

**Testimony Provided by Christopher Rosa, Ph.D., CUNY Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs  
Joint Hearing with New York City Council Higher Education and Women Issues Committees  
Oversight – Child Care Centers at the City University of New York  
Wednesday, February 9, 2017**

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Good Morning Chair Barron, Chair Cumbo, and distinguished members of the Committees on Higher Education and Women Issues. My name is Chris Rosa and I proudly serve as CUNY's Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

CUNY's Master Plan and its implementing Strategic Framework, highlight our University's "connectedness" to key institutions in our city and state, as well as to the students we serve, as a key principle and strategic approach in our efforts to promote access and success for our more than half-million students. Emblematic of CUNY's long-standing commitment is campus-based child care programs, which capitalize on federal, state, and city resources and partnerships to leverage strong family bonds to promote the success of student-parents and the well-being of their families. .

Campus-based child care is essential to student-parents' ability to complete their college education. The attrition rates of undergraduate students who support children is a growing national problem. Limited access to affordable, quality child care is a significant challenge for student-parents; this is especially true for New Yorkers, as our state is ranks high among the least affordable states for child care. As a result, national data indicates student-parents are three times as likely as traditional undergraduates to drop out of college.

Access to campus-based child care can make a critical difference to the success of student-parents and the wellness of their children. Child care is a particularly critical resource for working parents, especially for single and low-income parents, because it enables them to work, further their education, and move toward self-sufficiency. Furthermore, high quality child care's positive impact on the cognitive, social and physical development of young children is well-documented.

We know that CUNY's 16 on-campus child care programs are making a critical difference in the lives of student-parents and their families. In a 2014 CUNY survey of student-parents using on-campus child

care, more than eight out of ten student parents said that they had more time to study and over six out of ten said they were able to take additional courses.

CUNY's childcare centers serve over 1,300 student-parents and their more than 1,400 children. All CUNY Child Care Centers enroll pre-school children, ages 2.5 to 5 years of age. Seven Centers offer Infant/toddler programs for children ages 6 months to 2.5 years of age. Ten centers offer after-school programs for school age children, ages 5-12. The Centers accommodate the needs of parents with some Centers opening as early as 7AM and closing at 9PM; some are open on weekends.

CUNY's Board of Trustees campus childcare policy gives first priority to CUNY student-parents. Once the needs of CUNY students are met, campus childcare centers are available to community residents. CUNY Child Care Centers promote the success of student-parents by providing subsidies for low income student-parents through funding from the New York State Child Care and Development Fund administered by OCFS, and contracting with the New York City Department of Education to offer UPK at eight CUNY Centers. Nine campuses have been the recipients of CCAMPIS grants – competitive federal grants that support the participation of low income parents in postsecondary education through the provision of campus-based child care.

At CUNY, we recognize the importance of early alert systems to keeping all students on track in pursuit of their degrees. A proven early alert method is the close working relationships that campus child care professionals develop with student-parents. Center staff develop strong individual relationships with student-parents and are among the first to know – often well before their professors – when students are experiencing academic or personal problems, and are uniquely positioned to help students to leverage an array of campus-based and community services to foster their wellness and success. In fact, our survey found that almost 60 % of student-parents said that, as a result of having access to on-campus child care, they were able to use on-campus support services.

The University's Child Care programs provide a broad range of developmental experiences for children, all of which feature parental involvement as a key program element and core value. These programs provide an array of services that include parenting workshops, parent-teacher conferences, early intervention and prevention services, and health and wellness referrals. Children at the centers are engaged in high quality programs, the curricula reflecting the essential elements of quality program standards by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. These programs are thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, and culturally and linguistically responsive to the families they serve. Experienced and dedicated early childhood educators plan activities and experiences based upon curriculum goals and develop multicultural classroom settings that value diversity, leveraging it as a strength in learning. The Centers also serve as a key resource to many academic departments by providing a venue for student internships, fieldwork and research.

The safety and wellness of the children we serve is a top priority. Every Campus Child Care Center is licensed by the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, in compliance with New York City Health Code, which provides regulations for staff qualifications, staff/child ratios, program safety, emergency procedures and facilities maintenance.

We are proud to report that CUNY's Child Care Centers have distinguished themselves through their excellence. Several centers have achieved national accreditation, meeting the professional standards of high quality early care and education programs developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

CUNY remains committed to maintaining high quality University Child Care programs and expanding services to meet the needs of evening and weekend student-parents. However, levels of City, State, and Federal support remain virtually unchanged for more than a decade. Furthermore, the New York State Executive Budget proposes a cut of \$900,000 to campus child care at CUNY's community colleges. These trends will make it difficult for our Child Care Centers to attract and retain top-quality

teachers and to provide campus-based child care to adult learners during the times when they need it most.

We ask for the Council's continued leadership in having the City make investments in CUNY campus child care, to enable our centers to recruit and retain talented, qualified and experienced early-childhood educators; to ensure that these teachers receive ongoing training and professional development; to allow our centers to remain open during the times when our students need them most; and to provide our colleges the resources for facilities maintenance and management to ensure that our centers are safe, clean, and welcoming to student-parents and their kids.

We thank the Council for its abiding commitment to creating access and opportunity to higher education for CUNY's student-parents through your support of campus child care.

Jessica Maldonado, Student, Hostos Community College  
Receives Child Care Services from Hostos Community College Children's Center, Inc.

Good afternoon New York City Council representatives of the joint Higher Education/Women Issues committees. My name is Jessica Maldonado. I am a 4<sup>th</sup> semester student-parent at Hostos Community College majoring in Early Childhood Education. I have two children ages 16 and 2 years old. As a teenager my dream was to become a New York City teacher and currently I am pursuing my dream.

I had my daughter at the age of 18 and could not pursue my education because I had to work to make ends meet. I became an Employment Specialist but the thought of teaching never left my mind. In 2013 I began my journey at Hostos Community College to further my education. Unfortunately, shortly after enrolling I had to leave school because I became pregnant with my son. I was fortunate to stay home with him for two years, however, my dream was once again deferred for two additional years.

Throughout my absence from school, I researched child care facilities and found out Hostos Community College had a Children's Center on-campus, and I signed up. I was excited and grateful that I could finally continue my education and begin my child's education at the same institution. My son started with Hostos Children's Center in the Fall 2016 semester. He absolutely loves it and has learned so much in one semester. During pick up time, my son never wants to leave Hostos Children's Center! I feel so relieved to know that my child is well taken care of. It's a great feeling as a parent and important for my son to interact with children and continue to learn every day.

Having my son at the Hostos Children's Center has allowed me an opportunity to continue my education, have time to take advantage of the campus library to research and study, take advantage of work-study opportunities on campus to assist with my financial aid, and I get the chance to attend campus events, which are beneficial to my goal of becoming a New York City teacher. When I entered Hostos Children's Center for the first time I was greeted with respect and attention. My son's teacher made me feel comfortable right away and I knew my son was going to be in good hands. Not only is my son's teacher so warm hearted and dedicated to developing children, but all of the other teachers are as well.

FOR THE RECORD

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Jessica Maldonado, Student, Hostos Community College  
Receives Child Care Services from Hostos Community College Children's Center, Inc.

As an aspiring teacher I understand the need for parent involvement. Hostos Children's Center also serves as my work-study site. Not only am I being provided child care I am developing my skills as a teacher daily by working with the Toddler, Pre-School, and Pre-K For All teachers. All of the teachers at Hostos Children's Center have so much passion and love for the children. I am thankful I got to experience it as a parent and as a work-study student. Adding to my decision of having my child attend Hostos Children's Center is that it is very affordable. The surrounding child care centers would cost me thousands of dollars a month on top of my college tuition and I would be more concerned about the quality of my child's development. My son is currently in the Pre-School 2 year old program and I would love for him to continue receiving child care at Hostos Children's Center as he becomes 3 years old and I want him to attend the Pre-K For All program too. The Pre-K For All program will prepare my son for Kindergarten in a New York City public school. I would like for both my son and I to graduate from Hostos together.

In closing, I want to graduate with my Associates Degree from Hostos Community College. Receiving child care services on-campus has positively impacted my life and my child's life. Education is very important! I feel productive and eager to learn every day because I can focus on my studies. I'm trying to provide a better life for my children and make a meaningful difference for other children in New York City by becoming a teacher. If my child was not in Hostos Children's Center, my dream of becoming a teacher and making a greater impact on society would again be delayed. Hostos Children's Center and all Child Care Centers within CUNY need the \$900,000 New York State is proposing to reduce. A reduction in funding would place my education and my child's development in jeopardy. All of the student-parents who utilize child care services on-campus would have their education and their child's development jeopardized as well. A reduction in funding can lead to higher child care rates, loss of highly qualified staff, a decline in developmentally appropriate resources, and lessen the hygiene of the program. We need a more educated society and it starts with investing in children and their parents. I ask on behalf of the

Jessica Maldonado, Student, Hostos Community College  
Receives Child Care Services from Hostos Community College Children's Center, Inc.

children at Hostos Children's Center and CUNY Child Care Centers, and their parents who are students not  
to allow any reduction. Thank you for taking the opportunity to hear my voice.

Testimony from Gregoire Boisrond Jr.  
Borough of Manhattan Community College Student  
City Council Hearing on CUNY Early Childhood Centers  
February 8, 2017

Dear Chair Barron and Chair Cumbo and Members of the City Council,

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my concerns about the possibility of the Early Childhood Center losing its funding. The loss of the funding would close the door on a community, availability, and most important safety.

My name is Gregoire Boisrond Jr. I attend the Borough of Manhattan Community College. As a Computer Science Major, I see the logic behind the Early Childhood Center. This service should be available nation wide. The teachers in this facility are highly qualified, educated and kind. I mention this because this translate perfectly to the care and education they give the children. I remember my son, Lucas, had a homework assignment to bring back some leaves or any foliage to discuss trees and their types. My wife, family, and friends planned a day trip to Minnewaska State Park (Ulster County New York). The excitement Lucas conveyed when he remembered his assignment was priceless! He returned to school with a sample of different types of Pines and Leaves.

The other ways the Early Childhood Center stand apart from just day-care is availability. As a parent and student, this holds true when you have an evening class (that ends past 7pm) and or weekend class.

My journey with the Borough of Manhattan Community College and the Early Childhood Center ends this Spring 2017. I graduate and Lucas will as well. Our story is not unique. However, this facility has help me plant the seed of higher learning for my son. And gives me momentum to continue my journey to City College and placement in the attend tech companies in the NYC area.

Please continue to fund the BMCC Early Childhood Center. We add value and pride to the NYC community.

Sincerely,

Gregoire Boisrond Jr.

Olivia Pearl  
Borough of Manhattan Community College. Ny. Ny  
Nursing Major

Good afternoon,  
Members of City Council of New York  
and all the individuals present here today.  
My name is Olivia Pearl, A Single mother, and full  
time student at the Borough of Manhattan  
Community College.

Today I am here to express the importance  
of having an Early Childhood Center at the  
College, and how it has significantly impacted my  
decision to further my education.

The Early Childhood Center as provided me  
the time and privilege needed to attend classes,  
Study, and get any additional tutoring that is  
required to maintain my 'A' average, which is  
needed to remain competitive academically, and  
which has also resulted in me being awarded  
membership in the international honors society, Phi  
Theta Kappa.

The Early Childhood Center also provide Child  
Care at a cost that is affordable, enabling young  
mothers in my current situation to access quality  
care for my child in a clean, nurturing and  
educational environment.

The Center is unique in that, it's not only  
child care, it's a family that incorporates learning,  
while providing a safe environment for your child.

Without the convenience of and affordability of  
the childcare center it would be extremely  
difficult for me to access higher education.

Thank you.

Testimony to New York City Council

Hearing on Child Care Centers at CUNY

From Claudia Bencosme, Student at Borough of Manhattan Community College

February 8, 2017

Thank you for having us here today

My name is Claudia Bencosme. I'm currently enrolled as a nursing student at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC). I also have my 4 year old son enrolled at BMCC Early Childhood Center. My plans for the future is to go to Hunter College and pursue a bachelor's degree.

As 26 years old, when I decided to go to school back in 2015 one of my main concerns was my son. I didn't know how it was going to be possible for me to combine my mommy life and my student life. Regular day care it was impossible, because of the high prices (around \$300/week) and I wanted to have my son as close as possible. It was going to be his first year in school and that made me nervous.

When I found out that BMCC had a child center within the school, instantly it lifted a weight out my shoulders. In that moment I knew that I had the support and I felt confident and focus on my school.

The Center is not just some place that watches kids while parents are in school. Its an actual school. Their program is excellent, the kids actually learn new thing without even noticing it. Even their meals are excellent which is a big plus when you a parent. Their staff member is the best that I could ask for. They not only help our kids to explore and learn new things, but also there are a support system for the parents. They help the parents understand these new face that their kids are going through.

The center means second opportunities, means trusts, means community, values, equality and respect. For the student parents our children means everything. We have the chance of pursuing a dream that would not be possible if it wasn't for them.

I believe everyone deserves and education whether you are 18 or 40 and places like the BMCC Early Childhood Center at Borough of Manhattan Community College makes that possible.

Thank you.

Carleigh Fraley, Student, Hostos Community College  
Receives Child Care Services from Hostos Community College Children's Center, Inc.

Good afternoon representatives of the New York City Council Joint Committees on Higher Education and Women's Issues. My name is Carleigh Fraley. I am a dental hygiene major at CUNY Hostos Community College.

According to Benjamin Franklin, "an investment in knowledge pays the best interest." This ideal is a core value in our CUNY schools, where students from all walks of life are able to find quality affordable higher education. However, affordable tuition is not the only challenge facing CUNY students. Women often shoulder the brunt of caregiving at the expense of their career, either academic or professional. Funding programs like the CUNY Childcare centers give women more options, and a chance to move into different fields rather than staying home. Giving women with children a route to enter or return to the workforce benefits not only the woman herself, but also her children and family. Affordable childcare is imperative to the success of CUNY students, and in particular women.

CUNY Hostos is a predominantly Hispanic/Latino Institution but is also home to many other nationalities and cultures. While in many ways I do not represent the great student diversity at CUNY Hostos, I am proud to count myself among them. As an individual I have enjoyed many privileges. I was born a child of white upper middle-class parents, attended a top high school and attained my Bachelor's degree and yet, despite these advantages, as a woman, after having my second child, I was unable to find a job in my field that would cover the costs of childcare for my two sons. My choices were to stay home and wait to return to work once my children were older, or return to school and get skills that would land me a better paying job. Hostos Community College Children's center made it possible for me to return to school.

I have the great honor of sharing my classes with other parents whose challenges outweigh mine manifold. For some English is not their first language, they might be parenting without a partner, or have left family support behind in other countries to pursue better opportunities. Yet affordable childcare is helping all of us achieve our goals and make a better life for our families. At Hostos Children's Center I know my two sons are safe and well cared for. They receive not only hands on educational experiences, but also nutritious meals and snacks. As a student, the childcare facility cares for my children while I am in class and while I study, allowing me the best chance of success academically and the ability to attain my degree without delay.

I cannot express enough how important this on campus care is. For many students, including myself, school would not be possible without it. Reducing funding to CUNY Childcare would be devastating to parents like me, who depend on CUNY's Child Care Centers for their academic success and also devastating to the young students, our children, who get to enjoy a wonderful educational experience while their parents do as well. In addition, an increase in funding would allow for CUNY Childcare Centers to expand their hours to evenings and weekends, further accommodating working parents.

**Carleigh Fraley, Student, Hostos Community College  
Receives Child Care Services from Hostos Community College Children's Center, Inc.**

**Benjamin Franklin also said, "The only thing more expensive than education is ignorance." Please continue and increase funding for the CUNY Childcare centers. Investing in woman and families' academic success will lead to stronger children and a stronger New York.**

**Thank you.**

January 30<sup>th</sup> 2017

CUNY colleges strive to represent the very best of urban education. Often, CUNY colleges serve the poorest urban counties in the United States and admit Hispanic, African-American, Asian, Caribbean, and European students of all stripes. Almost all students have jobs, and many are single mothers and fathers who either never began college or have returned after a long hiatus. The intersection of economic obstacles and familial obligations make CUNY childcare services *especially* important. Funding from City organizations ensures children of our students are given the best quality of care. This ensures students perform better in their academic classes because they are not left struggling to fill in the gaps of learning that a poor quality childcare center might create for their child.

Additionally, with the support of funding, childcare centers are able to offer services that support student and child success simultaneously. We as childcare professionals understand that counseling and advisement are an invaluable resource for *all student* parents. In fact, this kind of service often proves just as valuable as academic courses. Through the continued support of childcare centers, childcare administrators will have the resources necessary to create a lasting impact on both CUNY students and students' children.

One such CUNY college is Bronx Community College. Bronx Community College Early Childhood is an educational facility committed to developmentally appropriate early care and education of children and parents, providing integrated family services. We educate, advocate and provide support and expertise that empowers and enriches students, parents, children, our college community and the early childhood community.

Our program objective is to support student parents in achieving success. We help children make a successful transition from home to school as they go to Kindergarten. We help them develop social competency with peers and adults and provide opportunities for self-expression for each child through language dramatics, art, music and play. Children develop a positive self-concept, respect for others & their ideas by being engaged learners at our center.

Our strategic goals include expanding our program to meet the needs of the parent population by having an Infant Toddler program .Hence helping in student retention success and graduation. We empower our student –parents to succeed by supporting them at the center with a family worker, social worker and individualized tutoring .We help develop world citizens by engaging families in trips and enjoy cultural immersion.

Campus base childcare is instrumental in supporting low income parents be successful in higher education retention and graduation .Parents are helped in their efforts to obtain a college degree , which is critical for the economic stability of a family . Investing in CUNY childcare is direct help to student-parents that will not be able to attend college without childcare support. The increasing cost of childcare is making it harder for campuses to provide services as needed .

We promote active learning by initiating and supporting professional development conferences for all CUNY teachers which empowers them with excellent tools to teach. Having easy access to quality and affordable campus childcare is a support service that enables our student parents to graduate and be successful. We are very proud of the center and the support from the college administration that is given to us for everything. If there is any further information you need please feel free to contact me at 718-289-5335.

Sincerely,

Jitinder Walia  
Executive Director  
BCC Early Childhood Center



February 7, 2017

Early Learning Center  
104 East 19<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10003

### **Statement in Support of CUNY Childcare**

My name is Melanie Hague and I serve as Administrator and Lead Teacher at the Baruch College Early Learning Center. I have been employed at the Center for over 24 years, and I believe I am in a unique position to advocate for childcare particularly for student-parents throughout CUNY. Over the years, hundreds of student-parents and their children have passed through our doors. A large majority of them, particularly at Baruch College, are new immigrants to this country; they come from different countries with children speaking more than 15 different languages. Not only has our Early Learning Center welcomed and supported these student-parents and their families, but we have helped them develop, graduate, and become part of the American urban community.

In our small microcosm in New York City (NYC), student-parents have pursued higher education, often in a second language, and have had the benefit of their children learning a second language by age 5 and entering kindergarten, not only with the knowledge they need to succeed, but often their parents, at the same time, graduating college and entering the work force, continuing to pursue a graduate degree, or more extensive higher education. We believe we play a pivotal role in helping our students succeed and realize their American dream. After being in existence for over 24 years, our childcare center continues to be a highly valuable and much needed student service.

While our students study, take on internships opportunities, and/or worked part-time, they never have to worry whether their children are in good hands, or have any doubt who is kindly and carefully guiding their offspring while their pursue the rigors of the College's curriculum. The children of our student-parents are working in partnership with dedicated and well-trained professional staff members, in a nationally accredited Center, who understand student needs and provide best practice, top-notch childcare in an early childhood educational setting conducive to student learning and development.

Our CUNY childcare centers are the best nurseries and pre-schools one can find in NYC. Our Centers make life fuller and easier for student-families, whether they are from NYC, the five boroughs, or elsewhere in the world. These Centers are to be acknowledged and commended for allowing student-parents, who would otherwise not be able to pursue higher education, to do so with the promise that their children will be afforded the same opportunity to become part of the American middle-class. We hope that CUNY's childcare centers will continue to flourish with appropriate support so that they can continue to help student-parents remain stress-free, pursue their educational endeavors, and reach their fullest potential.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely

Melanie Hague  
Administrator/Lead Teacher

THE COUNCIL CUNY PANEL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK 1 of 3

Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/14/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christopher Rosa, Interim Vice Chancellor

Address: 205 E. 42nd Street for Student Affairs

I represent: CUNY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL CUNY Panel  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK 2 of 3

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/14/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jitinder Walia, Executive Director

Address: Bronx Community College - Early

I represent: Childhood Center

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL CUNY Panel  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK 3 of 3

Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/14/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Carleigh Fraley, Student

Address: Hostis CC

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Claudia Bencome  
Address: 494 Sheffield Ave 8N Brooklyn NY 11207  
I represent: Bmcc Childhood Center  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 02/14/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Olivia Pearl  
Address: 1630 Lincoln Place Brooklyn NY 11215  
I represent: Bmcc Early child care  
Address: 199 Chambers Street NY NY

**THE COUNCIL  
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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 2-14-17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gregoire BOISRONO JR  
Address: 2110 Newkirk Ave Apt 4K  
I represent: Bmcc Early Childhood Center  
Address: 199 Chambers St

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/14/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John Kotowski, Director - City Relations

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: CUNY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL CUNY Panel  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/14/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kisha Fuentes, Program Specialist - Child

Address: Care Leadership - CUNY

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: 205 W 4th 555 W. 57th St.

**THE COUNCIL CUNY  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/14/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cecilia Scott-Croff, Executive Director

Address: BMCC Child Care Center

I represent: BMCC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_