms, gymnasiums, auditoriums, and science labs must be a part of any sustainable and responsible school capital plan. I implore this Administration to consider seriously what the technological demands are in our schools. This is not a fringe matter. It is one that has set apart the best schools and the best students, and we must begin to undo the technological divide that exists in our school system. Thank you, Chairwoman.

KATHERINE CHAMBERS: Hello? Okay, got it. My name is Katherine Chambers. I'm from Project Reach, and hello again from last year. So, I'm going to reintroduce myself. I'm a Bengali transgender woman, and I come from a Muslim family, and if you want to imagine my family, I would say imagine the stereotype, and that is really my family. I wish I was joking. But for me to come out as transgender in a Bengali Muslim family I think in and of itself might be a whole, like, "Oh, my God, what?" So, for me to even be able to come out, I couldn't for 18 years, and part of this as of last year. But back then was when I first got involved with Project Reach, and I got involved in Project Reach through one of their citywide dinners that they host, and

1 they invite young people from all over the City to
2 borough that's a borough center that's under-
3 represented, and you know, Project Reach was one of
4 the first places I actually had the ability to sort
5 of be myself. And, you know, since going to Project
6 Reach I've gotten the support and the ability to be
7 actually be able to be present here this year in a
8 dress, whereas last year I had to be in a t-shirt. I
9 had a different name, and you know, now I even run
10 those dinners that originally invited me to Project
11 Reach. And you know, one other really important
12 thing I think that kept me there is that Project
13 Reach is both a youth and adult-run organization.
14 Young people have the same amount of power as Don
15 over there. If I don't like what Don's saying, I can
16 tell him no.

18 MEI FUNG: Good afternoon. My name is
19 Mei Fung, and you know, I'm a Community Board member
20 of Project Reach, the Chinese-American Planning
21 Council, and I was first introduced by Project Reach
22 over 30 years ago, and Don was staff there, and I was
23 16, and you know, I was a run-away and a high school
24 drop-out, and you know, we don't realize what being a
25 youth is and not having that family support, and

1 Project Reach was that for me. They talked to my
2 parents. It was the height of the gang [sic]
3 violence in Chinatown, and you know, the community
4 was not as supportive as it is now where there was a
5 lot of organizations. So when I was in my crisis
6 there was very few places to go to, and Project Reach
7 was an advocate for me as a youth with no voice. And
8 what I learned is like I realized reflecting on 30
9 years ago, you know, because I was introduced to
10 Project Reach during that crisis, you know, I later,
11 you know, went around, you know, speak at colleges
12 about diversity, you know, watch Project Reach evolve
13 from serving only the Asian community to everyone at
14 crisis. You know, I remember my sister, you know,
15 was part of the youth program and she was translating
16 for a family because, you know, the dad was in a
17 hospital and he didn't want to tell why he was so
18 sick to his family, and when he finally realized that
19 it was AIDS-- and this was in the 80's when Reagan
20 didn't want to speak for AIDS, and my sister was like
21 16 and she translated all these intimate things
22 between the family and the patient who was dying.
23 And I think of all the impact that Project Reach had,
24 and I remember being in City Hall 30 years ago when
25

1 Mayor Dinkins was the president, and it was all
2 because Project Reach brought us youth out to talk
3 about our perspective, what we saw in our community.
4 When we talked about violence in high school and
5 violence between different race and how to
6 assimilate, and you know, live together, and I think,
7 wow, that was over 30 years ago, and you know, I
8 realize how fortunate I am. I'm not a sad statistic.
9 You know, most people who meet me nowadays do not
10 realize that, you know, where I came from. I mean,
11 today, you know,--

12
13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

14 [interposing] Thank you for your testimony. I'm sorry
15 to cut you off, but we have tons of people that want
16 to testify.

17 MEI FUNG: Okay.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And your
19 table is deep with Project Reach. So, you want to be
20 next? Who's next? Okay, great.

21 AKAYLA WILSON: Hi, I'm Akayla Wilson
22 [sp?]. I'm a Youth Staff at Project Reach. I first
23 got started with Reach sometime in the beginning of
24 this year, and it's been significant to me because I
25 never really had a voice. Like, you know, I come

1 from like your typical black family where they tell
2 you stay in a child's place all the time. So I could
3 never speak about anything. Like, I never had
4 feelings, stuff like that. But one thing that
5 Project Reach brought to me was that my voice
6 mattered, and ever since then I've been getting
7 involved in a lot of different things. Like, in
8 school I never was in any clubs or anything like
9 that, but with Project Reach I've hosted almost every
10 dinner that-- I mean, every summit that we've had,
11 we've been a part of, and every borough, and I've
12 gotten enrolled in so many different things because
13 of Project Reach giving me a voice, and I wouldn't be
14 here today if I wasn't enrolled with Don and
15 Katherine. And I've also found a sense of family
16 being here, and it's been really significant for me
17 to be a part of these things. So, it would be great
18 if Project Reach could continue, because I can't
19 imagine where I would go, you know, if we were to
20 have to stop because we can't afford or anything like
21 that. Like, the thought of it scares me every time I
22 think about it. So, it would be great if we can still
23 continue.
24
25

OLIVIA WALTER LOGAN: Hello? Hi. My name is Olivia Walter Logan. I am a gender non-binary queer youth coming from a traditional West Indian family where the word "gay" is really more of a curse word rather than a regular term. And I came across Project Reach by chance really through QORO [sic] New York. From there I was just doing a holiday party and it happened to have this event at Project Reach, and from the first 10-minute conversation I had I was already blown away because at this point I was still denying my sexuality and denying, you know, my gender identity, and just walking into a place filled with people of color where there was a rainbow flag presented proudly and people asked you what your pronouns were instead of just assuming by what you presented as was something that I'm not very used to, and just coming there was an understanding that I needed to be a part of that. And I, in the end, was a part of the winter internship, and I have now gone to LGBTQ summits that give me a chance to really connect with my community, connect with other communities, connect with different organizations that I didn't even know existed. I didn't know we had a Brooklyn Pride Center

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DON KAO: Good afternoon. My name is Don Kao. I think I grew up at Project Reach. I'm 35, and I've been there for 32 years. No, I'm just kidding. Often times, people are afraid to tell their age, and I just mention to them that my daughter has a parent that is going to be 65, and I leave it at that. So, thank you for the opportunity to present to you again, and it's good to see some familiar faces. I think that you've probably heard some of the stories that have spanned the history of Project Reach, and I've been very blessed to not have to look for a job for 32 years. Our challenge is that as you know last year we-- last couple years

1 we've lost quite a bit of funding, and I just want to
2 tell the audience here that had it not been for the
3 City Council and various individual City Council--
4 the Speaker and various City Council Members, we
5 wouldn't be here today. So, I think what I'd like to
6 do is showing that you at least for this-- between
7 now and June 30th we are going to do-- we are not an
8 LGBT organization. I'm not trying to put us back in
9 the closet, but we aren't. We feel that homophobia
10 and transphobia are incredibly important issues to be
11 dealt with and so we integrate those things into the
12 work we do. We're going to be hosting four adult
13 anti-discrimination clinics in every borough, and
14 some of the City Council Members who I won't mention,
15 because I don't want to embarrass the ones, you know,
16 didn't get a chance to join in yet, but are going to
17 be supporting our work in Queens. We did one in the
18 Bronx on Friday. We're doing it in Brooklyn, Staten
19 Island and Queens between now and June 13th, and they
20 will be followed up by youth clinics that will be the
21 same one-day clinic intensive that will cover all the
22 different issues of discrimination. Because we have
23 a long history of working with immigrant community
24 organizations, we are actually among the few
25

1 organizations that actually can go in and do a
2 homophobia or transphobia workshop in a Muslim
3 community, for example. And so there are two last
4 things I just want to name them. I won't talk about
5 them. Two last things we're asking for funding for
6 next year. One is called the Give Back the Night
7 Campaign, which is a male-focused version of the Take
8 Back the Night, which is about sexual assault, but
9 we're doing it as an anti-sexual harassment thing,
10 because we can't believe--

11
12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

13 [interposing] Okay, just speak about the next one,
14 because I really--

15 DON KAO: [interposing] I will, okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: want to
17 make sure, okay?

18 DON KAO: Thank you very much.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Alright.
20 Thank you. Are you speaking? No, okay. Oh, right,
21 no, but you are speaking. Yes, okay, so please grab
22 the mic.

23 DAVID CALVERT: Hello. So my name is
24 David Calvert, and first of all, I'd like to say
25 Project Reach sounds Fantastic. I hope it gets

1 funded. We-- I'm here for YouthBuild. I'm with the
2 New York City YouthBuild Collaborative. There's
3 seven YouthBuild programs around New York City. Some
4 of you may know, I hope everyone knows, that
5 YouthBuild started 38 years ago in New York City in
6 East Harlem, and then it spread around the country
7 and spread around the world. So now there's 20,000
8 youth every year doing YouthBuild in 21 countries,
9 and including 270 projects in the United States, and
10 it's something that just generated out of East Harlem
11 community and out of the City of New York because
12 young people that are out of work and out of school
13 have capacity to do things, have love and creativity,
14 just want to have a chance to do something positive,
15 and that's the way YouthBuild started up when we
16 renovated 13 buildings in East Harlem. We've done
17 38,000 units of affordable housing in the country,
18 and it's harnessing up the energy of young people
19 that need their GED and need some vocational skills,
20 leadership development and community service, and
21 counseling support. So, that's YouthBuild, and you
22 know, we will have a YouthBuild hearing, I think in a
23 couple of weeks, so the young people will come out
24 and speak at that one at Youth Services Committee.

1
2 But we just love to tell our story. Anybody here is
3 welcome to come and visit us in East Harlem or any of
4 the five boroughs now we have YouthBuild programs,
5 and we've done discretionary applications to the
6 Council, so each one, I hope they'll be honored by
7 the Council and supported, and we can continue to do
8 this work. Thank you very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you
10 very much for testifying today. I speak on behalf of
11 the entire City Council, we're very proud of the work
12 that you do, but as you all can now attest, you have
13 all officially now begun to understand how
14 complicated it is to divvy up this pot for all the
15 worthy causes. So thank you very much for coming to
16 testify, and my Counsel will call up the next panel.
17 And Katherine, I know you testified last year with
18 the wrong name and you came in a t-shirt, so I'm very
19 proud of you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel is
21 Bianca Bockman, Maha Attieh, Anthony Feliciano, Karen
22 Jarett, Connie Turner, Alfred Grant, Naomi Goldberg
23 Haas. The panel following this one will be the group
24 from Lunch for Learning Campaign.

MAHA ATTIEH: Good afternoon, my name is Maha Attieh. I'm Head Program Manager at New York City of Health Navigator. I work at the Arab-American Family Support Center. We get our grant through Coalition for Asian-American to help our community, the Arab-American and South Asian community to apply for health insurance. Okay. I just want to brief-- we are a community-based organization for social services, and it's very important for us to be funded by the budget this year for the outreach services we do, because our center is funded for to apply for health insurance, but we're not funded to do the outreach for our community to educate them about applying for health insurance and access healthcare after they receive their card. My testimony is right there. I know it's a little bit long, but I would like to say I'm the only fulltime navigator in the agency helping the Arab-American community in Arabic language to apply for health insurance. I help find doctors who speak the client's language, translate and explain their health insurance letters and documents, help them with their medical billing problems, make appointments or change doctors, advice where to go for preventive services,

1 host education health workshops and street health
2 fairs. I attend outreach health events citywide to
3 provide information in Arabic for clients who are not
4 eligible to be enrolled in health insurance. I refer
5 them to Health & Hospitals options to access
6 healthcare for a small-scale fee, but more outreach
7 is needed about this program. Our agency is very
8 important to the immigrant of New York City because
9 we serve over 6,000 clients a year since 1994. Our
10 staff speaks 12 languages. So, we'll be happy if we
11 receive some funding this year, because the same
12 funding last year, we had one million; we're asking
13 for five million this year for Access Healthcare.
14 Thank you very much for your time.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

16 And I know there's a group that's on the panel that's
17 going to be performing. If you'd like you can sit in
18 these rows up here, and then we'll give you your
19 space so you can come up so you don't have stand up
20 in the back there. You may begin.

21 ANTHONY FELICIANO: Good afternoon. My
22 name is Anthony Feliciano. I'm the Director of the
23 Commission on the Public's Health System. Thank you,
24 Council Member Julissa Copeland, Council Member
25

1 Miller, Chin, and Johnson. I want to talk about what
2 the Mayor and others have been saying for a long
3 time, a tale of two cities, but from a tale of two
4 hospital systems, a tale of two healthcare delivery
5 systems. You know, we have a public health system
6 that serves all, but a private health system that
7 doesn't serve all, particularly the most underserved.
8 There is some exceptions to that rule with some
9 really true private safety net like Interfaith and
10 others, but we have this situation where we have
11 discriminatory practices, policies and racism still
12 in healthcare. And I want to talk about three major
13 areas that are about addressing it, but also provide
14 tools for communities in addressing it together. the
15 first one is Access Health NYC, which I want to thank
16 Councilman Johnson and others for making this a new
17 initiative last year that came into effect this year
18 to provide funding for 12 really great community-
19 based organizations and 30 qualified health centers,
20 and it was really not just about helping people in
21 issues of enrollment can coverage, but knowing their
22 rights, their rights to navigating the healthcare
23 system. And that's one of the two that is necessary
24 and can only be done by the trusted brokers in the
25

community. I also want to say that this indirectly helps with Health & Hospitals in terms of knowing that there is so many uninsured that only the public health system really is serving. Access Health NYC can help people guide them to the right areas in terms of coverage and also access to the care. The other areas, Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative. We just want to make sure that 1.5 million is baseline funds and 0.5 reinstated to groups that have provided this through an RFP that they were excluded from. There are many important CBO's that have worked on Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative, and unfortunately we're excluded from a proposal that necessarily didn't and wasn't accurate in terms of the work and the great work they've done over the years. The other-- I want to go back-- is to preserving our public health system. We commend the Mayor for taking this very seriously in terms of the fiscal crisis that Health & Hospitals is going through. It's not something new, but we commend him for that. We want to ensure that people understand that there is some real bias in terms of the public health system. We want to make sure that they get the funding and that any commission created around

1
2 them is transparent and more representative of the
3 communities that they serve. Thank you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you so
5 much, Anthony.

6 ALFRED GRANT: My name is Alfred Grant.
7 I'm from DC 37's Local 420 Political Action Community
8 Board Seven. I'm also an employee of North Central
9 Bronx Hospital. I'm the Vice Chapter Chair of the
10 Local there, but one of my greatest concerns and what
11 made me come here today is that I saw Doctor Raju
12 here live on my union TV, and Councilman Corey and
13 Andrew Cohen asked him the questions about the
14 restructure, and the restructuring just only go to
15 2017, but it goes, I believe, 2020. The thing is
16 this, in North Central Bronx Hospital we service the
17 community. I've been working there since 1978, and
18 everything about the restructuring that we have, I
19 believe that what they should do with North Central
20 Bronx is not to totally restructure it in a downward
21 fashion, but to restructure it to expand it in
22 certain areas, because in our area we have a high
23 rate of behavioral health problems. We brought back,
24 and I want to thank the City Council for bringing
25 back Labor and Delivery, and the other thing that we

1
2 have there is a high area of asthma. So we can
3 provide the means, and the community is made up of a
4 lot people who tend to have the problems with
5 immigration. They are here. They are Mexicans,
6 Africans, people of all culture. The old Norwood
7 section of the Bronx where North Central is used to
8 be Italian and Irish only, but re-gentrification has
9 expanded and people need healthcare. We are
10 connected to Montefiore, and I want to put this in
11 the light, that Montefiore is the Goliath and North
12 Central is the David, and we are trying to make sure
13 that we get proper healthcare for those who just
14 don't want it, but who need it. Thank you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you.

16 CONSTANCE ROBINSON-TURNER: Good
17 afternoon. Good afternoon. My name is Constance
18 Robinson Turner, and I serve as the Program Manager
19 for the NYU College of Dentistry, Smiling Faces Going
20 Places Mobile Dental Care program. I thank you,
21 Chairperson Ferreras-Copeland and members of the
22 committee to allow me to come before you today. For
23 16 years, the Dental Van program has played an
24 essential role in addressing the oral health care
25 needs of low income children in New York City and the

current discretionary funding request of 300,000 dollars for the program is important to ensure the program continues its mission. We have provided all healthcare and dental education to over 2,000 children annually by visiting public schools, daycare centers and health fairs citywide. The Council has provided annual discretionary funding to support the program for the past 11 years. Last year, the City Council was critical in helping the van program securing funding after the previous year's funding was baselined and slated to be used for purposes within DOHMH. We are extremely thankful and we hope that you can help ensure that the program continues by providing 300,000 dollars in discretionary funding. With recent studies showing a strong correlation between good health and systemic health, it's essential to ensure that New York City's children are not overlooked in receiving dental services. We're looking forward to being a pilot program to expand our services to older adults, which is a recent development that the College of Dentistry will be testing. IN order to ensure the continued provision of crucial services for medically underserved children, we are requesting discretionary

funding of 300,000 dollars in new City Council funds in Fiscal Year 17. This will result in an additional 200 children being treated. We thank you.

KAREN JARETT: Good afternoon. My name is Karen Jaret. I'm the downstate Director of Political and Community Organizing for the New York State Nurses Association. Wanted to come before this committee today to discuss two particular issues. First, we'd like to thank Council Member Ferreras, Council Member Miller, Council Member Chin, Council Member Johnson for their support of Access Health NYC and NYSNA as well supports that. Along with our community and labor coalition partners, we asked the Mayor and the City Council to reinvest funding into this vitally important program. A reinvestment of five million dollars will go to expand culturally and linguistically competent outreach and education programs about options for healthcare access. More importantly, this money will go to CBOs who have the access and need the additional financial resources to reach those communities who are often medically underserved, overlooked and hard to reach due to language and cultural barriers. NYSNA considers our support for this program as a national extension of

our efforts to make quality healthcare accessible to all New York City. Our second reason for coming before you today is that we support the Mayor's One Plan for New York healthcare for our neighborhoods, the blueprint for New York City Health & Hospitals. Our public hospital systems, its patients and their millions-- its millions of patients in communities that it serve will greatly benefit from the infusion of financial funding by the City Council can provide in the Executive Budget. We continue to lobby to secure funding that will help the system meet its patient care responsibilities, but part of this is speaking up for fair funding for Health & Hospitals, and that's why we support A9476 and S6946, Assembly Member Gottfried, Senator Hannan's [sic] bill to redefine or define the enhanced safety net hospitals, and we ask that New York City Council Members join us in these lobbying efforts in the coming weeks and months. Private hospitals make money because New York City Health & Hospitals are there to provide services that they avoid or shirt [sic]. The New York City public health system is an indispensable core of the entire New York City healthcare system because it provides high quality care and cost efficiency that

is equal to or better than private hospital networks. It also provides services in operation areas that private hospitals do not, and so New York City Health & Hospitals should be expanded and play a greater role in delivery of culturally and linguistically competent--

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: [interposing]

Thank you.

KAREN JARETT: efficient and high quality healthcare.

BIANCA BOCKMAN: Hi, my name's Bianca Bockman. I'm the Community Healthy Food Advocate at Northeast Housing Development Corporation, also known as NEBHDCo. Thank you to the Finance Committee for hearing this testimony. I'm submitting this testimony on behalf of Communities for Healthy Food, which is a coalition of CDC's. Our Coalition is requesting City Council citywide discretionary funding, totaling 1.3 million. We're so lucky that in Fiscal Year 16 that we received 500,000 for the initiative from the City Council with 125,000 going to my organization which has helped us do so much. We are requesting additional funding to heighten program impacts and to expand into two new

neighborhoods. Communities for Healthy Food is an innovative approach to expanding access and food justice in New York's economically challenged neighborhoods through community-based organizations. We are based in six different organizations throughout Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan and Queens. In Bed-Stuy where I'm at, we've designed Communities for Healthy to Bring in more affordable food options and also create job and business opportunities so that people actually have the money to afford the good food that is in the neighborhood. We also have guiding principles that are about residents teaching residents and that we have the knowledge in the community to lift up the community. So we've trained and now hire a team of community chefs to lead all of our culinary and nutrition education work, and we pay them really well for that. We also pay all of our youth that participate in our year-round youth programs great stipends to learn critical thinking skills, especially as it relates to the food system to learn about gardening and cooking and professional job skills. And finally, we also do, in addition to many other things, a cooperative business project to start worker-owned co-ops throughout the

neighborhood and increase our economic development around food. Thanks.

NAOMI GOLDBERG HAAS: Hi, I'd like to [off mic] and face the Council. There you go. Let's span [sic]-- yeah, okay. A special performance. Hi, my name is Naomi Goldberg Haas, and it is a pleasure to give testimony on the importance of vital arts programs for New York City senior by introducing the work of my company, Dances for a Variable Population known as DVP. DVP was founded in 2005 with the mission of supporting strong and creative movement for people among all ages and abilities with a special focus on older adults. Each year, we reach 250 New Yorkers through multiple free weekly dance programs for underserved seniors and free public dance performances across New York City, and we could do more. Our programs meet the needs of New York City seniors for experiences of physical, intellectual and creative mastery in the spirit of our mission to enable marginalized seniors to take center stage. With me today are nine senior participants who will share their testimony through dancing. [music] Rita, Dawn, Coleen [sp?], Pat,

Brenda, Deborah, Rayan [sp?], Molly, Ellsbeth [sp?].
Thank you.

[applause]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you
very much for your testimony. Thank you. Thank you.
We really appreciated that. Now, we'll call up the
next panel and the following panel so that you can be
in que.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: This panel is the
group from-- everybody from Lunch for Learn, and the
panel after that will be Alexis Posey from FPWA,
Patricia Restrepo [sp?], Voces Latinas, Tammy Yuen,
Suki Turata Port [sp?], Karen Jamie [sp?], Mac
Chiulli, Heidi Siegfried.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, I'm
just going to need-- because we called you up
together on the same issue, I'm going to need you
state your name clearly before everyone speaks.

PAMELA STEWART MARTINEZ: Thank you.
Good afternoon. My name is Pamela Stewart Martinez,
and I would like to thank the members of City Council
for the opportunity; to appear before you today. I
am the proud mom of seven children ages 24 to eight
years old, all of whom have been or continue to be

1 educated in the New York City schools. I also-- I'm
2 also Co-president of the Citywide Council on Special
3 Education, which advocates for all children with
4 IEP's that includes over 175,000 in the New York City
5 public school system, over 12,700 in the charter
6 schools and 7,500 in state approved private schools.
7 I'm also a member of the Lunch for Learning Parent
8 Caucus. Today, I choose to speak to you to the
9 benefit of universal free lunch for all students. As
10 a child, I was abandoned several times before the age
11 of six. I know what it's like not to have correct
12 documentation to substantiate that I belong where I
13 reside, being afraid to fill out lunch forms because
14 someone may force me to leave my school, the
15 community that I grew to love and my newly found
16 family. I went to school many days not eating school
17 lunch because my new family could not afford to pay
18 for the school lunch fee, and we didn't want to fill
19 out the form, because of course, we didn't want
20 anyone discovering the secret that I really wasn't
21 supposed to be residing in that household.
22 Truthfully, in middle school academically I did okay.
23 I could have done better if my mind wasn't in such a
24 rush to get home because I was still hungry. Today,

1
2 I speak for the many students who are afraid to admit
3 that they're hungry, whether it relates to
4 documentation or stigma of qualifying for free lunch,
5 and if we remove the barriers that prevent students
6 from enjoying lunch, there is no stigma, no fear and
7 no hunger in school. Thank you.

8 CELIA GREEN: Good afternoon. Good
9 afternoon. My name is Celia Green. I'm the First
10 Vice President for the citywide District 75 Education
11 Council. I'm also a mother of four, three of whom
12 are still in school, and one of the things that I
13 found somewhat disturbing is that students in my
14 district have the same challenges that are found
15 throughout New York City. One of them is students in
16 transitional housing and those who may be doubled up
17 have a problem, doubled up with a relative or a
18 friend, experience hunger from lack of food and lack
19 of food stability. Most of that is compounded by the
20 fact that they have housing instability, but even for
21 families who are from stable homes, it does add up.
22 A lot of people live in the City from paycheck to
23 paycheck. This is a really expensive city, and I
24 think one of the least things we can do is feed our
25 children. Our children need that fuel for school. A

1 lot of children I know right now are willing to
2 starve because of a stigma. They don't want people
3 to know that their family can't afford for them to
4 pay for the school lunch, and they're rather sit it
5 out and say that, oh, it's okay. But I would hope
6 that as most of the groups have said before, and as
7 Pam has just finished saying, that we have the
8 strength to remove the stigma from school lunch,
9 because it really is a universal right for these
10 children. Thank you.

12 CONSTANCE ASIEDU: Good afternoon,
13 Council Members. My name is Constance Asiedu. I'm
14 President of the Citywide Council on High Schools,
15 and I have three children who have been educated in
16 the New York public school system, one who is still
17 waiting to graduate. I'm here to speak on behalf of
18 our high school students and the universal free lunch
19 program. I believe that the stigma on the high
20 school level is much more intense than everyone
21 understands. When I attended high school, lunch was
22 a free entity because President Franklin Delano
23 Roosevelt saw fit to institute free lunch to ensure
24 that all American citizens who would become members
25 of the working marketplace would be-- would develop

1 well nutritionally and mind-wise. I don't think that
2 in this day and age with the homeless problem in New
3 York, with the immigrant problem in New York, with
4 the financial situation in the City, that it is a
5 time for parents to be burdened with the charge for
6 lunch. Also, for students in temporary housing who
7 are not doubled-up who live on their own from house
8 to house who don't find any place to eat except in
9 school, but the stigma is so intense, they will not
10 enter lunch rooms. That's what we have going on in
11 our high school level. I think we need to remove
12 this. When I entered school, the lunch room was the
13 social place. We all ate there. No one looked to
14 see who was paying, who wasn't paying, who couldn't
15 afford it to ridicule them with that information. I
16 think the Council has to look at our children
17 intently and determine whether or not you do want to
18 working force in the future, whether or not you do
19 really care for them, and to institute free lunch as
20 well as breakfast I think is the pathway to ensure
21 this. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I'm
24 sorry. I don't-- I just want to make it clear. The
25 Council has made free lunch and breakfast a priority

1
2 in our budget response. So, the question here is the
3 Administration who didn't baseline it. So, we are on
4 the same page when it comes to this. So, it's not
5 that the council doesn't believe in it. We do. It
6 was in our budget response.

7 CONSTANCE ASIEDU: And we'd like--

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
9 [interposing] The Mayor didn't baseline it.

10 CONSTANCE ASIEDU: And we'd just like you
11 to keep it a budget priority. We understand the
12 Administration does not agree with you. We just
13 don't want you to give up the fight for the children.

14 UNIDENTIFIED: And we thank you. We
15 really do. We really appreciate your support.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
17 you.

18 TIANHAO ZHANG: Good afternoon, Chair
19 Ferreras-Copeland and members of the New York City
20 Council Finance Committee. My name is Tianhao Zhang
21 and I'm senior at Francis Lewis High School in Fresh
22 Meadow, Queens. I'm here today to represent the
23 student advocacy group Teenergetic inspired by a
24 student protest at my school about lunch appeal. I
25 founded Teenergetic with my classmates and set as our

mission to launch universal free lunch, improve the appeal of school food and enhance the overall learning experience in New York City schools. With your supports, Teenergetic and other community-based organizations aim to make more progress this year to our universal free school lunch. At Francis Lewis High School, we have a significant population of immigrant students. Having immigrated to this country with my family four years ago, I witnessed firsthand some of my friends who are hesitatn about filling out school lunch forms. They will say it's because their parents are unwilling to reveal certain information out of concern of their immigration status. Additionally, in my school, many students' families barely miss the eligibility threshold to qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, and therefore struggle to pay for their children's meals. What this means for many students is choosing between food or a review book. Unfortunately, most students will choose to pay for the latter, a decision that affects their health and academic progress. This situation's not limited to my school. In fact, the lack of universal school lunch leads to problems throughout New York City in many different forms

1 depending on the school. By implementing universal
2 school lunch, the two aforementioned problems can be
3 immediately and effectively addressed. While the City
4 tried to remedy the crisis in our school food system
5 with initiatives in elementary and middle schools,
6 high school students continue to be left out of this
7 critical conversation. That's why I'm here today.
8 I'm here to ask the City Council to continue to make
9 universal free lunch a priority. To Chair Ferreras-
10 Copeland and the fellow members of the Finance
11 Committee, I thank you for your support and hope for
12 you continue to be strong champions of this issue.
13 All students should be guaranteed full access to
14 school lunch regardless of individual family
15 situations so that every student can become very--
16 become more productive in their educational
17 endeavors. Thank you.

18 KRISTINA ERSKINE: Hello. My name is
19 Kristina Erskine and I'm Co-Founder of the Bushwick
20 Campus Youth Food Policy Council, and I'm also a
21 youth organizer for community food advocates. I
22 began advocating for universal free school lunch in
23 my senior year of high school. Now, as a sophomore
24 in college, I still know what New York City public
25

schools are really like because I work with the students who are in these lunch rooms every day. On behalf of the youth I work with and all New York City public school students, I would like to highlight the fact that along with our written testimony, we are submitting a student letter. We would all like to thank the City Council for championing universal free school lunch and making it one of your top priorities in the Fiscal Year 2017 Budget. We want you to know that we cannot get this done without you. I urge you to read the student letter to find out how much your support means to all of these students. Many graduating high school seniors want this to be their legacy, and we need you to keep championing and fighting for all New York City public school students. Although this could not be my legacy in high school, many of the current high school seniors who have been fighting for years, still have a chance to see this happen for their younger siblings and generations to come. Attached to the student letter, you will see that 14 citywide youth groups who are active supporters of the universal free school lunch initiative stand behind all New York City public school students in asking you, our City Council

Members, to keep fighting to make this crucial change this budget session. Thank you for your time.

NATASHA RODRIGUEZ: Hi. My name is Natasha Rodriguez. I attend the Alexis [sic] Day [sic] Academy. I'm in sixth grade and 11 years old. I also attend the Children's Aid Society East Harlem Center Free Justice Afterschool program. First I would like to thank the Finance Committee and Chair Ferreras-Copeland who have been supporting this campaign. It means a lot to us. I am here today to thank the City Council for supporting the expansion of universal free school lunch, and to ask that they continue to fight to make universal free school lunch a reality. There are many kids my age who are stigmatized from being bullied because they have free school lunch but their peers don't. Universal free school lunch will help eliminating bullying in our lunch rooms. For example, if all students have free school lunch, nobody could judge anyone for having the "free-free." The "free-free" is a term used when people are bullied for having free school lunch. Somebody who is being bullied tends not to eat their lunch, what might be their only meal for the day. I know that when I eat lunch, I learn more. Students

who don't each lunch are not able to focus because they are focusing on their stomachs. So, I hope you continue to support and fight for free universal school lunch. Thank you.

AMINA: Good afternoon. My name is Amina [sp?], and I am in the 12th grade at the Academy of Urban Planning in Bushwick, Brooklyn. Thank you, Chair Copeland and the Finance Committee also, for your continued support on the universal free school lunch. And as a student who has been fighting for this issue for almost three years now, I am also here to urge the City Council to continue their positive support to expand the program. We need you to keep fighting for us. Imagine someone who has been trying to stay unseen for the longest time in a game of hide-n-seek. You may be asking, "Who is this person and why are they hiding?" This scenario I am talking about is not just a hypothetical one. It is a reality that plays out in school cafeterias throughout New York City. This person tries their best to not show any evidence at all of their hiding area. You may be asking, "Why exactly are they hiding?" The answer is because they really don't want to be seen by other members of the game. You

may also ask yourself, "Why not?" And the answer to that is because if this does happen, they lose. In the case of school lunch, many students play this exact game of hiding and wanting to be unseen. Why do students not want to be seen on the lunch line? Because of the fear of getting caught, but why? Many reasons to answer that. Let's go to the main points. Primarily, it is the social class system that is reinforced by the school lunch process. Secondly, stigma and bullying come in place. All over the world, the motto is to treat people the way you want to be treated. Well, this motto actually does not exist in our school cafeterias. Name callings, put downs, bullying, labels, etcetera happen. Can you believe that is actually happens because of school lunch? People are ashamed to get up and get lunch. But what if they're hungry? What if that lunch is the only meal for the entire day? What if their parents don't have the money to give them to buy lunch, then what? The answer is obvious. They are hungry and stay hungry for the entire day until hopefully they go home and eat something. The reason why students do not want to get on line for lunch is because they are afraid of getting caught eating what

our world knows now as "free-free." Getting labeled or being bullied for or being a "free-free" eater is like getting labeled and outcast, and being an outcast schools without universal free school lunch means that everybody knows who you are in a very, very bad way. This is not what the Department of Education is aiming for, but this is what happens in school cafeterias, and students should have the resources and nourishments they need to reach their potential. And as a graduating senior of 2016, I really want to make sure that my years of fighting for universal free school lunch will alleviate and hopefully banish the "free-free" stigma once and for all. We needed to continue--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] I'm sorry that I have to cut you off, but thank you very much for your testimony, and I saw that you tried to read it as fast as you possibly could at the end. I appreciate all of you coming to testify. This is very important for the public, and then you can just come up on the next.

UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you.

DI GREEMAN: So, thank you to the City Council for giving us the opportunity to testify and also for all of your support. My name is Di Greeman [sp?]. I'm the President of the District 15 Presidents Council. District 15 is located in Brooklyn and runs from Carroll Garden to Sunset Park, includes the neighborhood of Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, Boreum Hill [sp?], and Red Hook. It's a very economically diverse district. It's almost too obvious to say this, but nutrition is crucial to the ability of children to learn. Kids cannot focus if they're hungry, and in my opinion, all of the other amazing education initiatives we have in the City don't really matter if the basic need for food is not met. It's hard to focus. Children will not be able to fully take advantage of them if they are instead thinking about how hungry they are. I really believe it's a moral imperative in this great city and country that we do everything we can to ensure that children are well fed. The universal free lunch program will be a big step forward in this goal. District 15, as I mentioned before, is a diverse district with many different income levels and races represented in our schools. We in District 15 are

trying very hard to make sure the segregation in our schools is reduced as much as possible, and effort that still has a long way to go. The one place that we can make sure that children feel equal is in the lunch room, just like we strive very hard to do in the classrooms. When it is obvious to the children that certain people do not have to pay for lunch, this by design sets up an unequal system in the cafeteria that divides children by income. It is hard in the school where there are all income levels, like many of the District 15 schools. For the children who are entitled to free lunch to realize that they are different than the other kids who buy lunch. It makes them feel bad, and there is no place for that in schools. Earlier today I was actually at a celebration of schools who are participating in the ADL's No Place for Hate initiative, and the School Chancellor Carmen Farina was the keynote speaker. She said something which I keep thinking about today, "Lunchrooms are the one place where children should never be divided along any category." Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could eliminate the differences children feel based on their parent's income levels? And if we start this effort in kindergarten with

1
2 young children who have not yet formed negative
3 impressions, eating school lunch will become a normal
4 part of the culture of the school day, and I think
5 this is a worthy goal. Thank you.

6 LIZ ACCLES: Hi, my name is Liz Accles
7 with Community Food Advocates, and thank you for the
8 opportunity to testify, Madam Chair and members of
9 the Committee. I'm just going to be very short. I
10 handed a big packet of information that shows the
11 breadth of support that we have, and we thank you,
12 and I just want to say first and foremost we're
13 counting on the Council to make this happen this
14 year, and we hope as the negotiations move on that it
15 will. Two very quick points. Ninety-two percent of
16 school lunch costs are covered by the federal and
17 state government. For just an additional 8.75
18 million, really a very modest amount of money, we
19 could reach all students in the City. We find it
20 puzzling, as I know the Council does, that the
21 Administration's response and hesitation to support
22 expansion and kind of a set-up of a catch-22. We
23 think the initial numbers were perfectly acceptable
24 at over six percent, and that's with virtually no
25 promotion by the Department of Education. So, we--

the idea of relying on an increased participation for a reason to expand while not doing anything, but very little by DOE's own admission, to promote the program is by definition confusing and self-limiting. So, we again thank you for listening to all of us, and we thank you for your leadership. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you very much. Thank you to this panel. Greatly appreciated. We're going to call up the next panel.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: This panel will be Alexis Posey, Patricia Restrepo Simpkins [sic], Tammy Yuen, Suki Tarataports [sp?], Karen Jamie [sp?], Mac Chiulli, and Heidi Siegfried. The panel after this one will be Janet Poppendieck, Max Hadler [sp?], Georgianna Glose, Maria Greco [sp?], Aimedia Badamosi [sp?], Ron Prowell [sp?], and Peter Quinones.

ALEXIS POSEY: Hi, good afternoon. My name is Alexis Posey and I'm the Senior Analyst for Health at the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies. FPWA would like to thank Chairman Ferreras-Copeland and member of the New York City Council for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Access Health NYC Initiative, an initiative that improves access in health coverage to

all New Yorkers. FPWA would like to thank the New York City Council for the inclusion of the Access Health NYC Initiative in the FY 16 budget. Since that time, the initiative has been greatly successful in connecting New York City residents with education and resources needed to obtain health insurance and quality healthcare. In the five months since the awardees received initiative funding, 126 trainings and workshops have been held across the City, 5,926 individuals have been reached through trainings, workshops, community events, and individual outreach. Three hundred and twenty-two thousand individuals have been reached through ethnic media readership and viewership. Based on these results, FPWA-- excuse me, FPWA along with the People's Budget Coalition, recommends that the City Council enhance the Access Health Initiative to five million in FY 17. In year one, the Access Health Initiative has supported 12 CBO's and 150 service providers in connecting immigrant communities to healthcare. The Access Health NYC initiative has provided multiple high-level trainings around cultural competency, homelessness as a barrier to healthcare, and language access. Enhanced funding for Access Health NYC will

1 provide the needed financial support and
2 opportunities for capacity building in CBO's across
3 the City to better perform these tasks. Also, the
4 proposed enhancement will allow for the continued
5 work of the 12 Fund organizations as well as
6 additional CBO's which will be selected through a
7 request for proposals process to ensure transparency
8 in reform program development. With that, we hope to
9 expand in year two, expand the initiative beyond
10 immigrant communities and focus also on people living
11 with HIV and AIDS, people who identify as LGBTQ,
12 people who are formerly incarcerated, homeless, speak
13 English as a second language, and other barriers to
14 healthcare. Thank you.

16 HEIDI SIEGFRIED: Hi. I'm Heidi
17 Siegfried. I'm the Health Policy Director at Center
18 for Independence of the Disabled in New York, and we
19 are members of the People's Budget Coalition, and I
20 will just add, I'm also on the Board of Hunger Action
21 Network of New York State, and so I know that
22 Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Poughkeepsie, they all
23 over universal free school lunch. Time for New York
24 to join. But I'm actually here to support the
25 People's Budget Coalition priorities and particularly

1 Access Health NYC. We were involved with the effort,
2 and during the first year in a limited capacity,
3 because what we're looking for here is to do-- Center
4 for Independence of the Disabled of New York is a
5 cross-disability organization and represents people
6 with all kinds of disabilities, hearing, seeing,
7 thinking, feeling, walking, climbing, talking,
8 running. People don't realize that the disability
9 prevalence in New York City is 10 percent in just
10 about all boroughs, except in the Bronx where it's 14
11 percent, because people with disabilities have a 36
12 percent poverty rate. So, that's why they live in
13 the Bronx. So, and people with disabilities are also
14 a health disparities population and experience
15 discrimination in the healthcare system. So, what we
16 did in our limited capacity with Access Health NYC is
17 try to get the current community-based organizations
18 to learn a little bit in their training about what
19 the prevalence is, why it's important to address
20 people with disabilities and also the thing that
21 Anthony mentioned which is most important is to help
22 people know their rights when they're using the
23 healthcare system. And so we would like to see it
24 expanded in the second year so that we can have a
25

larger focus on these other populations, as it was just said, homeless people, people with disabilities, LGBT people, and really reach people who are experiencing discrimination in the healthcare system.

KAREN JAMIE: Good afternoon. My name is Karen Jamie, and I am a case worker at HANAC. I have been assisting in the development of the program Health Access New York City for the past five months, more or less. I'm here to request the Council to include five million dollars for Access Health New York City in the budget. This funding has enabled us to create literacy workshops in which we explain about Medicaid, Medicare, Obama plan, alternatives at the extended marketplace, and how to use health insurance. We have also advocated for clients in which cases limited English proficiency is an obstacle. We have also-- we have a Facebook page, which, you know, we have 2,000 viewers, and we also plan on taking the NYSOH assistors training in order to become navigators in order to give more help to people that need health insurance. This effort enables us to reduce the cost in family insurance. One example, we had a client that had an income of a thousand dollars a month and was paying 300 dollars

1 for Obamacare plan. We contacted the insurance
2 company, and after we explained the issue, the client
3 is now enrolled with her two kids in a family plan
4 and paying only 15 dollars a month. This reflects
5 3,000 dollar savings in one year. We have seen many
6 cases in where we can help people that really aren't,
7 you know-- they don't really know this-- they don't
8 speak their language or they have other issues, and
9 so we're here to help them. By increasing the
10 funding we will have more resources and attract more
11 attendees to our workshops, which means New Yorkers
12 may have better access to hospital annual check-ups,
13 insurance coverage and fair billing when they need to
14 receive medical attention. Thank you very much.

16 MAC CHIULLI: Thank you for this
17 opportunity. My name is Mac Chiulli, and I'm here
18 representing Big Apple Greeter, perhaps a lesser-
19 known program in this city despite the fact that it
20 will celebrate its 25th anniversary next year. While
21 our target audience is visitors to New York City, the
22 foundation and the backbone of the program is New
23 Yorkers, older New Yorkers. Since 1992, Big Apple
24 Greeter's mission has been two-fold, to enrich the
25 New York visitor experience by connecting visitors

with knowledgeable and enthusiastic volunteers while at the same time enriching the lives of mostly elderly New Yorkers from all boroughs who keep active and engaged in the community while providing greets, which are free, unscripted meetings between a real New Yorker and one party of visitors and promotes New York City as a friendly, inviting and manageable place. While New Yorkers may not know about us, the rest of the world certainly does. We've earned Certificates of Excellence Awards from Trip Advisor. We have over 7,000 followers on Facebook and have spawned the Global Greeter Network which now has similar programs established in over 100 other cities worldwide. Check it out the next time you travel. To-date, we have met well over 135 visitors from all 50 states and 120 countries. We provide greets in many foreign languages as well as for visitors with various accessibility needs. Our greeter base comes in all shapes and sizes, former CEO's, Wall Street Execs, teachers and Staten Island ferry deckhands. Many are well into their 80's and still fit as a fiddle, while others keep infirmities at bay with the physical, mental and social activity of a Big Apple Greeter. Even with about 350 active volunteers, the

1 demand for greets far outstrips our supply, and we're
2 able to meet less than half the number of greets
3 requested, which is frustrating and disappointing
4 both for us and for visitors. Increased funding will
5 allow us to expand the program with outreach to
6 senior centers and other appropriate venues. New
7 greeters will be trained, learn to use our technology
8 and will participate in activities which [sic]
9 educate and expand their knowledge. We sincerely
10 hope that those involved with the Healthy Aging
11 Initiative will see the value of the proven Big Apple
12 Greeter model and help us with our small request to
13 continue to lead this cross-cultural senior-centric
14 initiative for the next 25 years and beyond. Thank
15 you.

17 PATRICIA RESTREPO CINCO: Good
18 afternoon, Council Members. My name's Patricia
19 Restrepo Cinco [sp?]. I am the Navigator at Voces
20 Latinas in Jackson Heights, Queens, New York. The
21 Access Health New York City program has provided us
22 the opportunity to educate and assist our Latino
23 community in the health insurance enrollment process.
24 Our services are the key for clients to navigate
25 assistance and provide guidance in their language.

Most our clients are monolingual Spanish-speakers who are also not proficient with computers and the healthy system. Our Latino population has had problems understanding the marketplace and the health plan terminologies for which as a navigator I think it's important the relatively [sic] of navigators proficient in different languages. At Voces Latinas we complete 50 to 60 applications per month, of which 90 percent are immigrant Latinos in the country under 10 years, fearful of the system and they believe they don't qualify for health plans. The Access Health New York City program assists these clients to obtain low to no-cost insurance and prevents them from going to brokers who are not following the guidelines and misleading the community. In addition to enrolling clients in insurance, we at Voces Latinas take the time to assist the clients in choosing primary care. As culturally competent agency we understand how confusing this can be and the barriers faced by our community. Lastly, through the assisted service, we have been able to identify other needs like HIV-positive individuals needing treatment and care, domestic violence victims' individuals is need in our legal services, benefits and entitlements of which

Voces Latina has been able to assist. The Access Health New York City program has been extremely beneficial to our community and connecting to healthcare. We ask the program to continue in order to reach many others. Thank you for your time.

TAMMY YUEN: Hi, good afternoon, Council Member. My name is Tammy Yuen, and I'm a healthcare navigator at the YWCA of Queens. I'm here today to urge the Council to include five million for Access to Health New York City in the Fiscal Year 2017 budget. This fund has enabled us to support our outreach program and help people to understand Affordable Care Act and assist the immigrants to enroll to the New York State of Health Marketplace so that everybody can take advantage of the coverage and have access. The Access Health New York City needs more funds to support the network community-based organizations. For this reason we are asking for five million for the Access Health New York City so that more organizations could get the words out to the communities they serve. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you very much for your testimony, and thank you for this

panel. I know it was varied, but it's important that we had you all come testify today. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel is Peter Quinones, Ron Prowel [sp?], Ahu Mida Badamosi [sp?], Maria Greco, Georgianna Glose, Janet Poppendieck, and Rachel Sabella. The panel following this one will be Randi Levine, Advocates for Children, James James, Parent Action Committee, DeJohn Jones, Parent Action Committee, Joseph Ferdinand, Parent Action Committee, Anne Marie McFadyen, Restorative Justice Initiative, Jazmine Dugall, Teachers Unite, and Lucille Rivin, Teachers Unite.

LAURA JEAN HAWKINS: Hello? Hi. Hello, Council Members. Thank you for this opportunity. My name is Laura Jean Hawkins and I'm representing Peter Quinones today and the Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation. First, I would like to thank the Council Members for your sustained support of the Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation. With your support, Sports and Arts has become the largest school-based provider of sports, arts, recreational, and academic programming in New York City. I'm here today to ask

for your continued support of Sports and Arts Citywide Council Funding Initiative. In FY 16, Sports and Arts received one million dollars from the Council for which we're very grateful. This year, we have put in a funding request of 1.5 million. This additional funding will enable Sports and Arts to recoup some of the money it lost eight years ago when Sports and Arts used to receive 2.1 million dollars. It will also enable Sports and Arts to keep up with rising DOH and DOE permit and security fees, equipment, personnel and other costs. It will also, and more importantly, enable us to serve more young people in every Council District throughout the five boroughs. With council funding, Sports and Arts runs its flagship Council Sports and Arts Summer Camps which provide free summer camp experiences for children throughout the five boroughs. They also use council funding to provide enrichment during the school year. Council funding is leveraged against other sources and extend the school day and year into Saturday and weekend programming as well as programming when schools are in recess. Each of our summer programs provides students with instruction by top specialists in sports and arts and other

1 recreational activities. It also provides special
2 trips and events for these young people. Sports and
3 Arts provides the children of New York City with the
4 same quality programming that more affluent families
5 can afford to provide for their children. So with
6 that, I thank you and ask for your continued support.
7

8 JAN POPPENDIECK: Good evening Council
9 Members. I'm Jan Poppendieck and I'm here on behalf
10 of the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute located at
11 the CUNY School of Public Health and Health Policy,
12 and at the Public Health School we recognize that
13 access to healthy food at school is a public health
14 matter. So, like the testifiers from Lunch for
15 Learning, we want to thank the Council for its
16 leadership on promoting the conversion to this far
17 more sensible approach to school lunch, and I'm
18 hoping to provide you with a little additional
19 ammunition to use in your negotiations with the
20 Administration. So, we hope you'll pass this along
21 to any members of the budget negotiating team.
22 Ending the School Food Means Test, converting to
23 universal free will benefit all our school children
24 because it will permit the integration of the
25 cafeteria with the classroom. It will allow us at

1 last to really build health programming around the
2 school lunch, but it will especially benefit three
3 groups of children. You heard from the Lunch for
4 Learning students about the issue of stigma and
5 bullying, so we can be sure that it will help those
6 whose lunch experience is now being undermined, a
7 meal seasoned with shame, or who are being deterred
8 from participating by the fear of teasing and
9 bullying. It will clearly make the lunch more
10 effectively accessible to children from immigrant
11 families whose parents have been afraid to fill out
12 the application for fear of being regarded as a
13 public charge or out of a general fear of providing
14 information to the authorities. I want to focus on
15 the third group who are the thousands of students in
16 New York City public schools who-- oops-- are not
17 eligible for-- on an income basis, but who are in
18 need. And cost of living in New York is far higher
19 than the national average, and based on that the
20 income thresholds that work in some other communities
21 don't work well in New York. There's more in the
22 written testimony, you'll look in there.

24 GEORGIANNA GLOSE: Good evening. I want
25 to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. I

am Georgianna Glose, the Executive Director of Fort Greene Strategic Neighborhood Action Partnership, and today I am representing The People's Budget Coalition as well as the Brooklyn Coalition for Health Equity for Women and Families. We want to highlight three priorities of our coalition, Access NYC, Health Plus Hospitals funding, and the funding for our Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative. As you've heard from other speakers, Access NYC was able to start last year with an initial investment of City Council funding. We seek to enhance that funding to five million dollars to provide outreach and public education to communities that have been left out of the marketplace. Our target populations include people with disabilities, LGBTQ communities, medically underserved, uninsured, non-English, or limited-proficient English communities throughout the City. Additional support for Health Plus Hospitals in the amount of 337 million dollars to provide healthcare for the most needy and vulnerable members of our communities are needed. Health & Hospitals doesn't receive money for indigent care, and they end up being the largest single provider of that kind of care to the uninsured. So we believe that they need

1 that support. The Infant Mortality Reduction
2 Initiative is something that's very dear to me. I've
3 been doing it for the last 15 years. We're asking
4 the Council for one million set aside and 500,000 for
5 our borough-wide coalition because the RFP sent out
6 by Public Health Solutions disadvantaged many of our
7 agencies, and like mine, we were only funded at one-
8 third of what we need.

10 MARIA GRIECO: Good evening. I want to
11 thank you for this opportunity for being able to come
12 here today and to testify. My name is Maria Greco.
13 I am the Director of the College Discovery Program at
14 Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College in the
15 Bronx. In addition, I'm Co-Chair of the SEEK and CD
16 Directors Council. And if you're familiar with
17 College Discovery, it was the very first opportunity
18 program that was enacted 50 years ago and we still
19 exist today. We're funded through the City of New
20 York. The money comes through CUNY from the City,
21 and our purpose here today is to request additional
22 funding and a little bit under two million dollars to
23 pay for metro cards. Why? We have a competitor who
24 is named ASAP that is modeled after the CD program
25 that the City has provided a lot of funds to and

resources that we don't have in metro cards. So, our purpose is to hopefully gain more funding so we don't lose students, and our retention and graduation rates, we don't want to them to go down, okay, because we don't have metro cards and that's really crucial to the students getting back and forth to work. And basically, that's it. It's short. CD provides academic support services to under-representative groups and we've been around 50 years and we're hoping for your support. Thank you. Okay, you're next.

ROWAN PROWEL: This is pretty cool. Alright. Can you guys hear me? Alright it's-- Alright. My name is Rowan Prowel [sp?]. I'm 20 years old. I attend Kingsborough Community College and I'm part of this College Discovery Program. Fourteen is the number of classes I failed when I was in high school. Three is the number of times I've been suspended, and 12 is the number of times of physical altercations I've been in before I attended college, and those 12 physical altercations were in one year. College Discovery was a clean slate for me. What it did was provide me with tutoring, provided me financially to help me pay for my books.

1 With College Discovery it's a very family-oriented
2 environment. You know, I'm always in that school
3 from day and day out. And ASAP, like she was saying,
4 ASAP is-- yeah, I got a problem with ASAP. I don't
5 like it. Metro cards, I need it to be more
6 convenient for me. I'm coming from a black and
7 Hispanic low income family, so as a minority it's
8 pretty hard, you know, to travel back and forth to
9 school. It takes a little bit over an hour for me.
10 You know, in terms of commuting, you know, Metro
11 cards would be a big help for me to basically in my
12 education. And that's all I got to say.

14 ARAMIDI BADAMORSI: Good afternoon
15 Council. Good afternoon, Council Members. My name is
16 Aramidi Badamorsi [sp?] I'm here to testify on behalf
17 of the College Discovery Program. As a student from
18 an international country coming into college in the
19 United States and New York, the College Discovery
20 Program has made my transition into college and
21 school, which is a different schooling system for me,
22 as easy as possible. Coming into college I didn't
23 think I could go through college as easily as I have.
24 Also, coming from a low income family, the College
25 Discovery Program has provided additional funds

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Government Relations at Food Bank for New York City.

First, I want to thank the Council for the opportunity to testify today, but more importantly than that, I want to thank the Council for continuing to prioritize anti-hunger programs. We are grateful for your support of the 22 million dollars for the Emergency Food Assistance Program and to the 48 Council Members that signed onto a letter to the Mayor demanding 22 million in baseline dollars.

Thank you for that. You have my written testimony.

It's got a lot of facts and figures. It has an updated meal gap map. We always like to make sure you have that. I want to touch on two major points today. The first is-- it's come up a few times and I think it's important to mention. We are in full agreement that SNAP is the first line of defense against hunger. We believe that every eligible New Yorker should sign up for SNAP. We have a longstanding partnership with HRA and are grateful for the Administration's commitment to this program.

However, when the federal government cuts programs, it leaves gaps at the local level, and that's what food pantries and soup kitchens are experiencing right now. We need an increase in funding to EFAP

not just because of the snap cuts. Before SNAP cuts, 60 percent of New Yorkers at food pantries and soup kitchens still relied on SNAP. It relied on SNAP. Before the SNAP cuts, half of agencies of food pantries and soup kitchens experienced food shortages. So, even before the cuts, we experienced - there was great unmet need, and that just made it worse. We're now well past the time for the City to respond. Included in my testimony is a letter signed by 207 agencies that operate approximately 285 food pantries and soup kitchens across the City. They are adding their name to the list of people that want to show their support and the absolute need for this increase in funding. I want to be mindful of time. Thank you again, and we are here to work with you on all of these issues. So, thank you to the Council.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel is Lucille Rivin, Jazmine Dugall, Anne Marie McFadyen [sp?], Joseph Ferdinand, DeJohn Jones, James James, and Randi Levine. The panel after that one will be Victor Gidarisingh, Robin Vitale, Stephanie Gendell, Catherine Hughes, and Harvey Epstein, and Sharese Crouther.

RANDI LEVINE: Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Randi Levine and I'm the Policy Coordinator at Advocates for Children of New York. For more than 40 years, Advocates for Children has worked to ensure a high-quality education focusing on students from low-income backgrounds. We're pleased that the Executive Budget invests in a number of important education initiatives, including an expansion of Career and Technical Education programs, and increase in funding for SESIS, the DOE's special education system. I want to focus my limited time today on a few issues that we urge you to prioritize as you negotiate the budget process concludes. First, we ask you to work with the Administration to increase and baseline funding for the Department of Education social workers for students living in shelters. Our written testimony has information about the abysmal outcomes that students experiencing homelessness experience. We thanked Mayor de Blasio for including 10.3 million dollars in the Executive Budget to support students living in shelters, including 3.6 million dollars to hire 33 DOE social workers to work in the 43 schools with the highest populations of students living in

shelters. Unfortunately, this funding is one year funding that is not baselined, and 33 is not sufficient. So we urge you to work with the Administration to ensure that the final budget includes funding to hire at least 66 social workers to work with students living in shelters and to baseline this funding. Second, we urge you to increase funding for the Restorative Justice initiative and to include at least five million dollars in the final budget for this initiative. I think you'll hear more about it on this panel. Third, we urge you to work on increasing funding for Early Childhood Education and afterschool programs and have a series of recommendations listed in our testimony. Finally, we note that we are deeply grateful for the City Council's ongoing support of Advocates for Children's Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline which has allowed us to help thousands of families navigate the education system each year. We urge you to continue your support for this program as it provides assistance to parents who have no place else to turn. Thank you for your leadership and support.

DEJOHN JONES: Hi, good afternoon. Thank you for having us. My name is DeJohn Jones. I'm a Parent Leader at New Settlement Apartments Parent Action Committee. We'd like to thank you for the 2.4 million dollars you've invested in Restorative Justice, the initiative for 20 of our schools across the City. Thank you for understanding the urgency and how crucial Restorative Justice is to our communities, understanding that Restorative Justice is a healthy alternative to harsh punitive punishments. During the 2014/2015 school year, there were over 44,636 suspensions and 775 arrests and summonses issued to students. Black students comprise 28 percent of student enrollment, yet made up 61 percent of the arrests. Meanwhile white students' enrollment comprised 15 percent of students, but made up five percent of arrests. Excuse me. This demonstrates how students of color are disproportionately impacted by punitive discipline. Also, in 2014/2015, students with IEP's were suspended 2.6 times as frequently as students without IEP's. As you can see here, many of our school environments lack the ability to deal with growing students and communities in a healthy, non-

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1 in 2009, but I was a product of the New York City
2 public school system. I was produced by the school
3 system at a time when, you know, the way we dealt
4 with discipline was a more traditional model.
5 Restorative practices are about changing the way
6 schools address discipline in the schools. It's about
7 repealing B21, the Disciplinary Code, and ultimately
8 helping schools come up with new methods to deal with
9 it. Back in the day when students were suspended
10 from school, the idea you would send them home and
11 parents would be there to monitor and ridicule what
12 the child had done in school. Nowadays there are a
13 lot of parents who are working outside of the school,
14 working outside of the home, so when you suspend a
15 child, you're creating the situation where they're
16 not learning and they're probably getting into more
17 violence than they would be if they were in the
18 school. So, restorative practices are opportunity to
19 actually to create teachable moments where students
20 can learn that whatever they did wrong in the school
21 is something that we don't appreciate, and we want to
22 encourage them to understand. We know they have
23 issues outside of the school that may be impacting
24 why they're acting out, but it's about giving them an
25

1 opportunity to reflect and learn about what's going
2 on. We want to thank the City Council and the
3 Finance Committee for the 2.4 million dollars you
4 funded last year, but we're requesting that you do
5 another additional 2.6 million dollars because while
6 that funding led to 15 schools that are going to be
7 working on restorative practices, the Office of
8 School Youth Development sent out applications to
9 over 50 schools, and there were 115 schools that were
10 identified that needed these problems. So, that
11 additional funding will allow us to select more
12 schools, and we hope we can create a model where this
13 will lead to greater practices and hopefully change
14 the way school climate works. Thank you.

16 JAZMINE DUGALL: Thank you, Council
17 Members, for the funding the Restorative Justice
18 Initiative. Hello, my name is Jazmine Dugall.
19 Academy for Young Writers in East New York, Brooklyn
20 is one of 15 schools selected to receive funding
21 through the City Council's Restorative Justice
22 Initiative to hire a Restorative Justice Coordinator.
23 Through the leadership program, I have been hired as
24 a Restorative Justice Coordinator to build capacity
25 teaching students, staff and admin the Restorative

Circles, about them and to shift the school from punitive discipline to a restorative culture. I'm here today to urge you to fund the second year of this Restorative Initiative. We're funding the initiative for Fiscal 2017. The sustainability will ensure the sustainability of our hard work and will allow the initiative to expand the number of participating schools. We'd like this years' schools to be funded the same 2.4 million during the fiscal year and for an additional 2.6 to expand the number of schools participating. As the RJ coordinator this year, I've been able to recruit an RJ team of 15, teachers, guidance, admin, and deans. We're leading the way to make sure that the shift in tone and culture continues. We've started an advisory schedule that incorporated Circles one to two times per week throughout the six through 12th grade. We appointed three students in the high school to lead mediations and community circles. Today, at third period, Kyro [sp?] and Kreshawn [sp?], 10th and 11th graders led a circle with an eighth grade class that had lost inspiration to finish the year strongly. The students are leading students in discussions about the importance of self-reflection, setting

goals and creating good habits for their futures.

I've led five professional development workshops, and

I've facilitated several-- close to 100 circles.

Students that we are doing repair and community

service with are taking responsibility for the harm

that they've caused and are benefitting from this.

With the school safety budget nearing a half a

billion dollars, the Administration must divest from

police in schools and invest in what really makes

schools safer for students and families. Thank you.

LUCILLE RIVIN: Hello. Thank you for

hearing us as we advocate for more funding for

Restorative Justice today. My name is Lucille

Rivin. I am the Director of Curriculum Design for

the Leadership program. We are a community-based

organization working with the Coalition of-- for

Teachers Unite and Dignity in Schools to advocate for

this. I am also working as a Restorative Justice

Coordinator in one of the 15 pilot schools. I'm the

Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School in the Bronx.

So far we have only been in there a few months, and

we are already seeing results. As part of the -- I

can give a few incidents that have changed because of

Restorative Justice practices in the school. In one

case, two young men who nearly got into a physical altercation in the cafeteria. By having a restorative chat with each of them first and bringing them together with the Dean and myself in the Restorative Justice room, they were able very easily to each take responsibility for the role that they played to apologize to the other. One was-- one young man very movingly was self-reflective enough to say, "I should have been more sensitive to the fact that this other young man was not really fooling around the same way that my group was, and I should have been more sensitive to that, and that's on me." And they shook hands and apologized to each other, and there have been no more negative incidents. They didn't have to get suspended. They didn't have to lose anything but a half hour of school for this. In another incident, two young girls who were involved in post-- negative postings online finally came to terms and stopped doing that and agreed to be respectful to each other. We really urge a change from the police in schools funding to the funding for Restorative Justice to move away from the school to prison pipeline, which affects minority students in

far greater numbers than white students. I thank you so much for your attention.

ANNE MARIE MCFADYEN: My name is Anne Marie McFadyen, and I am also here to support the continuation of the funding for the Restorative Justice Initiative. I am a Restorative Justice Coordinator working at a public high school in Harlem, and my hope is the Council will continue to support our efforts to halt the school to prison pipeline, because by embedding restorative practices in our schools, that's the way in which we'll ensure that we'll hold onto our kids. Four months into the Restorative Justice Project there are very many indicators that the school is moving away from a punitive and exclusionary response to discipline, and this is has had a really big impact on building a positive school culture. The school hallways are the evidence base for our early success. When the Restorative Justice Project commenced in February of this year, the hallways were noisy, chaotic, messy, and often very, very violent. Now they are empty, but you know what? They're empty in a really good way. Students are in classrooms. Kick-outs are less common. Attendance is up, and incredibly, and I'm so

blown away by this. The students are asking not to be suspended, and suspension was actually their favorite flavor of discipline. Both staff and students are now turning to a much more restorative response to behavior, the behavior that when I arrived was so very disruptive in the hallways. So last week we engaged the students in a visioning exercise. They were asked to actually use blank building blocks to construct their ideal school. Bricks named-- the bricks that they named were called respect, calm, support, orderly, no drama, and positive vibe. These were the ones that were chosen to build their dream school, but one brick said, "Eliminate the kids that are crazy and keep the ones that are calm and cool." These were the students that were wanting to eliminate each other. So, clearly our restorative work is not done. We need the Council to continue its support of the Restorative Justice Project. We need to show these kids we don't want or need to get rid of anyone. We want them all to stay, and what we know from research is--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] I'm so sorry, I have to cut you off.

1
2 ANNE MARIE MCFADYEN: One more sentence?
3 One more sentence?

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I need you
5 to really wrap it up.

6 ANNE MARIE MCFADYEN: I'm done. And what
7 we know from research is that a restorative school
8 climate gets rid of the crazy, but guess what, it
9 keeps the kids.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
11 you.

12 JOSEPH FERDINAND: Okay. Good evening.
13 My name is Joseph. I am a parent leader with the New
14 Settlement Parent Action Committee. I am here today
15 to request an enhancement of the funding for the
16 Restorative Justice Initiative. It is my duty as an
17 adult to love, guide and protect our young people so
18 that they can grow up and become responsible,
19 productive members of society and not go down the
20 road of jails, intuitions and death. One of the
21 simplest, most effective ways this could be done is
22 to fully support the Restorative Justice Initiative
23 which is used to build school community, resolve
24 issues, repair harm, build positive relationships,
25 and collectively develop core values. Too often,

1 young people are blamed for negative, destructive
2 behaviors, which they have inherited. Children learn
3 what they live. This initiative is personal to me,
4 because I know it works. If it is well funded it can
5 continue to save many young lives and allow them to
6 grow to their full potential. By granting five
7 million dollars to the Council Restorative Justice
8 Initiative for Fiscal Year 2017, we could transform
9 the school culture of discipline in New York City
10 schools from one that pushes students out of schools
11 to one focused on meeting the needs of our youth.
12 There isn't much more I could say on this subject
13 matter because a lot of it has already been said, but
14 I will say this; funding this initiative is a good
15 thing, and one of the greatest gives we can give our
16 children is love, and love is an action word. Thank
17 you.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you
20 very much. Thank you all for your testimony.
21 Restorative Justice is one of our key priorities, so
22 thank you for putting this on the record. We will now
23 call up the next panel.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel is
25 Sharese Crouther, Harvey Epstein, Catherine Hughes,

Stephanie Gendell, Robin Vitale, Victor Gidarisingh, and the panel following that one will be Carlyn Cowen [sp?], Rosa Consepcion, Miriam Mansdion [sp?], Niles French, Thomas Cheng [sp?], and Patrick Kennell.

SHARESE CROUTHER: Well, good evening, Madam Chair and other members of the City Council. My name is Sharese Crouther, and I'm the Strategic Partnership Specialist at the Center for Court Innovation. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am here to urge-- excuse me. I am here to urge the Council to support continued funding for the Center for Court Innovation and its groundbreaking efforts to improve public safety, promote and expand the use of community-based alternatives to incarceration, improve services for victims of crime, and increase equal access to justice for vulnerable New Yorkers. For nearly 20 years, the center has created more than 25 neighborhood projects in all five boroughs. We provide a wide range of diversion projects like Youth Court and Project Reset in our efforts to help youth avoid incarceration and the collateral consequences of justice involvement. City Council support has been invaluable to the success of the Center for Court Innovation helping us maintain

cooperation's and launch new initiatives on the demonstration projects throughout New York City. To continue these efforts, the Center for Court Innovation is seeking City Council's continued support for one million dollars for Fiscal Year 2017. The center works with victims of violence and crime by expanding highly specialized services for women, children and young men who are victims of trafficking, abuse, violent crime, and community violence. With continued Council support, the Center would expand these services adding capacity to existing sites across the City and piloting new initiatives in underserved communities. Additionally, Poverty Justice Solutions engages recent law school graduates in two-year fellowships with New York City Civil Legal Service providers. In the first six months of their placement from 2015 through March of this year, the fellows served close to 1,300 clients. With continued support of the Council, we can expand the program to help thousands more low income New Yorkers remain in their homes. Can I wrap up quickly? The Center is looking forward to continuing to work with the Council to improve public safety and services for victims, and I

1
2 appreciate the opportunity to speak today and answer
3 any questions you have. Thank you.

4 CATHERINE MCVAY HUGHES: Hello. Good
5 afternoon. My names is Catherine McVay Hughes. I'm
6 Chair of Manhattan Community Board One. I have a two
7 testimonies here. Unfortunately, Mark Apastinella
8 [sp?] a small business owner and Chair of the Support
9 Civic Center Committee could not be here, losing
10 three hours from his afternoon to testify. So I will
11 quickly summarize his statement. At the height of
12 seven feet, Community Board One experienced one of
13 the highest inundation levels in Manhattan during
14 Super Storm Sandy. Two people in our district
15 drowned, and we suffered extreme damage to
16 residential and commercial property, tunnels and
17 public transit, telecommunications and our electrical
18 grid. Folks lost their businesses, jobs and were
19 displaced from their homes for extended periods of
20 time. We are very concerned about the short term and
21 long term timeframe that the City is taking care for
22 our Manhattan tip. We remain largely unprotected
23 while we face an increasing potential for suffering
24 extreme weather events and subsequent damage. A
25 recent report suggests that the total rise of sea

could reach five or six feet by 2100. That's only 85 years from now. With the rise of sea exceeding a pace of a foot per decade by the middle of the 22nd Century. We want to thank the City for giving their leverage monies from the NDRC applications to Manhattan tip, but there's still a major shortfall. We're also very concerned that the community-based planning has not even begun. We've requested that there's a special taskforce set up for Community Board One because of our unique challenges down here and the unique financial needs. So currently in the budget there's no money for resiliency planning for CB1. On another item for transportation, representing Catherine Hughes' Community Board One, I wanted to continue on a major health and safety issue. As you know, this community has changed a lot in the last 15 years since September 11th. The street grid has not. We have not yet had comprehensive study. We're very concerned about emergency vehicles getting through when they need to. We have 90 major construction projects in Community Board One. Last year we had roughly 1,400 street activity permits, and an additional-- a recent survey said that we had 7,000 obstacles on our sidewalks.

So we're requesting in the budget funding for comprehensive transportation study. Thank you.

PATRICK KENNEL: Thank you, Madam Chair, Council Members. My name is Patrick Kannell, and while a member of Manhattan Community Board One and Chair of its Planning Committee, I'm also President of the Financial District Neighborhood Association which represents the exploding population of New York City's oldest neighborhood and which proudly counts Council Member Chin among our membership. The financial-- I'm here today asking for funding for the Department of Transportation to conduct studies and modeling for a managed street and sidewalk program. The Financial District is the fastest growing residential neighborhood in the entire City of New York, and quite possibly the entire nation with more than 70,000 New Yorkers calling FiDi home. In 2016 and 2017 alone, the next two years, more than 6,000 apartments are expected to come online, meaning an influx of more than 10,000 new residents in just the next two years alone, and that's unprecedented in our city. Gone are the days of the 5:00 p.m. ghost town. Financial District is now a full-service 24-hour community. As residents we now share our

neighborhood with a record number of tourists. Twenty-five million people have come to visit the 9/11 memorial alone. From a real estate, tourism and economic development perspective, the rebirth of FiDi has been a shining example of what New Yorkers can do, but from a transportation and street planning perspective, it's a total mess. The streets and sidewalks are crowded with obstacles too numerous to mention here. The problem is this, unlike anywhere else in the New York City, the old colonial street map provides narrow roads originally built for horse traffic. When there is a stoppage on any street or sidewalk in FiDi, it cascades through the entire neighborhood. Put simply, we need a managed street plan and sidewalk plan, and we need it now. So that's why we're here today, specifically to ask for inclusion in the budget of funding for the DOT to oversee studies and mobility modeling. That's all we're asking for is money for the studies for the development of a managed street program to help FiDi reclaim its neighborhood. Thank you.

ROBIN VITALE: Good afternoon. I'm Robin Vitale from the American Heart Association, and while the American Heart Association supports many

different initiatives including improving our pathways for those who bike and walk in our city streets, improving access to emergency response, and several of the initiatives that are already covered in either the Council's budget response or the Executive Budget proposal, I'm including Access Healthy NYC in improving access to healthy foods for our city schools and our most vulnerable populations. I wanted to address specifically a proposal found in the Executive Budget regarding the opportunity for students to be more physically active during the school day by improving physical education. For the good of the group, the Mayor has proposed nine million dollars to as we understand provide 150 new certified PE teachers. The American Heart Association as a member of the PHYS Ed for All Coalition, which is a large group of like-minded organizations, strongly supports this investment. However, we do have some questions about how the funding is going to be dispersed and implemented. Ultimately, we want to make sure that this funding and the funding for the teachers is sustainable. The investment that happened last year with the PE Works Initiative is fantastic, but it was built to be a

1 three-year initiative, and we do want to make sure
2 that these teachers, once they're in place and we do
3 have a quality PE program, is there for the long
4 term. We also want to make sure that the teachers
5 are being provided to schools that are struggling the
6 most. We want to make sure that PE programs that
7 either are not currently in existence or perhaps are
8 not quite meeting good quality standards that those
9 funds are being diverted to those schools in order to
10 meet the existing state laws for PE. And lastly, I
11 also want to just reiterate the comments from the
12 Borough President Gale Brewer really emphasizing the
13 need to improve the physical space in the capital
14 budget for gymnasiums and recreation yards, and
15 anything that the Council can do to make sure that
16 funding is devoted for those purposes we would
17 greatly appreciate.

18
19 STEPHANIE GENDELL: Good evening, I'm
20 Stephanie Gendell, the Associate Executive Director
21 for Policy and Advocacy at Citizens Committee for
22 Children. I could spend my whole two minutes
23 thanking the Council for your incredible support and
24 partnership this year, but then I won't get my key
25 asks on the record. So I'm going to do that instead,

1 but thank you. In the area of child welfare, while
2 there was a great number of investments, we were
3 disappointed that the Administration did not include
4 any funding for post-adoption services and continued
5 its cut to You Got to Believe, and we urge the
6 Council to address that. As for childcare, we know
7 they are in discussions about salary parody. Our
8 understanding is the proposal does not reach parody
9 and we're urging the Council to push the
10 Administration to add at least 18 million more to get
11 closer to parody. On the youth services, we are as
12 disappointed as you and beyond disappointed about the
13 summer camp issue. As you think about putting money
14 back in for summer camp, we hope this money can be
15 baselined so we do not have to go through this budget
16 dance again for summer camp next year and can
17 actually save the slots next year. Similarly, for
18 any additional summer-- any additional afterschool
19 programs that we add for elementary school students,
20 which is desperately needed, we need to make sure
21 summer camp is included. It never used to be a
22 question, but apparently it is now. Some additional
23 issues we support are increasing the number of MSW's
24 for homeless students, universal lunch, expanding

1 summer youth employment, restoring the funding for
2 mental health for children under five, since the
3 baseline funding is being used for a different
4 program, expanding emergency food to 22 million, and
5 then my testimony-- I got to do it really fast. My
6 testimony includes the full list of proposals from
7 the Administration that we support as well as
8 additional restorations that we'd like to see from
9 the Council. Thank you.

11 HARVEY EPSTEIN: Good afternoon,
12 Chairwoman Ferreras-Copeland and Council Members
13 Miller, Gibson, Chin, and Johnson. Thank you for
14 being here and staying to listen. My name is Harvey
15 Epstein. I'm from the Urban Justice Center. I'm
16 just here quickly to talk about two initiatives. One
17 is our legal services of the working poor, and many
18 of you members know it's been an initiative that's
19 been supported by the Council for over a decade. In
20 the realities of New Yorkers are that people who
21 can't afford to have access to a lawyer, even if
22 they're making more than 200 percent of poverty, and
23 the Mayor's been amazing about trying to get access
24 to lawyers to do eviction prevention cases, but it's
25 exclusively focused to people at 200 percent of

poverty. And we have people who have consumer issues, immigration issues, employment issues, public benefits, and there's no access to a free legal services lawyer, and even if they make 40,000 dollars for a family of our, they're beyond any income that's available. So legal services for the working poor is the only funding available in this city and that we know of in the country that provides free legal services population. The Council's been a champion of this. Hopefully, we'll-- we're seeking an increase. The coalition of five groups which is Housing Conservation Coordinators, Urban Justice, MFY Legal Services, NIMIC [sp?], and Campbell [sic] Legal Services got 1.5 million this year. Trying to get to two million and overall for the initiative would be 2.2 million. Another thing, I'm here also on behalf of Stabilizing NYC. Unfortunately, Salami Chester [sic] who was going to speak on our behalf couldn't stay, but it's a coalition of 16 organizations that's really trying to preserve New York and the character of our communities in saying landlords who are engaging in predatory equity around the City as Council Members know are really reducing the fabric of what New York is about. And without access to

1
2 organizers, with access to communities, we're going
3 to lose what our future will be. And Stabilizing NYC
4 got 1.25 million dollars last year. We're asking for
5 a large increase to 2.5 million. We're trying to add
6 members. We've gotten outreach from groups in Queens
7 as because Councilwoman Ferreras-Copeland knows, who
8 bene trying to do more work in Queens, and Council
9 Member Miller knows, and the reality is we need to do
10 more because we're losing. Even though, like a
11 crewman [sic] got arrested last week by the Attorney
12 General. He's not the only actor out there who's
13 harassing tenants out of New York. He got 400
14 tenants out, but there's a dozen behind them who are
15 doing the same thing, and without access to
16 organizers, lawyers can't defend this alone. We need
17 this funding to make it work. Thank you.

18 VICTOR GIDARISINGH: Good evening,
19 Council. Thank you for the opportunity to speak
20 today. My name is Victor Gidarisingh from Bronx
21 Health Reach. I address racial and ethnic
22 disparities in Bronx schools. I want to thank Council
23 Member Gibson for strongly supporting District Nine
24 with our PE Works Initiative as Robin mentioned
25 already. Our schools are doing wonderfully. We are

a higher risk for obesity than the rest of the city.

I want to see that the PE Works is expanded to

Districts Seven and 12. The South Bronx, especially

the Mott Haven community needs a lot of support. It

is not for a lack of effort. I think it's really

about the allocation of resource and we need to make

sure they hit our black and Latino communities.

That's a huge priority. I also wanted to say in the

schools that do have PE Works, we have to continue to

provide resources to them in the forms of

professional development. We need to have

comprehensive physical activity programs. I know

right now we're a little bogged down. We want to get

up and take a stretch; I do too. Well, think about a

student and how it affects learning. The American

College of Sports Medicine shows that there are clear

links between physical activity and activity in the

brain, and we want to create holistic citizens. I

think it needs to start in physical education that

reflects what's going on in Common Core, it reflects

what's going on in the rest of the Department of

Education. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you

very much for testifying today and having all your

issues submitted for the record. We will now call
put the next panel. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel is
Thomas Cheng, Niles French, Miriam Mandion [sp?],
Rosa Concepcion, and Carlyn Cowen.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And you
are officially our final panel. We're getting
efficient. We're getting efficient here. Do you
have-- you have testimony here. Excellent, and you
may begin.

ROSA CONCEPCION: Thank you for allowing
me the opportunity to speak before you. My name is
Rosa Concepcion [sp?] and the Community for Healthy
Food Advocate in West Harlem Group Assistant. My
counterpart spoke a little earlier, Bianca Bockman.
As she stated earlier, we are one-- well, two of a
coalition of four programs requesting City Council
discretionary funding totaling 1.3 million. In FY 16
we received 500,000 for initiative from City Council
which gave my organizations 125,000. We are
requesting additional funding to heighten program
impact to expand it to two new neighborhoods. We are
currently in Bed-Stuy, West Harlem, Mount Eden,
Cypress Hill. We are looking to add Ocean Bay and

the South Bronx. In the neighborhoods that I just mentioned we serve the residents that suffer from disastrous compounds of consequences of historical disinvestment and continued economical injustice, the highest rates of unemployment and diet-related diseases, the lowest performance in school districts, and the least access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and the highest incarceration rates, and the overall economic stress. Our Community for Healthy Food place-base [sic] initiative integrates access to healthy and affordable food into every aspect of our comprehensive community development work through resident outreach and nutrition education, cooking classes, creating new and improving healthy food outlets, and generating food sector jobs. It is very important for West Harlem to receive this support. We are the second poorest neighborhood in Manhattan. Twenty-nine percent of our residents live below the federal poverty level. Forty-eight percent of the deaths could be averted with people in central Harlem. We're number one in New York City with deaths of heart disease, number two with deaths from cancer, number four in deaths from diabetes, and number eight with deaths in hypertension. These

chronic and mostly preventable or controllable conditions are a result of direct correlation with unhealthy food consumption, and we are asking for increase so that we can continue to provide our community with healthy and affordable food. Thank you.

NILES FRENCH: Good afternoon. I'm Niles French from the Staten Island Historical Society and Historic Richmond Town representing the cultural institution groups and non CIG groups. It's good to see some familiar faces up there. So, I'll keep it brief just because of time and in case anyone wants to ask any questions. We are New York City cultural institutions. We serve New York City. We serve people from all around the world. Most importantly, we serve our neighborhoods. We amaze, teach and inspire. School children come to our living classrooms and are blown away by what they see, hear and feel. Visitors from every continent jet here to make us a part of their lives. We are the heart and soul of New York City. We share our treasures every day. We share them with passion and love, and we delight in putting smiles on their faces, and making that Big Apple a little shinier. We're needed and

1 loved. We thank the City Council Members for their
2 support over the years, and appreciate the love we
3 are feeling this year. We need it desperately so we
4 can continue and pass it on to others. So, please
5 send us 40 million hugs so we can share them with the
6 millions of friends.
7

8 UNIDENTIFIED: [off mic]

9 NILES FRENCH: If they're translatable,
10 Councilwoman, that would be great as well. And we
11 thank-- and we ask Mayor de Blasio right now to not
12 hold back but share the love. Thank you, and I'll
13 answer any questions.

14 THOMAS CHENG: Good evening, Madam Chair
15 and esteemed Council Members. This is the first time
16 I'm giving testimony. My name is Thomas Cheng and I
17 represent a small organization in Corona, Queens.
18 When I was coming into this meeting I had this long
19 thing prepared, and then I see that the predecessors
20 before me from well-deserved organizations, and they
21 actually provide all the testimony that I wanted to
22 say, which is that the small nonprofits are the
23 organizations that are the frontline, and we serve
24 the community in an intimate way because we
25 understand the needs of the community. So, as I sat

1 there and listened to other testimony, I do not
2 really envy your position because all of them are so
3 deserving. However, we believe that our communities
4 do need help, and for example, the one good thing is
5 that a blessing has had happened with the New York
6 City Council with the tenaciousness of Council Member
7 Chin, tenaciousness of Gibson and everyone else, the
8 Council Members have made the communities for color,
9 Nonprofit Stabilization Fund, which is tremendous to
10 the small organizations such as ourselves. And what
11 I want to request is that FY 2016 there was 2.5
12 million allocated to this fund. I just-- my request
13 is that you consider increasing that number so that
14 we can give all the people that are deserving that
15 didn't get the chance and opportunity to receive the
16 help that we all go that is so crucially and vitally
17 needed so that we can serve the purposes. It may
18 sound cliché, but united we all prosper; divided we
19 all struggle.

21 CARLYN COWEN: Good evening. My name is
22 Carlyn Cowen and I'm a Policy Analyst at FPWA. Thank
23 you to the Committee for the opportunity to testify
24 today. FPWA strives to build a city of equal
25 opportunity that reduces poverty, promotes upper

mobility and creates shared prosperity for all New Yorkers. To this end, we encourage the Council to fund several initiatives that support these. First, enhancing the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative to 3.8 million. Worker Cooperatives, which are small businesses owned and managed democratically by their employees, offer entrepreneurs control over their working conditions and improves their labor by providing higher wages, more benefits, and better stability. This year's enhancement will allow the Worker Cooperative Coalition to scale the impact considerably by continuing to add new worker cooperatives, as is [sic] our 67 existing cooperatives, provide outreach for 1,500 cooperative entrepreneurs and train 20 new incubators. Enhancing the day laborer workforce initiative to 1.8 million, the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative supports the expansion and development of Day Laborer Centers across the five boroughs which will provide dignified physical space for day laborers and provide support for job referrals, wage theft legal clinics, referral to critical services, and workplace development by opening four new centers and building the capacity of existing centers to

1 better serve New York City's 8,000 to 10,000
2 estimated day laborers. Enhancing the Access Health
3 NYC initiative to 5.0 million which would allow us to
4 increase the capacity of 12 designated CBO's that
5 work to provide educated outreach assistance to all
6 New Yorkers about how to access healthcare and
7 coverage. And lastly by investing 425,000 in
8 Interfaith Leadership Institute Initiative which
9 would create a citywide initiative to train 102 New
10 York City faith leaders in the upcoming fiscal year
11 to better engage their communities, partner with
12 public and nonprofit services and be positive
13 community change agents. Additionally, we have a
14 full list of our human service budget priorities
15 which you can see in my written testimony which
16 include among others creating salary parity with DOE
17 staff for early childhood education, creating summer
18 programs for middle school students, increasing
19 funding for SYEP, and the rest you can see in my
20 testimony. Thank you.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you
23 very much for coming to testify today and for being
24 the last panel, as informative as the very first. So
25 we appreciate it. This concludes the City Council's

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to your leadership of this committee. So, I think the whole Council's grateful for your effort during this past month. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you, Chair.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yes, I also want to congratulate you, Chair, on your third budget as Chair of the Finance Committee, and really wanted to thank everyone for coming out. I mean, the stories that we hear from the public, that's what sticks in our minds, and that's why we're here to fight for our community, and it's really great that people take the time out to come and testify. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Ditto. Thank you, Madam Chair, but equally as important, thank you to the staff. The Finance Division is amazing. Countless hours of paperwork and analyzing information, and I thank you all, and to the Sergeant at Arms, thank you for always keeping us safe and allowing us to have great hearings. As not only a member of Finance, I've been here for every agency, but really I want to thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you Julissa for the work you've done, and to all the public, I really wished there was an opportunity

1 where we could have the public go first and talk
2 about what they want to see and envision in a budget,
3 but I really think hours and hours of testimony is
4 really reflective of what New Yorkers care about,
5 right? I mean, all the things that we've heard from
6 the advocates, from parents, from teachers, from
7 children, I think it's a testament to the work that
8 we've done as an Administration, as a Council, things
9 that we fought for that we care so much about. And
10 certainly, over the next several weeks, I can't wait
11 'til we have all these great success stories, because
12 all this work has made a significant difference, and
13 I want to thank you, Madam Chair, for your
14 consistency, your dedication, your persistency, and
15 remaining here throughout the entire process. And
16 thank you once again to the staff.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
19 you.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I would also like
21 to thank you, Madam Chair, for your thoughtful
22 leadership, and you're really-- your vigilance in
23 just being here over the past month and then dragging
24 me out every day. I thank you so much. Constituents
25 thank you. I also like to thank the Finance team for

the work that they've done in preparing us and making sure that we're all prepared in understanding the needs of the city that we serve, and I'd like to thank Mr. Joe Goldblum [sic] for what you do. Thank you, sir.

[applause]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: This must be Joe's-- what budget? How many budgets have you--

MINDY TARLOW: [interposing] Joe, how many budgets?

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Joe, how many budgets have you done?

JOE GOLDBLUM: [off mic]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: How many budgets?

JOE GOLDBLUM: Since 1974 [sic].

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: OH, that's a lot of budgets. That's more-- that's longer than I've been born, right?

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you.

[laughter]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: A lot of us weren't even born, but we're glad that you're here. And again, I think it's very important that we

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acknowledge also our District Office staff because
they hold down the fort while we're here.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: That's right.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And our
own district staff and our legislative directors and
our chiefs and everybody else. So, this is a family
affair here. Now we have to go and pass a
responsible budget that responds to all the needs of
New Yorkers. Thank you. This hearing is now
adjourned!

[applause]

[gavel]

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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 June 24, 2016