



Statement by Thomas W. Galante
Director, Queens Library

Testimony before the Finance and Cultural Affairs,
Libraries and International Intergroup Relations Committees

Oversight—Mayor's November Financial Plan

November 24, 2008

Good afternoon. I am Tom Galante, Director of the Queens Library. I want to begin by thanking Speaker Quinn, Chairmen Weprin, Recchia, and Gentile as well as the entire City Council for your continued support of an institution so critical in times of economic peril - our City's public libraries. I know that each of you believes in libraries and the life-enhancing services we provide. Thank you for inviting us here today to share with you the vital need for library doors remaining open, especially in these difficult economic times. And more importantly, I hope that I can impress upon you the need for the City to reconsider its proposed cuts to libraries.

Queens Library sustained substantial cuts of \$2.8 million from the FY'09 budget that was adopted in June. We were left with no other choice than to make some very hard decisions in meeting our primary goal, to save six-day library service. Cost saving

measures employed were regrettable and resulted in the elimination of 49 Teen Net Mentor positions along with reductions in our shipping department staff and staff at the Central library. Other services that were impacted by the cuts were the popular mobile community library, the Bookmobile, which was grounded permanently; and the highly acclaimed gallery which offered museum-quality exhibitions, arts education and cultural activities since 1995, which saw more than 50,000 visitors in 2007, closed its doors. Further actions were taken to help defray this loss in funding so that we could balance our budget. We reluctantly closed five (5) Community Libraries an additional morning each week and reduced funding to purchase library materials, i.e. books by 10%, programs, building maintenance, furniture and much needed equipment were also reduced.

I am particularly disheartened that we are now facing an additional \$2,174,000 funding reduction in the FY'09 budget and \$4,118,000 in FY'10. These cuts, coming on the heels of the nearly \$3 million cut sustained five months ago, will bring libraries to their knees. Simply put – further reductions to libraries will result in our doors closing to the public and the end of weekend library service in most communities. We all know that these are unprecedented times and that the financial crisis has taken an enormous toll on us all. To that end, Queens Library has taken proactive cost-cutting measures so that we can endure this tidal wave of economic uncertainty while maximizing service hours. We have implemented a hiring freeze and have already begun to cut back spending in every way imaginable. But I must tell you that fewer people are leaving the library so reducing staff by attrition becomes harder by the day. The truth is that the cuts currently being proposed would cripple the Queens Library should they be enacted. Our City's public

libraries are a lifeline in times of financial crisis and increased unemployment. All of our services and programs are completely free and accessible to all. But in order to fulfill our mission our doors must remain open.

You should also be aware that we are facing staggering budget cuts on the State level. The Governor has proposed a \$20 million cut for libraries in New York State. Under this plan, Queens Library will lose \$2.1 million of the \$6 million we receive in state operating funding. This 33% cut in State funding coupled with the over \$11 million proposed City funding reduction represents a double barreled shot at the heart of our library system. You should also know that Queens Library and its intrepid supporters are fighting back! This past Tuesday, over 60 Queens Library customers, staff and Friends members traveled in two buses to Albany to voice their objection to the proposed State cuts. And we'll be similarly active on the City level, engaging our supporters to fight these cuts.

The people of Queens need their library, now more than ever. In times such as these, with record job loss, a seemingly unending mortgage crisis, increasing food costs, and a host of other factors that are leaving more with less, our libraries are increasingly a safe haven for those most directly affected by this downturn. If our doors close, where will the family with four children in Corona get the books they need to further the education of those kids? Some are lucky enough to buy all their books from a bookstore but I can tell you that that option doesn't exist for many of the people who rely on us. And while many people think that everyone has a computer at home, the truth is that

many do not. And those folks need the library because it is at the library that they can look for jobs, post resumes, and simply connect with others. In tough times people look to us to help defray family entertainment costs by borrowing DVD's and CD's or take solace in checking out their favorite books. We offer solace, a reassuring helping hand in a world that is increasingly unsteady. Further cuts will reduce our ability to reach into the community to help those among us with the least at a time when their need is greater than ever.

And with fewer jobs available for a growing unemployed population, people are forced to take control of their own financial future; some people seize this opportunity to change careers, while others opt for entrepreneurship. Once again Queens Library has partnered with Queens Economic Development Corporation on StartUp, a business plan competition, where more than 400 people participated in last year. Also making a repeat appearance is the New Americans Programs (NAP) offering beneficial programs to immigrants. One particular program, was working with the City's Small Business Services, where 100+ participants learned how to start and grow businesses offered in Mandarin Chinese.

Libraries are a staple institution worthy of the respect that one would give our places of worship and our schools. President-Elect Barack Obama, keynoting the opening general session at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago in 2005, spoke of the importance of the library in society. He said "More than a building that houses books and data, the library represents a window to a larger world,

the place where we've always come to discover big ideas and profound concepts that help move the American story forward and the human story forward."

Queens Library knows all too well about the human stories President-Elect Obama spoke of. The more than 14 million people who came through our doors last year represent 14 million American stories and these stories can be traced by the imprints left behind on the 23 million books and other items we circulated last year. These heartfelt human stories walk through our 62 libraries, 7 adult learning centers, and Family literacy centers every day we are open. We must do everything we can to remain open so that these American stories endure.

Queens Library cannot single handedly erase rising unemployment, but libraries can provide free and quality access to programs and services during hard times. I implore you to allow us to do our job and be the bridge of hope. We take our role here in the community seriously; and we will continue to do all that we can to educate, inform and train the workforce of tomorrow. Libraries are more than just a repository for books—we are a vital part of the economic engine that drives New York City. Libraries value, care for and celebrate the people of New York City, we are a core part of this City's soul. We must do all we can to save our libraries!

Thank you.



The New York Public Library

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES ON FINANCE AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

November 24, 2008

Chairman Recchia, Chairman Weprin, Chairman Gentile, Members of the City Council, ladies and gentlemen. Good afternoon, I am Paul LeClerc, the President of The New York Public Library and I am joined in this testimony by David Ferriero, the Andrew W. Mellon Director of The New York Public Libraries and Dave Offensend, our Chief Operating Officer.

We are here today to discuss the Executive November Financial Plan and the impact on libraries. As you well know, this plan includes a \$3.6 million cut in FY09 and \$6.8 million cut in FY10 to The New York Public Library. This \$6.8 million reduction when combined with the loss of \$7.3 million which was not baselined would mean a devastating reduction of \$14.1 million to our libraries in FY10. We are tremendously grateful for your leadership, and that of Speaker Quinn, in restoring the \$7.3 million in the FY09 budget which allowed us to maintain six days of service at all of our locations – a level of service that New Yorkers need and deserve.

Before detailing the impact that reductions of this scale would have on our service to New Yorkers, I'd like to spend a moment telling you how an important American recently described the importance of public libraries.

That important American is Barack Obama, our President-Elect. And here's what he's on the record as believing:

"More than a building that houses books and data, the library represents a window to a larger world, the place where we've always come to discover big ideas and profound concepts that help move the American story forward and the human story forward."

"At the moment that we persuade a child, any child, to cross that threshold, that magic threshold, that magic threshold into a library, we change their lives forever, for the better. It's an enormous force for good."

"At the dawn of the 21st century, where knowledge is literally power, where it unlocks the gates of opportunity and success, we all have responsibilities, as parents, as librarians, as educators, as politicians, and as citizens to instill in our children a love of reading so that we can give them a chance to fulfill our dreams. That's what [librarians] do each and every day."

At this time of economic difficulty and rising unemployment rates in New York City, people are turning to libraries in ever greater numbers. And they're doing so for a very simple reason: libraries are the best free source of job information; they provide access to online resources to help job seekers locate and apply for available positions. Nothing illustrates this more dramatically than the editorial entitled "I got my job through The

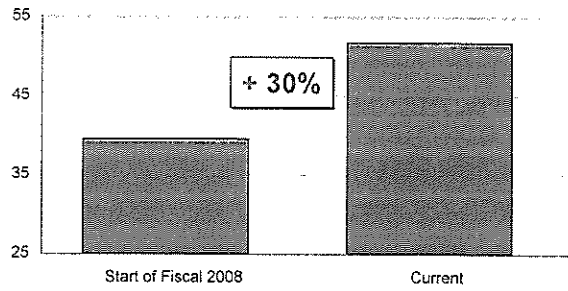
New York Public Library,” which appeared in the New York Daily News on November 10, 2008. President-Elect Barack Obama talked about the great difficulty he was having in locating a job as a community organizer in New York after his graduation from Columbia University. He went to the Mid-Manhattan Library where the librarian helped him use directories and make a list of organizations. He wrote to them all and one wound up being an organization in Chicago which offered him a job. We know how well this story ended, but also know that there are millions of others waiting to happen at libraries throughout New York.

Our libraries are now open six days and 52 hours (on average) a week. Eight of them are open seven days a week, with our five of our ‘hub’ libraries being open 64 hours a week and one being open 84 hours a week.

New Yorkers’ response to these expanded services levels has been simply tremendous. As the following charts dramatically show, attendance rose 8% in FY08 and was up an additional 14% in the first four months of FY09. Similarly, circulation was up 18% in FY08 and increased an additional 18% in the first four months of FY09. It is crystal clear that we are offering services that people really need and really use, arguably now more than ever before.

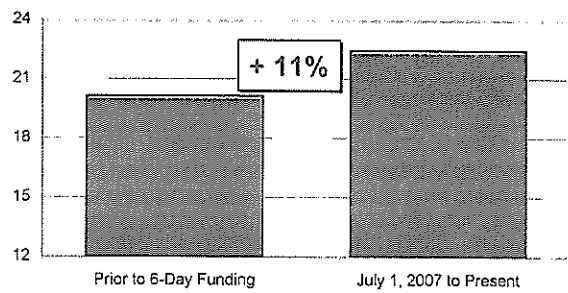
Hours Open

Increase to 52 scheduled weekly hours

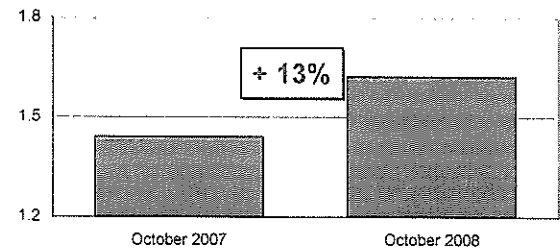


Attendance

2.3 Million More Visits Since 6-Day Funding

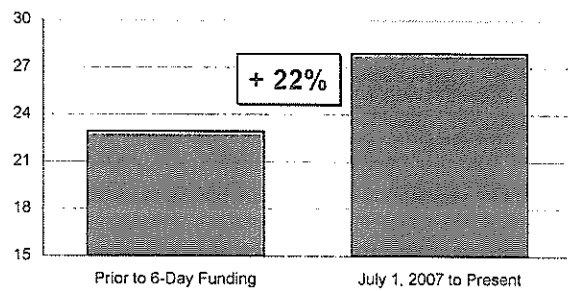


Continued Strong Attendance Growth

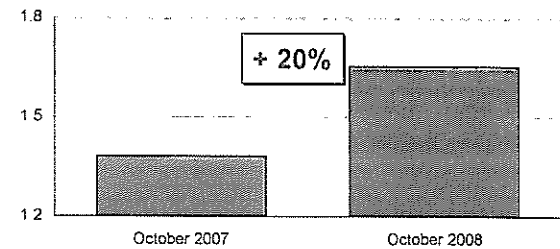


Circulation

5 Million Higher Circulation Since 6-Day Funding



Continued Strong Circulation Growth



Losing \$3.6 million in FY09 would result in service reductions that would be phased in as we capture the savings from a minimum of 60 positions becoming vacant through attrition and left unfilled.

If we get further budget reduction in January we would reduce hours of service more quickly. We would also see fewer books on our shelves and reductions in critical physical and Information Technology infrastructure that is central to providing our services. It is our goal to avoid layoffs, but the additional major reductions which are proposed for FY10, coupled with potentially serious New York State cuts, would put us in a real bind. The proposed reduction of \$14.1 million in FY10 would mean that we would have to capture 170 additional staff positions through attrition and leave them vacant. Whether or not we can capture so many remains to be seen. With a reduction of this magnitude in the workforce, I anticipate that the majority of our branches would be brought down to a five day a week schedule, with substantially reduced collections in them.

The result would go sharply against the central element in New York Public Library's new strategy, namely increasing use of our libraries by working with all local communities to provide the services and collections their residents need. The entire goal of the strategy is help people advance in their lives, just as we did for Barack Obama so many years ago.

Conclusion

The funding you have provided to maintain six days of service has had proven, demonstrated, and important returns. There is no denying that six day service was – and continues to be – a critical investment, nurturing, empowering and educating millions of New Yorkers every year.

Even during the depths of the Great Depression, the City's libraries were open seven days a week. The Council has long believed that investing in public libraries is a direct investment in the people of New York City. At this critical time, we are asking for your help to allow us to continue to deliver the quality library service that the residents of New York City have responded to so positively and deserve in these difficult times.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

I got my job through

... the New York Public Library.

That might well be the slogan of an ad campaign suited to an era when unemployment is rising and the U.S. is shedding hundreds of thousands of jobs a month.

As a reminder that local libraries offer extensive job-search resources, here's how Barack Obama found his community organizing job in Chicago after he graduated from Columbia University.

In 2005, he told *American Libraries* magazine:

"People always mention libraries in terms of just being sources for reading material or research. But I

probably would not be in Chicago were it not for the Manhattan public library, because I was looking for an organizing job and was having great trouble finding a job as a community organizer in New York.

"The Mid-Manhattan Library had these books of lists of organizations, and the librarian helped me find these lists of organizations, and I wrote to every organization. One of them wound up being

an organization in Chicago that I got a job with."

The help is still there, and in even greater sophistication. Check it out.



NY jobless hit library

The faltering job market has driven hordes of New Yorkers to the city's reference library in Manhattan, where they can surf the Web for free and take advantage of employment databases.

Attendance has skyrocketed at the Humanities and Social Sciences Library on 42nd Street, to 137,777 visits last month compared to 96,327 in October 2007, officials said.

"In times of economic downturn, when people might be looking for a job or trying to start a business or working as a freelancer, there's a wide range of materials at the library that are valuable to them," said Herb Scher, spokesman for the city's library system.

A woman who moved to the city from Phoenix four months ago was taking advantage of the free Internet access yesterday.

The woman, who identified herself only as Caroline, said, "My background was in engineering, but I'd even flip burgers."

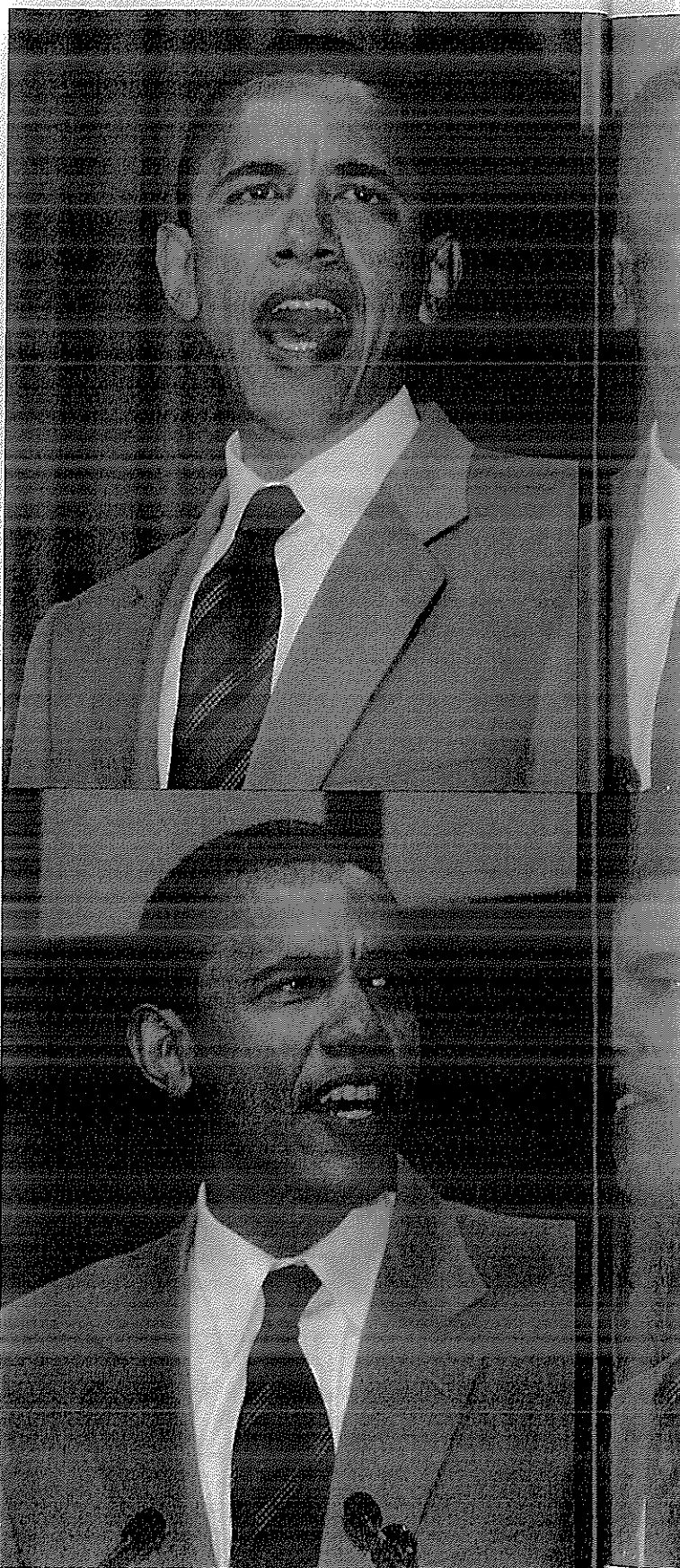
*Sally Goldenberg
and Rebecca Rosenberg*

COVER STORY

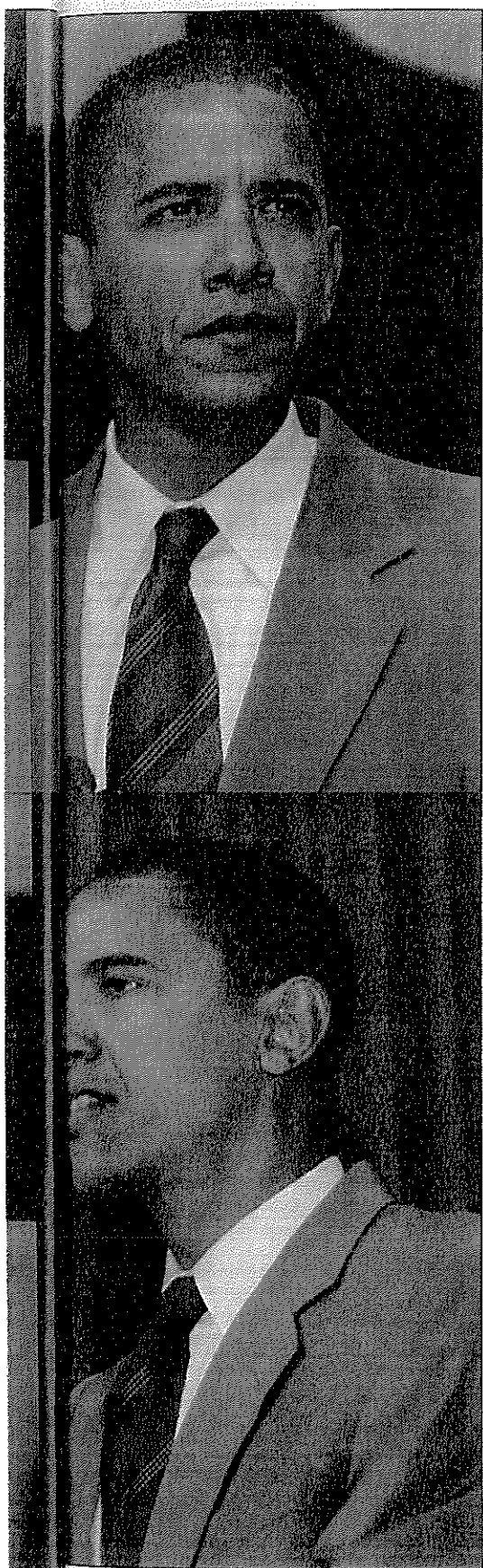
BOUND TO THE WORD

GUARDIANS OF TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE,
LIBRARIANS MUST BE THANKED
FOR THEIR ROLE AS CHAMPIONS
OF PRIVACY, LITERACY, INDEPENDENT
THINKING, AND, MOST OF ALL, READING

BY **BARACK OBAMA**



Tim Lohr, Getty



If you open up scripture, the Gospel according to John, it starts: "In the beginning was the Word." Although this has a very particular meaning in Scripture, more broadly what it speaks to is the critical importance of language, of writing, of reading, of communication, of books as a means of transmitting culture and binding us together as a people.

More than a building that houses books and data, the library represents a window to a larger world, the place where we've always come to discover big ideas and profound concepts that help move the American story forward and the human story forward. That's the reason why, since ancient antiquity, whenever those who seek power would want to control the human spirit, they have gone after libraries and books. Whether it's the ransacking of the great library at Alexandria, controlling information during the Middle Ages, book burnings, or the imprisonment of writers in former communist bloc countries, the idea has been that if we can control the word, if we can control what people hear and what they read and what they comprehend, then we can control and imprison them, or at least imprison their minds.

That's worth pondering at a time when truth and science are constantly being challenged by political agendas and ideologies, at a time when language is used not to illuminate but, rather, to obfuscate, at a time when there are those who would disallow the teaching of evolution in our schools, where fake science is used to beat back attempts to curb global warming or fund lifesaving research.

At a time when book banning is back in vogue, libraries remind us that truth isn't about who yells the loudest, but who has the right information.

We are a religious people, Americans are, as am I. But one of the innovations, the genius of America, is recognizing that our faith is not in contradiction with fact and that our liberty depends upon our ability to access the truth.

That's what libraries are about. At

the moment that we persuade a child, any child, to cross that threshold, that magic threshold into a library, we change their lives forever, for the better. It's an enormous force for good.

I remember at different junctures in my life feeling lost, feeling adrift, and feeling that somehow walking into a library and seeing those books, seeing human knowledge collected in that fashion, accessible, ready for me, would always lift my spirits. So I'm grateful to be able to acknowledge the importance of librarians and the work that you do. I want to work with you to ensure that libraries continue to be sanctuaries of learning, where we are free to read and consider what we please without the fear that Big Brother may be peering over our shoulders to find out what we're up to.

Some of you may have heard that I gave a speech last summer at the Democratic convention. It made some news here and there. For some reason, one of the lines people seem to remember has to do with librarians, when I said, "We don't like federal agents poking around our libraries in the red states, or the blue states for that matter."

What some people may not remember is that for years, librarians have been on the frontlines of this fight for our privacy and our freedom. There have always been dark times in our history where America has strayed from our best ideas. The question has always been: Who will be there to stand up against those forces? One of the groups that has consistently stood up has been librarians. When political groups tried to censor great works of literature, you were the ones who put *Huckleberry Finn* and *Catcher in the Rye* back on the shelves, making

BARACK OBAMA, Democratic U.S. senator from Illinois, keynoted the Opening General Session at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, June 23–29. This article is an adaptation of that speech, which drew an enormous crowd and garnered a standing ovation.

"LITERACY IS THE MOST BASIC CURRENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY."

sure that our access to free thought and free information was protected. Ever since we've had to worry about our own government looking over our shoulders in that library, you've been there to stand up and speak out on our privacy issues. You're full-time defenders of the most fundamental liberty that we possess. For that, you deserve our gratitude.

But you also deserve our protection. That's why I've been working with Republicans and Democrats to make sure that we have a Patriot Act that helps us track down terrorists without trampling on our civil liberties. This is an issue that Washington always tries to make into an either-or proposition. Either we protect our people from terror or we protect our most cherished principles. But I don't believe in either-or. I believe in both ends. I think we can do both. I think when we pose the choice as either-or, it is asking too little of us and it assumes too little about America. I believe we can harness new technologies and a new toughness to find terrorists before they strike, while still protecting the very freedoms we're fighting for in the first place.

I know that some librarians have been subject to FBI or other law enforcement orders, asking for reading records. I hope we can pass a provision just like the one that the House of Representatives passed overwhelmingly that would require federal agents to get these kinds of search warrants from a real judge in a real court just like everyone else does.

In the Senate, the bipartisan bill that we're working on known as the SAFE Act will prevent the federal government from freely rifling through e-mails and library records without obtaining such a warrant. Giving law enforcement the tools they need to investigate suspicious activity is one thing, but doing it without the approval of our judicial system seriously jeopardizes the rights of all Americans and the ideals Americans stand for. We're not going to stand for it.

We need to roll that provision back.

In addition to the line about federal agents poking around in our libraries, there was another line in my speech that got a lot of attention, and it's a line that I'd like to amplify this afternoon. At one point in the speech, I mentioned that the people I've met all across Illinois know that government can't solve all their problems. And I mentioned that if you go into the inner city of Chicago, parents will tell you that parents have to parent. Children can't achieve unless they raise their expectations and turn off the television sets and eradicate the slander that says a black youth with a book is acting white.

To some, that was perceived as speaking solely to the black community. I'm here to suggest that I was speaking to a basic principle, a worry, a challenge, a concern that applies to all of America. Because I believe that if we want to give our children the best possible chance in life, if we want to open the doors of opportunity while they're young and teach them the skills they'll need to succeed later on, then one of our greater responsibilities as citizens, as educators and as parents is to insure that every American child can read and read well. That's because literacy is the most basic currency of the knowledge economy that we're living in today.

The need to read

Only a few generations ago it was possible to enter into the workforce with a positive attitude, a strong back, willing to work. And it didn't matter if you were a high school dropout, you could go in to that factory or work on a farm and still hope to find a job that would allow you to pay the bills and raise a family.

That economy is long gone. And it's not coming back. As revolutions in technology and communications began breaking down barriers between countries and connecting people all over the world, new jobs and industries that require more skill and knowledge have

come to dominate the economy.

Whether it's software design or computer engineering or financial analysis, corporations can locate these jobs anywhere in the world, anywhere that there's an internet connection. As countries like China and India continue to modernize their economies and educate their children longer and better, the competition American workers face will grow more intense, the necessary skills more demanding. These new jobs are not simply about working hard, they're about what you know and how fast you can learn what you don't know. They require innovative thinking, detailed comprehension, and superior communication.

But before our children can even walk into an interview for one of these jobs, before they can even fill out an application or earn the required college degree, they have to be able to pick up a book and read it and understand it. Reading is the gateway skill that makes all other learning possible, from complex word problems and the meaning of our history to scientific discovery and technological proficiency. And by the way, it's what's required to make us true citizens.

In a knowledge economy where this kind of skill is necessary for survival, how can we send our children out into the world if they're only reading at a 4th-grade level? How can we do it? I don't know. But we do. Day after day, year after year. Right now, one out of every five adults in the United States cannot read a simple story to a child. During the last 20 years or so, over 10 million Americans reached the 12th grade without having learned to read at a basic level. These literacy problems start well before high school. In 2000, only 32% of all 4th-graders tested as reading-proficient.

The story gets worse when you take race and income into consideration. Children from low-income families score 27 points below the average reading level while students from wealthy families score 15 points above the average. While only one in 12 white 17-year-olds has the ability to pick up the newspaper and understand the science section, for Hispanics, the number drops to one in 50; for African

Americans, it's one in 100.

In this new economy, teaching our kids just enough so that they can get through *Dick and Jane* is not going to cut it. Over the next 10 years, the average literacy required for all American occupations is projected to rise by 14%.

It's not enough just to recognize the words on the page anymore. The kind of literacy necessary for the 21st century requires detailed understanding and complex comprehension. And, yet, every year we pass more children through schools or watch as more drop out. These are kids who will pore through the help-wanted section and cross off job after job that requires skills they don't have. Others will have to take that help-wanted section over to somebody sitting next to them and find the courage to ask, "Will you read this for me?"

We have to change our whole mindset as a nation. We're living in the 21st-century knowledge economy; but our schools, our homes, and our culture are still based around 20th-century and in some cases 19th-century expectations.

The government has a critical role to

play in this endeavor of upgrading our children's skills. This is not the place for me to lay out a long education-reform agenda; but I can say that it doesn't make sense if we have a school system designed for agrarian America and its transition into the industrial age, where we have schools in Chicago that let high school students out at 1:30 because there's not enough money to keep them there any longer, where teachers continue to be underpaid, where we are not restructuring these schools and financing them sufficiently to make sure that our children are going to be able to compete in this global economy.

There is a lot of work to do on the part of government to make sure that we have a first-class educational system, but government alone is not going to solve the problem. If we are going to start setting high standards and inspirational examples for our children to follow, then all of us have to be engaged.

There is plenty that needs to be done to improve our schools and reform education, but this is not an issue in which we can just look to some experts in

Washington to solve the problem. We're going to have to start at home. We're going to have to start with parents. And we're going to have to start in libraries. We know that children who start kindergarten with awareness of language and basic letter sounds become better readers and face fewer challenges in the years ahead. We know the more reading material kids are exposed to at home, the better they score with reading tests throughout their lives. So we have to make investments in family-literacy programs and early-childhood education so that kids aren't left behind and are not already behind the day they arrive at school.

We have to get books into our children's hands early and often. I know this is easier said than done, oftentimes. Parents today still have the toughest job in the world. And no one ever thanks parents for doing it. Not even your kids. Maybe especially your kids, as I'm learning.

Most of you are working longer and harder than ever, juggling job and family responsibilities, trying to be every-

Straight Answers from Barack Obama

Since exploding onto the American political stage with his stirring speech at the Democratic National Convention last year, Barack Obama has enjoyed extraordinary popularity as an idealist and a unifier. *American Libraries* caught up with the Illinois senator June 25 just before his keynote speech at what was probably the best-attended opening session in ALA Annual Conference history.

Can you share your memories about what libraries meant to you as you were growing up? I lived overseas for several years in Jakarta, Indonesia, when I was young, and having access to books—English-language books in particular—was just



a huge prize. So when I came back from Indonesia, the first place I wanted to be was in a library. It just always seemed to be a magical place where, if you wanted to sit there, you could learn about everything in the world.

Can you tell us more about the effect libraries have had

on you? Here's another interesting fact: People always mention libraries in terms of just being sources for reading material or research. But I probably would not be in Chicago were it not for the Manhattan public library, because I was looking for an organizing job and was having great trouble finding

a job as a community organizer in New York. The Mid-Manhattan library had these books of lists of organizations, and the librarian helped me find these lists of organizations, and I wrote to every organization. One of them wound up being an organization in Chicago that I got a job with.

Tell us something that you're not going to say in your speech. You know, I have a soft spot in my heart for librarians. Although I'll probably mention this in my speech, I have been known to misbehave in libraries.

What's your main message to librarians? That our prosperity as a nation is directly correlated to our literacy.

"READING IS THE GATEWAY SKILL THAT MAKES ALL OTHER LEARNING POSSIBLE."

where at once. When you're at home, you might try to get your kids to read, but you're competing with other by-products of the technology revolution, TVs and DVDs and video games, things they have to have in every room of the house. Children 8 to 18 spend three hours a day watching television; they spend 43 minutes a day reading.

Our kids aren't just seeing these temptations at home, they're seeing them everywhere, whether it's their friend's house or the people they see on television or a general culture that glorifies anti-intellectualism so that we have a president who brags about getting Cs. That message trickles down to our kids. It's too easy for children to put down a book and turn their attention elsewhere. And it's too easy for the rest of us to make excuses for it, pretending if we put a baby in front of a DVD that's "educational," then we're doing our jobs. If we let a 12-year-old skip reading as long as he's playing a "wholesome" video game, then we're doing okay, that as long as he's watching PBS at night instead of having a good conversation about a book with his parents, that somehow we're doing our job.

We know that's not what our children need. We know that's not what's best for them. And so as parents, we have to find the time and the energy to step in and help our children love reading. We can read to them, talk to them about what they're reading, and make time for this by turning off the television set ourselves.

Libraries are a critical tool to help parents do this. Knowing the constraints that parents face from a busy schedule and TV culture, we have to think outside the box, to dream big, like we always have in America, about how we're going to get books into the hands of our children.

Right now, children come home from their first doctor's appointment with an extra bottle of formula. They should come home with their first library card

or their first copy of *Good Night Moon*.

I have memorized *Good Night Moon*, by the way: "In the great green room there was a telephone . . ." I love that book.

It could be as easy to get a book as it is to rent a DVD or pick up McDonald's. What if instead of a toy in every Happy Meal there was a book?

Libraries have a special role to play in our knowledge economy. Your institutions have been and should be a place where parents and children come to read together and learn together. We should take our kids there more.

We should make sure our politicians aren't closing libraries down because they had to spend a few extra bucks on tax cuts for folks who don't need them and weren't even asking for them.

Opening doors

Each of you has a role to play. You can keep on getting more children to walk through your doors by building on the ideas that so many of you are already pursuing: book clubs and contests, homework help, and advertising your services throughout the community.

In the years ahead, this is our challenge, and this has to be our responsibility. As a librarian or a parent, every one of you can probably remember the look on a child's face after finishing their first book.

During the campaign last year, I was asked by a reporter from the *Chicago Sun-Times* if she could interview me about the nature of my religious faith. It was an interesting proposition. I sat down with the reporter, who asked me some very pointed questions about the nature of my faith, how it had evolved. Then the reporter asked me a surprising question. She asked me, "Do you believe in heaven? And what's your conception of it?"

I told her, I don't presume to know what lies beyond, but I do know that when I sit down with my 6-year-old and my 3-year-old at night and I'm reading a book to them and then I tuck them

in to go to sleep, that's a little piece of heaven that I hang onto.

That was about a year ago, and what's interesting now is watching my 6-soon-to-be-7-year-old reading on her own now. My 4-year old will still sit in my lap, but my 7-year-old, she lies on the table and on her own. She's got the book in front of her. She's kind of face down, propped up. And I say, "Do you want me to read to you?" "No, Daddy, I'm all right," she says, and there's a little heartbreak that takes place there.

Yet, when I watch her, I feel such joy because I know that in each of those books she's picking up, her potential will be fulfilled. That's not unique to me. It's true of all of us who are parents. There's nothing we want more than to nurture that sense of wonder in our children. To make all those possibilities and all those opportunities real for our children, to have the ability to answer the question: "What can I be when I grow up?" with the answer "Anything I want. Anything I can dream of."

It's a hope that's old as the American story itself. From the moment the first immigrants arrived on these shores, generations of parents worked hard and sacrificed whatever was necessary so that their children could not just have the same chances they had, but could have the chances they never had. Because while we can never assure that our children will be rich or successful, while we can never be positive that they will do better than their parents, America is about making it possible to give them the chance, to give every child the ability to try. Education is the foundation of this opportunity.

The most basic building block that holds that foundation together is the Word. "In the beginning was the Word."

At the dawn of the 21st century, where knowledge is literally power, where it unlocks the gates of opportunity and success, we all have responsibilities as parents, as librarians, as educators, as politicians, and as citizens to instill in our children a love of reading so that we can give them a chance to fulfill their dreams. That's what all of you do each and every day, and for that, I am grateful. ♦

**The Bronx Museum of the Arts
FY2008 Budget Hearing - November 24, 2008**

FOR THE RECORD

FY2008 Visitors

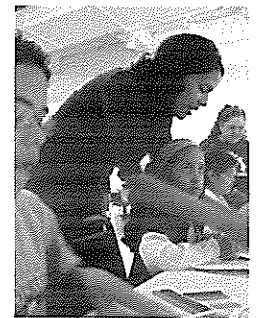
The Bronx Museum of the Arts served **20,000** children, students, community residents, artists, and general museum visitors who participated in school day, after-school, and weekend programs; **5,000** were comprised of Bronx K-12 schools, teens, and resident families. Approximately 95% of the Museum's education attendance is under the age of 21 and 55% of audiences surveyed who attend education programs are from the Bronx Empowerment Zone.



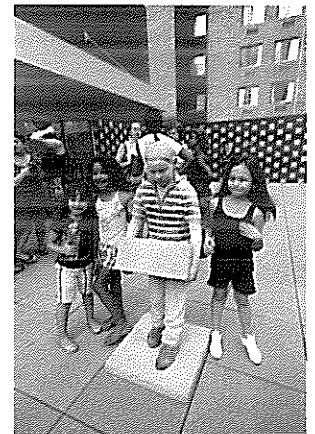
The Bronx Museum of the Arts is proud to be one of five Bronx members of the Cultural Institutions Groups (CIG). As the sole modern and contemporary art museum in the borough, the Museum provides both critically-acclaimed arts programming—exhibitions, lectures, performances, screenings, special events—and engaging education programs, filling a crucial role as partner and educator to the local Bronx community. The Museum's programming reflects the City's rich diversity and serves a crucial role in enhancing the social and cultural fabric of the Bronx.



Last year, the Bronx Museum and its CIG colleagues—Bronx County Historical Society, New York Botanical Garden, Wave Hill, Wildlife Conservation Society—provided a wide array of art, history, science, and nature enrichment programs to more than 3 million multi-generational audiences who may not otherwise have access to such services. Of this amount, more than 360,000 were New York City children who took part in on- and off-site educational programs that helped schools to build educational proficiency and enhance learning in the classroom.

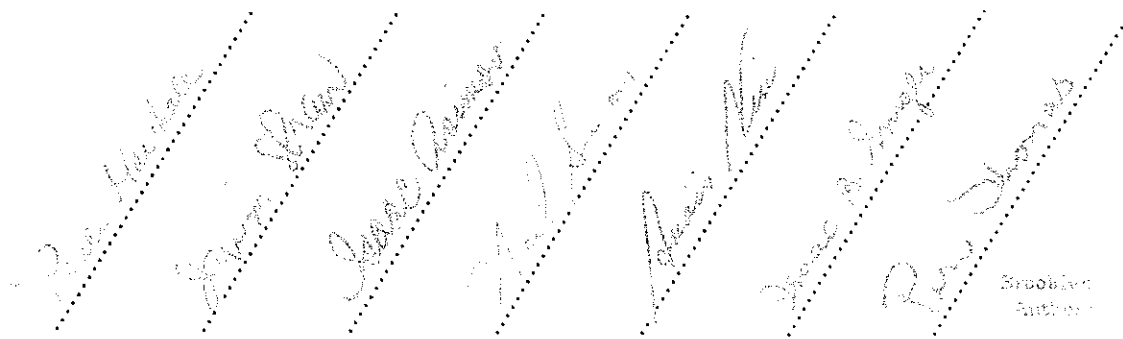


As a mid-sized institution, the Bronx Museum receives significant support through the Department of Cultural Affairs, which provides 30% of its operating budget. This investment enabled the Museum to double its education attendance in FY2008 by providing free and/or subsidized programs for visiting schools, after-school youth, and families. DCA also pays the salaries of nearly 100% of the Museum's security and maintenance staff.



Additional cuts during FY2009 will erode the Museum's ability to meet the educational and cultural enrichment needs of local Bronx audiences. To date, the Museum has faced a \$109,936 reduction from last year's levels. This substantial loss, together with reductions in corporate, foundation, and individual contributions, will force the Museum to turn away school groups who cannot pay and eliminate the availability of free programs, thereby reducing much needed services for local residents and youth during this economic downturn. We would like to impress upon the City to continue its partnership with the communities it serves by maintaining support of organizations that provide important cultural and enrichment programs during this challenging time.





NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL
INTERGROUP RELATIONS
COMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES
HEARING ON THE NOVEMBER PLAN
CITY HALL
November 24, 2008
TESTIMONY OF BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Good afternoon. I am Dionne Mack-Harvin, Executive Director of Brooklyn Public Library. I would like to thank Committee Chairmen David Weprin, Domenic Recchia and Vincent Gentile for inviting BPL to testify today concerning the City's November Financial Plan and its potential impact on BPL's operations.

With today being the first time that we have met in this setting since the start of the new fiscal year, on behalf of the BPL Board of Trustees, I want to thank Speaker Christine Quinn and the entire Council for its steadfast support for Brooklyn Public Library demonstrated in the budget adopted this past summer. We know you faced many tough choices, and your support for the continuation of full-day, six-day service at every library across the City is heartening. Thank you again.

When we last met, I discussed three ways that BPL is “working smarter” to ensure that most of what we spend goes to service that directly benefits customers. Before I move on to a discussion of the November plan, I want to highlight three additional programs that demonstrate this continued commitment to high-quality service.

Summer Reading – By any measure, Summer Reading 2008 was a tremendous success. Through this citywide collaboration with the New York and Queens Public Libraries, Brooklyn Public Library registered more than 100,000 children, teens, and yes, adults— building on the introduction of Adult Summer Reading in 2007. Total registrations grew by almost 22% when compared to last year, and BPL again had the highest number of participants of any library in New York State. We know our work in the summer makes children better students when they return to school in the fall.

Para Los Niños (For the Children) – Funded by a grant from the New York State Library, this bilingual program supports family learning and literacy among new and recent Spanish-speaking immigrants with young children. Nearly half of the borough’s population speaks a language other than English at home, and *Para Los Niños* has strengthened BPL’s Spanish-language outreach to Brooklyn’s large, increasingly diversified population drawn from different parts of Spanish-speaking Latin America. Through *Para Los Niños*, we have provided literacy services to nearly 800 families at 35 bilingual workshops at five neighborhood libraries and community partner locations.

Skills Training and Employment Program (STEP) – Given the rising unemployment figures in New York City, the creation of STEP could not be more timely. We recently completed this 18-

month workforce development program, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, which was designed to improve the job skills of Brooklyn residents and the ability of librarians to connect jobseekers to employment. Through STEP, nearly 1,500 people participated in employment workshops and other related programs, and over 400 individuals received referrals to partner agencies and internal services. STEP also supported the creation of a special collection of employment-related books, in both English and Spanish, and electronic databases. Given its success, we plan to expand the program by offering STEP services at 14 additional neighborhood libraries.

Usage Continues to Grow

Brooklyn Public Library's experience with STEP demonstrates how New Yorkers increasingly turn to their library during economic downturns, and how our programs and initiatives respond to those needs. Our first quarter and October circulation and programming data provides additional evidence that usage continues to grow during these tough times.

Overall, first quarter circulation grew by almost 5% to more than 4.5 million. During September, when the impact of the economic slowdown became more pronounced, circulation grew by more than 12% to 1.4 million—and in October, circulation expanded by more than 8% to 1.5 million.

Programming and program attendance also continues to grow. During the first quarter, we offered more than 11,000 free, high-quality public programs across the borough—an increase of 15% over the prior year. And, incredibly, more than 220,000 Brooklynites took advantage of these programs, which is 19%, or 36,000, more attendants than during the same period last year.

Impact of the November Plan

Regrettably, the proposed reductions discussed in the City's November plan put at risk many of the gains in days and hours of service that we introduced following the adoption of the 2008 budget. Before I outline BPL's plan to address these reductions, I want to emphasize that our goal is to maintain current service levels for as long as possible and to achieve the recurring savings called for in the plan through attrition.

Current Year Funding

The November plan includes a \$2.2 million, or 2.5%, reduction in current year funding. In response to this proposal, which we learned of in September, we instituted a hiring freeze, filling only critical positions. We also reduced our budgeted headcount by 34 positions. Should the current year cut be imposed, early in the upcoming calendar year we would likely eliminate Sunday service at all but our Central Library and then begin to reduce Saturday service throughout the system.

FY10 Funding

In order to achieve a recurring annual savings of \$4.2 million, or 5%, beginning in July 2009, we would continue the hiring freeze and reduce our budgeted headcount by an additional 28 positions, bringing the cumulative headcount reduction to 62. We would also have to further reduce Saturday service.

While our goal is to maintain the highest level of service possible, especially at those locations with the greatest demand, a cut of this magnitude would force BPL to reduce Saturday service hours at every location.

Out Year Funding

I want to discuss the potential impact on BPL's operations should the out-year funding presented in the Fiscal Year 2009 Adopted Budget become a reality. Given that increases above the level of funding included in last year's Executive Budget were not "base-lined," we are facing an additional reduction of \$4.7 million in Fiscal Year 2010, or a total funding reduction of \$8.9 million versus the Fiscal Year 2008 Adopted Budget.

At this level of funding, we would have little option but to eliminate an additional 85 positions, for a cumulative staff reduction of 147. Saturday service would face even greater cutbacks, with BPL only able to provide partial Saturday hours at just ten of our 60 locations. This reduction would bring our average to 41 hours of weekly service versus the 47 hours we currently provide.

Finally, I want to address the potential loss in State funding to BPL. Although the State Legislature did not reduce library funding in the Special Session held last week, the State Education Department still holds \$2.1 million of the \$8 million it allocated to BPL for 2008-2009. Any changes in State funding will have an impact on operations and services, and likely result in reductions in hours.

Our position moving forward is clear. We will continue to offer the days and hours of service that Brooklynites demand for as long as we can. We will continue to offer as many free programs as we can. And, we will continue to buy the books and periodicals that Brooklynites are borrowing in record numbers.

We know the national, state and local economies continue to slow and tax revenues continue to decline. We stand ready, like all New Yorkers, to do our fair share to help the City maintain a balanced budget. But as you can tell from the programs and initiatives that I outlined today, and from the demand for our services demonstrated by growing circulation and program attendance, we provide a unique resource that is particularly imperative during these tough times. Your strong support for the work of our staff will provide a benefit to literally hundreds of thousands of Brooklynites.

Thank you again for the Council's unwavering commitment to Brooklyn Public Library.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

Statement of Ellen Kodadek, Executive and Artistic Director

Flushing Council on Culture and the Arts/Flushing Town Hall

FOR THE RECORD

Council Member Domenic Recchia, Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations and Chairman of the Finance Committee, Council Member David Weprin.

November 24, 2008

Good afternoon. My name is Ellen Kodadek, Executive & Artistic Director of Flushing Council on Culture & the Arts (FCCA) since January 2008. I would like to thank Chairman Recchia, and Councilmember Weprin for the opportunity to speak with you today. I would also like to thank my colleagues in the cultural community for their staunch concern for our institution in this time of significant budget reductions.

We are one of the "smaller" CIG's - however, our impact on the vitality of our community is quite significant. In Fiscal year 2008, Flushing Town Hall served:

- **over 30,000 audience members** with high-quality ticketed and free arts events
- **over 2,000 seniors** through our Department for the Aging programs – across multiple council districts.
- **over 2,400 students** in our school-based enrichment programs, which includes students, parents and teachers - across multiple council districts.
- **We launched the Queens Jazz Orchestra**, a 17-piece orchestra, with Queens' own National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Jazz Master, Jimmy Heath as Music Director and Conductor. The Queens Jazz Orchestra is dedicated to preserving and rejuvenating the rich jazz tradition of Queens.
- We started a new World Music series, **New Trends/New Tracks** featuring extraordinary female vocalists who fuse music from their respective cultures with contemporary instrumentation.

- We began planning for an **FY'09 Hispanic Heritage Festival**, intended to become an annual event.

FY'08 saw great transition at Flushing Town Hall, with the hiring of a new Executive & Artistic Director in January 2008, and a new Director of Education in June 2008. Together we have developed a new and exciting format for our family and education programs – performances linked to interactive arts workshops for all ages. The numbers of audience members who are adults coming without kids, is fun to see. Staff has a renewed sense of energy and excitement. In the first 4 months of this fiscal year (FY'09), our attendance figures for expanded and re-configured arts education and senior programs has already reached unprecedented numbers, with school programs at over 1,300 and seniors at over 1,600 – all this with an education staff of 1-1/2 people. We had schools & seniors booked for our programs through the end of June 2009 – however, two weeks ago – 5 days before a contemporary dance company that the NY Times has called “superb”, we received a phone call from a local JHS cancelling 179 tickets – and we have a 300 seat theatre – they had just received a budget cut. We called them back and told them to bring the students anyway, even for \$1 a ticket, but they said they couldn't even afford the buses. Other cancellations are beginning.

The cuts we have sustained in this fiscal year to date have devastated our ability to provide year-round arts programs and educational services, having incurred a **devastating loss to FCCA/FTH of 41% of our operating support**. In addition to these losses, we have also received cuts from Department for the Aging – with our senior program support eliminated after December 31st; the elimination of non-discretionary Department of Youth & Community Development for CASA programs; and we already see reductions in foundation and corporate support.

ALL Staff have taken a 5% pay cut, and are currently also contributing 20% towards their health insurance. Two full-time positions have been eliminated (Gift Shop Manager and Director of Arts Services = Visual Arts). Their duties have been absorbed by the Executive Director and the Deputy Director. As we restructure the entire organization, four full-time salaried positions are being reduced to part-time hourly. Public hours for our galleries have been reduced to

Thursday through Sunday, noon to five – and will be further reduced to weekends only come January 2009. Our exhibition program will now consist of three local exhibits this year, instead of 4-5 professional, contemporary exhibitions, which has caused us to withdraw our application for funding from the NY State Arts Council's visual arts program. We have not hired key positions which are critical to the success of the institution, including a desperately needed Grants-Writer, Marketing & Development Associate, and a Capital Projects/Facilities Manager to manage our (circa 1862) historic building's increasing repair, preventive maintenance, and capital projects needs – including a wheelchair lift, garden renovation and brick re-pointing and portico woodwork.

We recognize that there are many issues facing the Council, and the various needs for funding support are great. However, on behalf of the 5 full-time, and 4 part-time employees that remain at Flushing Town Hall, we urge you to do all that's in your power to support our institution and the Cultural Institutions Group, as a whole.

Thank you for your time.

New York City Council Fiscal Year 2009 Mayor's November Financial Plan Hearing

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries & Intergroup Relations

Monday, November 24, 2008

Testimony submitted by David Freudenthal, Carnegie Hall Director of Government Relations

My name is David Freudenthal and I am Carnegie Hall's Director of Government Relations. I would like to thank Chairman Recchia and the Committee members for this opportunity to share with you the contribution that arts organizations like Carnegie Hall continue to make to the City—particularly in this very difficult economic environment—and also how the City's Fiscal Year 2009 budget reductions to the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) are affecting Carnegie Hall.

About Carnegie Hall As an international cultural center representing the very best in musical performance, artist development, and arts education, Carnegie Hall presents the world's greatest soloists, ensembles, and orchestras on its three stages. Highlights this season include two large-scale citywide festivals occurring in partnership with other great cultural organizations and celebrating the dynamic culture and distinctive history of American music. This fall's *Bernstein: The Best of All Possible Worlds* commemorates the life of New York City icon Leonard Bernstein. In the spring, *Honor! A Celebration of the African American Cultural Legacy*, will showcase and pay tribute to the tremendous contributions that African Americans have made to our nation's musical heritage.

As a CIG member, Carnegie Hall has a public mandate to provide the very best in music and music education to all New Yorkers. Our music education programs help us make great music accessible to as many people as possible. These programs are woven into the fabric of the

Carnegie Hall concert season. Each year they reach more than 115,000 children, students, teachers, parents, young music professionals, and adults, with service in every New York City Council District, as well as in the greater metropolitan area, across the United States, and around the world.

Our Economic Impact Like our cultural colleagues, Carnegie Hall makes a broad and major economic contribution to New York, as a result of the numbers of people who attend our concerts, participate in our educational programs and work here. This contribution greatly exceeds the operating support that we receive from the City, making the City's investment in the arts a remarkably effective one. By one direct measure, the more than 600 individuals employed by Carnegie Hall last year paid \$1.2 million in New York City and State personal income tax. Two-thirds of them live in the five boroughs, and their own spending supports the City's economy in many other ways. An additional benefit to the City is the 825,000 individuals attending performances or visiting Carnegie Hall in our 2008 season. Our data indicates that 43 percent of those individuals came from outside New York City. Every dollar that they spent during their visit—on tickets, transportation, restaurants, hotels and shopping—went directly into the city's economy. Finally, add to these the more than 10,000 people attending free Carnegie Hall concerts in venues in all five boroughs, and the commensurate economic stimulus in dozens of neighborhoods from those events. These are only some of the purely financial returns Carnegie Hall makes to the City; they do not reflect the massive contribution that Carnegie Hall makes in terms of educating the next generation of New Yorkers, enhancing the quality of life for those living in the City, attracting tourists and businesses to a great world City, building communities, etc. All of these activities play an essential part in ensuring that our City continues to compete and lead in the international marketplace.

Impacts of the FY09 Cuts Carnegie Hall receives City funding—in direct operating support, subsidized energy and capital dollars—and we leverage those public funds many times over to do the work described above and much more. In Fiscal Year 2009, Carnegie Hall's direct operating support is \$271,000 lower than the prior year, a reduction of 33%. This loss is due not

only to the cuts occurring across City agencies because of the economic downturn, but also to the elimination of City Council initiatives that directly supported this institution. Carnegie Hall has only been able to manage this loss by reducing the scope of the following three educational and community programs.

Carnegie Hall has reduced its Neighborhood Concert Series—which provides free performances citywide in community centers, libraries, after school sites and shelters—from 68 events last season to 45 events this season. The remaining concerts will continue to have a meaningful impact on diverse communities in all five boroughs, but with 28 percent fewer events, fewer New Yorkers will be offered this valuable experience.

Another affected program is LinkUP!, a school-based program for grades four through six that connects classroom music study with a concert at Carnegie Hall. By hosting six concerts in Fiscal Year 2009, down from eight in Fiscal Year 2008, we expect that 5,000 fewer students and teachers will participate.

Finally, Carnegie Hall has eliminated one of the eight planned Family Concerts (\$9 /ticket, ages 5-12), which will result in 550 fewer children and adults served by this program. In total, we estimate that access to music and the Carnegie Hall experience will be limited for an estimated 8,550 students, teachers and families across the five boroughs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today, for your interest in our activities and for your commitment to the importance of the arts and culture to New York City. We look to the City Council to help to ensure that culture and the arts continue to thrive and broaden their contribution to the lives of the people of this great city and beyond. The enormous contribution of arts and culture to this City and across so many areas of life here is among the best, the most effective, and the most important investments the City makes.

Wave Hill
675 West 252nd Street
Bronx, New York 10471

FOR THE RECORD

November 24, 2008

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

I write to you today with sincere thanks for this opportunity to share with you the effect of the recent City cuts on the operations of Wave Hill, a public garden and cultural center in the Bronx serving over 110,000 visitors annually.

We all acknowledge and recognize the challenging times in which we find ourselves, our city and our cultural institutions. Wave Hill is a strong and well run institution, and one that benefits greatly from its public/private partnership with the City of New York.

The City cuts experienced by Wave Hill since June of 2008 total \$151,375, down 14% from last year's support. This loss has a dramatic and profound impact on our work and the future security of Wave Hill. We have recently instituted a hiring freeze and have begun to consolidate positions. We anticipate the need to cut security and staff positions in the very near future. Our science education programs, which serve more than 8,300 New York City public school children and teachers, will undoubtedly be cut back. Along with the cuts from the City, we are facing across the board retrenchment from state support, foundations, corporations and individuals as a result of the economic downturn. Our hard earned and well-managed endowment has also been dramatically effected by the state of the economy. In short, it is hard to know where to turn to help keep Wave Hill vibrant and growing.

While these financial constraints exist, our visitorship has never been higher at Wave Hill. Simply put, this is because coming to Wave Hill makes people feel better. We welcome large numbers of senior citizens, families, and individuals who are seeking beauty, solace and inspiration in these extraordinarily difficult times. Our magnificent gardens, education and arts programs continue to enrich our community, and attendance at concerts and gallery exhibits is flourishing. As a resident of the Bronx for over twenty years, it is institutions like Wave Hill that give meaning, value and pleasure to my life.

On behalf of all my colleagues, I write to respectfully request the Council reconsider the current proposed cut to the CIG and work to reinstate lost funding. Many thanks for your time and kind attention.

Claudia Bonn
Executive Director and President
Wave Hill



425 Lafayette Street · New York, NY 10003 · T: 212.539.8500 · F: 212.539.8505 · publictheater.org

November 24, 2008

Dear Councilmembers:

I want to thank Chairman Recchia, and members of the Council for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of The Public Theater. The Public is a proud member of the Cultural Institutions Group and greatly appreciates the support that the Council and Mayor provide to us.

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The Public Theater serves over 250,000 visitors annually. Each summer our signature program, Shakespeare in the Park, attracts over 100,000 visitors who are able to enjoy our productions completely free. Our outdoor summer productions in Central Park draw tourists from all over the world who come to see first rate actors perform at the first outdoor Shakespeare Festival in the country. Last summer we presented five weeks of HAMLET, and eight weeks of HAIR. This was an increase from our typical ten week summer season to thirteen weeks, which was made possible by the unprecedented popularity of HAIR and the generosity of our donors. As you may know, the success of HAIR over the summer will result in a Broadway transfer, which is already generating excitement in anticipation of a March 5th opening.

Last summer was the first time in eight years that we did not receive \$100,000 from the Council to help subsidize the cost of free tickets to Shakespeare in the Park. Despite the success of last summer, this season we do not anticipate being able to provide more than ten weeks of Free Shakespeare to New York in 2009 due to budget cuts.

The support of the City not only helps us provide free Shakespeare, but also enables us to host a range of education programs such as Shakespeare Lab, Shakespeare Lab Junior and Summer Shake Up.

Shakespeare Lab is our acclaimed 13-week intensive classical education course for young adult actors. This program brings Shakespeare to local students and community members through a series of workshops focused upon reading and performing Shakespeare. The Lab recently launched a new community outreach program in the Bronx, and last summer we held Lab performances in Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx. The workshops are followed by a performance by the actors from Shakespeare Lab. By expanding the Shakespeare Lab program to include outreach allows us to return to our roots and bring Shakespeare to all five boroughs.

Since 1994, The Public has offered **Shakespeare Lab Jr.**, a free summer program of weeklong educational workshops on reading, understanding and

performing Shakespeare for high-school students from underserved neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs.

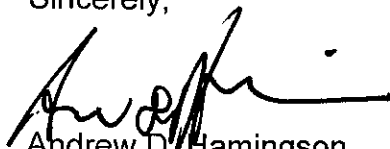
Additionally, each summer, 500 children and young people gather at the Delacorte Theater for **Summer Shake Up**. This provides an imaginative introduction to Shakespeare through sonnet writing and interactive sessions with Shakespeare in the Park performers, costume and lighting directors, prop masters and composers. Summer Shake Up attracts a diverse group of students and their parents to the Delacorte.

These vital programs are also facing extensive cuts through NYSCA. Without these necessary funds the quality of the programs we are able to offer will suffer, programs will need to be shortened and we will not be able to subsidize tuition for the students.

After cuts made at budget adoption and in the recent modification, our overall expense funding from the Council and Mayor for FY09 is down 24% from FY08, or a total of \$254,604. In addition to the Council cut of \$100,000, we also lost \$100,000 in supplemental support toward Rush Tics, a program which provides \$20 tickets for all performances at The Public. We are facing decreased giving in corporate philanthropy, individual giving, other government sources, and our annual gala. The Public cannot weather additional cuts from the City and continue to provide the level of desired service to New York City. Mayor Michael Bloomberg in his November Plan, stressed the importance of the performing arts to New York City—it is the reason that people travel to our city—to see shows in our theaters, to visit our museums, to attend concerts at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. We urge you to not impose greater cuts on our budgets.

Finally, our DCA funding supports 21% of our staff and future cuts will potentially result in job loss. I understand that under the current economic climate, painful cuts must be made throughout the city that will be felt by all. However, I ask that the Council and Mayor recognize that the CIG's have already experienced severe cuts this fiscal year and that when cuts are proposed, they come through to the CIG at a higher percentage than proposed, as witnessed by the most recent cut of 2.5% which turned into 4.2% to the CIG. Again, I urge to not harm this City's most vital assets—the Performing Arts!

Sincerely,



Andrew D. Hamingson
Executive Director



FOR THE RECORD

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**Written Testimony of New York City Center for the City Council's
Committees on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and Intergroup Relations
and Finance**

November 24, 2008

New York City Center is grateful to Chairmen Weprin and Recchia for holding this important hearing and pleased to submit the following written testimony.

As you know, New York City's Cultural Institutions Group has endured substantial cuts in funding from the City, losing not only baseline operating support but a variety of earmarked grants for security, education and other specific programs that have greatly compounded the PEG reductions to result in a year-on-year reduction in City funding of 23% for our institution. At City Center, we have also seen a dramatic impact on the funding available at New York City public schools for participation in our widespread arts education programming throughout the five boroughs. While we subsidize student participation fees up to 70% of the actual cost of participation, school fees are a vital component of our education budget. This has resulted in a 50% reduction in the number of schools that have committed to our upcoming in-depth dance outreach programs compared to this time last year.

In the current economic environment, it is nearly impossible to offset this decline with private support, and we fear that these losses will necessitate severe cuts in outreach programming as we plan for the 2009/10 season. We implore the Council to carefully consider the severe impact of further cuts to cultural institutions and understand the unique, multiplying effect further reductions will have on CIG institutions that are reliant on funding from so many different City agencies to sustain our programming.

TESTIMONY OF THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN
THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
Cultural Affairs, Libraries &
International Intergroup Relations Committee and
Finance Committee

FOR THE RECORD

Monday, November 24, 2008
1:00pm

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During difficult financial times, the City's funding support for cultural institutions is more important than ever. The Garden is now confronted with funding challenges on many fronts. The Wall Street crisis directly jeopardizes our support from individuals and foundations and our endowment has suffered like every other investment fund. This financial predicament has already resulted in cuts by the City. More cuts are projected in this and the next fiscal year by the City and the State, and federal support for ongoing and future projects is also in question.

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Funding support for Bronx Green-Up has been made possible through a partnership with the Department of Sanitation's (DSNY) Composting program. However, it is anticipated that DSNY will be cutting all of its funding for the Composting program in the next fiscal year and it is expected that this will require cut backs in the Bronx Green-Up; programming.

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cultural crafts and activities and sample special foods of each region featuring homegrown produce and native recipes. In addition, we sponsor special community events for Black History and Puerto Rican Heritage Month and participate in events outside the Garden such as parades and street fairs. Special events like Community Holiday Open Houses and Bronx Day are held each year. The Garden also encourages community groups to use its facilities for meetings and events.

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The grounds display masterpieces, some dating to the 1840s, by many of the nation's most accomplished architects and designers, both past and contemporary. The Botanical Garden's innovative programs, unparalleled resources, and talented staff are rivaled by few and exceeded by none!

OUR CHALLENGES

During these trying financial times, the City's "across the board" budget cuts have unintentionally affected cultural institutions disproportionately because we are confronted with funding challenges on many fronts. The current value of the Garden's invested endowment has dropped substantially, individual and foundation support is in jeopardy, and cuts on the public sector side are only compounding *our Wall Street problem*.

On top of this are cuts to the Composting program, which supports Bronx Green-Up; and Urban Advantage, which supports our educational programming. The double digit percentage reduction in City support, as compared to last year, is likely to be mirrored by State budget cuts. Again, this has already been magnified by the drop in our endowment's value and the likely reduction in support from individuals and foundations.

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TESTIMONY OF THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN
THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
Cultural Affairs, Libraries &
International Intergroup Relations Committee and
Finance Committee

Monday, November 24, 2008
1:00pm

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FOR THE RECORD

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Thank you.



Queens Museum of Art
New York City Building
Flushing Meadows Corona Park
Queens, NY 11368-3398
718.592.9700
www.queensmuseum.org

**Testimony of Tom Finkelpearl, Executive Director, Queens Museum of Art
City Council Joint Hearing of Cultural Affairs and Finance Committees
November 24, 2008**

Good afternoon Chairman Recchia, Chairman Weprin, esteemed Council members and colleagues. My name is Tom Finkelpearl and I am the Executive Director of the Queens Museum of Art. I would like to begin by thanking each of you for your dedicated partnership during my two-year tenure as the Chair of the Cultural Institutes Group and for caring enough about the state of the City's cultural community to hold these hearings.

It is not news to any of us that the economic morass that we are engulfed in requires a dedicated reconsideration of how the city and each CIG institution allocate its funding. As a museum director now faced with deciding between cutting jobs, programs and public hours, I know that there are no "good" ideas, and recognize the difficulty in trying to equitably address the current budgetary issues.

That said, I would like to take a moment to discuss the way in which the FY09 adopted budget and November revision have taken an unfairly heavy hand to the budgets of the CIG. On a whole, as we stand today, the CIG is set to receive \$14.9 million less than we did in FY08. That means that while the rest of the city endured a pair of 2.5% PEGs, the CIG was asked to swallow a cumulative cut of 18%. The \$14.9 million dollars represents cuts to both union and non-union jobs, family workshops, school programs, world-class exhibitions, and senior programs that will all face being eliminated. This is clearly something that we do not want to do.

The 131 year old compact with the City and the public/private partnership that it established, specifically discusses the responsibility that we each have to not only house collections and present exhibitions and performances, but to educate the public through these programs. These

cuts are directly affecting our collective ability to live up to our own standards of what our institutions can be and how we can serve our publics. An art museum is more than a hall with paintings on the wall and a zoo is more than a habitat for animals, yet with these cuts, we are all seriously considering if we can afford to be anything but.

I would now like to shift your attention to one other nuance of this budget crunch. As you know, DCA funds is but one element of the City funding that we all rely on. Many of us receive funding from the City Council, the Borough Presidents, and various city agencies, including but not limited to the Department for Youth and Community Development and the Department for the Aging. If I can, I would like to use my own institution to show you how the 2.5% budget cuts trickle down to a much more devastating decrease in funding to an entity like the Queens Museum of Art.

Since the adoption of the FY09 budget, the Queens Museum has lost:

- **\$268,045** in DCA funding
- **\$50,000** in Queens Borough President Funding
- **\$68,500** in DYCD CASA funding due to the elimination of the RFP CASA grant Program and the lowering of Discretionary awards from \$25,000 to \$19,000
- **\$58,000** in DFTA Senior Funding.
-

That is a total of **\$444,545** in city funding that no longer exists for us. That is a cut of more than 26% of the Queens Museum's city funding, and these funding cuts have immediate and direct consequences – cancellation of senior programs, afterschool programs and free weekend tours. In addition, I am leaving 4 open positions unfilled and thereby cutting our staff by 10%; furloughing the entire staff for two weeks without pay; and then still looking at running a deficit.

I can admit to you that I don't like to see my institution lose the momentum that it has gained over the past six years, and I don't like to see my staff asking out HR Department for advice on filing for unemployment, but this is exactly what is happening. Yes, we will continue to serve our communities to the best of our abilities, but our abilities have been severely hampered by

these cuts-cuts not of 2.5% or 5%, but instead of 26%. I am afraid to say that while my own situation seems quite difficult, my colleagues are suffering far more than I am.

I am here today only to bring this to your attention so that you will be armed with both data and anecdotal information to help us maintain the level of service to our shared constituencies – a level that they have rightly grown accustomed to.

Thank you for your time and Happy Thanksgiving.

Tom Finkelpearl, Executive Director

Queens Museum of Art



**STATEMENT BY THE AMERICAN CHEMISTRY
COUNCIL
BEFORE THE
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE
PUBLIC COMMENT**

NOVEMBER 24, 2008

“Budget Proposal to Tax Plastic Bags”

The Progressive Bag Affiliates (PBA) is an industry group of the American Chemistry Council (ACC). The PBA represents some of the nation’s largest plastic bag manufacturers, resin producers and bag recyclers, and works to encourage the environmentally responsible use and recycling of plastic bags. We agree that plastic bags do not belong in streets and in landfills, and support the Legislature’s desire to reduce environmental impacts of litter and waste.

However, we also wanted to bring to your attention that, contrary to public belief, plastic bags are actually an environmentally sound choice. Compared to other bag alternatives, plastic bags use significantly less energy to produce, emit less greenhouse gas emissions during the manufacturing process, use less water, and actually produce less solid waste.

ACC/PBA is concerned over, and oppose, Mayor Bloomberg’s proposal regarding the taxing of plastic bags. We believe this is the wrong policy at the wrong time. With so many other cost increases foisted on consumers and taxpayers and the dire financial straits many New Yorkers are facing in these uncertain economic times, we believe this proposal simply does not make sense either from a financial or environmental perspective.

We hear often the familiar refrain that the tax is working in Ireland and has resulted in a decrease in the use of plastic bags. While true to a certain extent there have been huge downsides to the plastic bag tax which never seem to get air time or public attention.

For example, the plastic bag tax has actually resulted in *more* plastic bags being used in Ireland after the tax than before it.¹ The tax eliminated plastic shopping bags in Ireland, but didn’t stop consumers from using plastic bags. In fact, the total amount of plastic bags used in Ireland

¹

increased by 10 percent. While sales of plastic shopping bags declined almost 90 percent; sales of other plastic bags, such as garbage bags, increased by 400 percent.

New York City Council Public Comment
Plastic Bag Tax Proposal
November 24, 2008

Another refrain being extorted claims the tax led to less litter in Ireland and therefore improves the environment. In reality, plastic bags were a small component of litter before and after the tax. Prior to the bag tax, the 2001 Annual Report from the National Litter Monitoring System indicated that plastic shopping bags were only .075 percent of the litter stream. The Irish Government has not proven that there has been any reduction in volume or weight of litter or waste going to landfills since their bag tax commenced operation. Further, retailers have switched to paper bags which require 220 percent more energy to produce and release 300 percent more greenhouse gas emissions than plastic bags. In the US, plastic bags make up a tiny fraction (less than 0.5 percent) of the municipal solid waste stream.

Finally, the claim that Irish retailers are some how benefitting from the tax, does not reflect reality. Retailers in Ireland have reported negative impacts of the bag tax, including the loss of in-store carrying devices and increased shoplifting. RGDATA, the trade body representing small to medium-sized retailers in Ireland, reported the loss of 450 wire baskets and carts per month by each retailer on average – a loss of approximately 24 million Euros per year. According to the January 2003 issue of the Irish retail trade journal *Shelf Life*, the tax has also led to an increase in instances of shoppers filling their carts and walking out of the store without paying at a cost to retailers of 10 million Euros per year.

Indeed, it is ironic that although plastic bags are being vilified in the media and by environmental groups as ‘filling up landfills’, paper products actually accounts for over 40% of landfill waste.

Plastic Bags Are An Environmentally Responsible Choice

As you consider this proposal, please consider the following information about plastic bags obtained from a Life Cycle Assessment of plastic bags compared to other alternatives that was conducted by the Boustead Environmental Consulting firm in 2007²:

- plastic bags require 40% - 70% less energy to manufacture than other bags, including paper bags;
- plastic bags generate less than half the greenhouse gas emissions that other bags do;
- plastic bags generate 80% less solid waste than paper; and
- plastic bags use less than 5% of the water used to manufacture other types of bags.

² Boustead Consulting, “Life Cycle Assessment for Three Types of Grocery Bags - Recyclable Plastic; Compostable, Biodegradable Plastic; and Recycled, Recyclable Paper,” 2007,

² GUA - Gesellschaft für umfassende Analysen, The Contribution of Plastic Products to Resource Efficiency, Vienna, 2005, <http://www.plasticseurope.org/Content/Default.asp?PageID=517#>

Plastic bags are fully recyclable, and we are very pleased to report that plastic recycling rates in the U.S. are increasing in double digits as consumers are becoming more aware of environmentally responsible practices.

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In 2006, over 812,000,000 pounds of plastic bags and other types of non-rigid plastic films were recycled in the U.S. This figure represented a 24% increase in the recycling rates from 2005. Plastic bags are also highly reusable. Over 92% of consumers report that they reuse plastic bags around their home for taking lunches to work, carrying extra clothes, as waste can liners, for car litter, and of course, for pet waste disposal.

Retailers provide plastic bags because they are strong, inexpensive, and require less storage space on the stores' back shelves. A single plastic bag weighs 7-8 grams; however, it can hold up to 50 pounds of product – almost 3,000 times its own weight.

The resource and environmental efficiency of plastic bags does not end with manufacturing. **It takes only one truck to transport the same number of plastic bags as seven trucks transporting an equal number of paper bags.** This provides the additional benefit of decreasing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, because fewer trucks transporting plastic bags on the road means less congestion.

Recycling Plastic Bags Is A Sustainable Solution

Due to increasing costs of virgin resin, recyclable plastic materials are simply becoming too valuable to waste. Despite numerous public debates about banning plastic bags, the fact is that the majority of localities are deciding instead to promote recycling over a ban. Only five localities to date have voted to ban plastic bags entirely, and these votes were taken despite the environmental and economic considerations of doing so.

The plastics recycling industry in the U.S. is experiencing a robust demand for recyclable plastic bags. Innovative recyclers like the Hilex and Trex companies are already working with retailers across the country to collect plastic bags and other plastic films (such as newspaper and drycleaning bags, and retail store shrink wrap) which is easily transformed into new high-recycled content green building materials, such as plastic/wood composite decking, fencing, park benches, picnic tables and similar products. The 24% increase in recycling rates in just one year indicates that, although relatively new, plastic bag and film recycling is growing very fast.

Lawmakers Are Increasingly Supporting Recycling Over Banning

Recent State and municipal legislation is further increasing the trend towards increased plastic bag and film recycling. Inspired by voluntary efforts to recycle plastic bags, more than a dozen municipal legislative bodies around the country are considering enacting legislation to require plastic bag recycling at the local level. From large metro cities like Chicago and Phoenix, to entire states like California, New York, Rhode Island, and Illinois, legislators are moving toward

encouraging plastic bag recycling as the more sustainable way to address environmental concerns associated with plastic bags.

This particular point should not get lost in the debate. For more than two decades, both the public and private sectors have spent millions of dollars developing a recycling infrastructure and working to create an environmental mindset among consumers in order to encourage recycling and create new markets for recycled materials. This in turn has created new recycling businesses that employ workers that produce recycled products. If a primary material driving the recycling industry—plastic bags—is banned, it will have a direct, negative impact as the supply

New York City Council Public Comment

Plastic Bag Tax Proposal

November 24, 2008

of bags available for recycling dries up, negating the money, time, and public education efforts that both businesses and the environmental movement have been investing in for years.

Reducing, Reusing and Recycling Plastic Bags Should Be Encouraged

We believe that the most meaningful approach to addressing litter and landfill concerns is to actively promote increased recycling. Recycling is a positive and sustainable environmental solution that requires the active participation, commitment, and collaboration of industry, government, non-profit groups, and consumers.

Please Give Recycling A Chance

We urge you not to undo the plastic bag recycling law that you recently enacted, but instead give the new law a chance to go into effect and be allowed adequate time to produce results.

Recycling is environmentally sustainable, and encouraging more New York City residents to do the right thing by bringing their plastic bags back to a store would result in a win-win for both the environment *and* the recycling industry.

Therefore, we ask the City Council to reject the proposal to tax plastic bags and let the City's recycling law take full effect. Thank you for your time and consideration of our information and our point of view.

Sincerely,

Stephen Rosario, CAE
Director, Northeast Region
American Chemistry Council
(518) 432-7835



**Testimony before the New York City Council Finance Committee
Comment on the Mayor's November Financial Plan
November 24, 2008**

Good afternoon and thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Terri Jackson and I am the Government Relations Officer at the Brooklyn Museum.

The Brooklyn Museum is a not-for-profit fine art museum, and it is one of the largest in the nation. The mission of the Brooklyn Museum is to act as a bridge between the rich artistic heritage of world cultures, as embodied in its collections, and the unique experience of each visitor. The Brooklyn Museum seeks to be the one of the most visitor friendly of any New York art museum and to welcome everyone into an accessible and open environment to explore one of the world's great collections, and foster personal understanding of how art, culture, and community are related. The welcoming aspect is evident in our glass entrance and is manifested in every aspect of our activities and programming. The Brooklyn Museum is also a member of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG), a distinguished group of 34 cultural institutions located on city property and/or housed in city owned buildings. Like many CIG's, the Brooklyn Museum is the steward of a city-owned historic building.

The Brooklyn Museum is proud to be a part of New York City's vibrant, innovative, and diverse cultural community. We are also proud of the historic partnership between the Museum and the City of New York. We work to sustain a standard of excellence in all of the services we provide to our constituents that include, school children, community members, local, regional and international visitors, and our committed staff members. The Museum offers extraordinary programs for children, families, and adults. In Fiscal Year 2008, the Museum provided vital education services to nearly 50,000 school children, arts education and professional development programs for 2,239 teachers, and created life-long learning opportunities for 22,327 families and adults. And the Museum hosted 439, 648 visitors. In addition, the Museum provides 287 full and part-time jobs, almost 60% are union positions that contribute to the City's tax base.

The Museum contributes to the local economy. Attendance at the Museum's well-known free community program, *First Saturdays* reached 12,000 last April during a popular exhibition by Japanese

artist Murakami. Since its inception in 1998, *First Saturdays* has evolved into one of the most popular community events in the New York metropolitan region, receiving overwhelming community and critical response, introducing new and often under-served communities to the arts and museums in general. Free programs, like *First Saturdays* also help support local businesses who use the event as a marketing tool to attract visitors to their establishments.

With the support of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the Brooklyn Museum has undertaken necessary capital projects to maintain, preserve, and upgrade this City owned building, and national treasure. The current capital project at the Museum, the Basement Service Extension, employs trades people in all the major trades of the building industry. Representing a total cost of around \$14.5 million approximately half of that number goes to wages for trades people. The trades represented are General Trades, Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, Fire Protection, and Sprinkler, and there are many additional services supported by the project including testing, expediting, design, furniture and equipment supplies that are paid monthly. At the same time, material suppliers off site are supported by our project. These are the suppliers of concrete, brick, steel and the myriad of other materials that constitute the building. This capital project, and many others over the years, has had a positive impact on the local and regional economy.

We understand that the City is struggling with a budget deficit, and the need to create a budget that serves the needs of all residents. While we understand the challenges facing our City, we also firmly believe that art is not a luxury. The Museum and the services, programming, and exhibitions we provide, in addition to the staff we employ make us an integral part of the City's economy and we are part of the economic solution. We believe that funding for the arts is the right thing to do. It is a secure and high-yield investment. According to a report by the Alliance for the Arts conducted in 2005, not-for-profit culture contributed \$5.8 billion to the local economy, was responsible for 40,460 jobs and generated \$170 million in taxes.¹ Few cultural institutions can sustain substantial reductions in City financial support without disastrous damage to both infrastructure and services. Cultural institutions are one of the critical engines of New York City's economy and an essential element of our extraordinary quality of life.

The continued reduction of City funding to the Brooklyn Museum will translate into removing employees and drastically reducing services to the community. At a time, when private funding is scarce the City must work to preserve funding for cultural institutions. Our City's greatest economic and tourism engine, the not-for-profit cultural community will be undermined at a time when it is needed the most. We urge the City to consider the vast economic contributions that cultural institutions make to the local and regional economy, the education services and programming we provide to our community, and the quality of life of New York residents and visitors.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

¹ Alliance for the Arts. "Arts as an Industry." P. 32.

**Testimony of Daniel Slippen
Senior Director, Intergovernmental Relations
American Museum of Natural History
to
NYC Council Cultural Affairs, Libraries, International Intergroup Relations Committee
Monday, November 24, 2008
Council Chambers, City Hall**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

The American Museum of Natural History was founded by the State of New York in 1869 and became the first member of the CIG in 1877. It has become an internationally preeminent scientific research and educational institution, committed to communicating scientific knowledge and the diversity of the world's cultures to the broadest audience possible. Over the 139 year history of the Museum, it has grown from one building to 26 interconnected buildings covering 1.6 million square feet and has become one of the most popular destinations in New York and the country. According to Zagat, the Museum is the most visited family attraction in New York City and the third most visited in the country, behind only Disney World and Epcot Center. The Museum generates more than \$400 million per year in economic activity in NYC and employs more than 1,300 individuals—approximately 400 of whom are union employees in either DC 37, Local 3, or Local 306.

We all know the tough economic times we as a country, state, and city are challenged with and we understand that tough decisions are being made. At the Museum, we have eliminated positions and continue to make thoughtful decisions about any vacant positions. We have eliminated and modified key education programs; cancelled a very popular evening music event called Starry Nights, which was held monthly in the Museum's Rose Center; and, in light of the most recent reductions, we are carefully reviewing the Museum's operations.

Although difficult choices are being made, it is critical to recognize and appreciate the key role that the cultural institutions in NYC play, not only as tourist attractions, but as important education providers. Since its founding in 1869, the Museum has been an educational institution training teachers, nurturing future scientists, and engaging families in the wonders of science and the natural world. More than 370,000 New York City public schoolchildren visit the Museum in school and camp groups every year, more than 1,000 NYC schoolchildren take part in our after-school programs, more than 6,500 NYC teachers participate in our professional development programs to further their teaching skills, and more than 100 schoolchildren participate in our science rich internship programs. In addition, the Museum extends its service through community-based programming where our

Moveable Museum fleet visits hundreds of schools, community centers, and libraries throughout the year—serving more than 31,000 NYC schoolchildren, teachers, and parents.

Founded as an institution of learning, we continue to explore new ways of contributing to science education for New York City schoolchildren and our visitors; however, due to the 22% budget reduction the Museum has received in the FY09 adopted budget and the November Financial Plan, the Museum must make significant changes in how it provides these services.

These changes include the cancellation of its *Museum Education and Employment Program (MEEP)*, which has been a long-standing educational program, where approximately 50 18-21 year old New York City residents are trained in the natural sciences, anthropology, education, and museum management for four weeks, followed by six weeks of Museum employment as a Summer Youth Guide. MEEP is the largest workforce development program for young adults offered by any of the City's cultural institutions and was initiated and funded by the City Council.

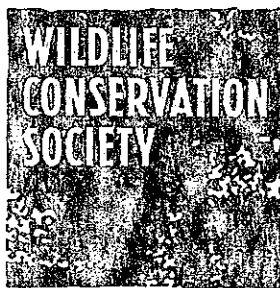
The Museum also had to reduce the number of free after-school science courses, which in FY08 had approximately 750 students enrolled in 50 courses. In FY09, the Museum has reduced the number of course

offerings to 30, with a percentage of slots being fee-based. This program has long been funded through the City Council.

The Museum will also discontinue accepting students into the *High School Science Research Program (HSSRP)* after May 2009. HSSRP is an after-school internship program for students interested in gaining hands-on research experience. High school students are exposed to advanced scientific material and research techniques. The goal of this program is to find students who demonstrate a keen interest in science and provide them with the knowledge and experience to work towards a career in the scientific world. Currently there are 35 high school students enrolled in this program. HSSRP has long been funded through funds from the City Council.

We as cultural institutions understand the economic situation the City is in; however, investing in the City's cultural is key not only to sustaining an industry that has made NYC the cultural capital of the world, but is key to assisting the City's formal education system in educating the next generation of scientists.

I thank the Chairman for his leadership on behalf of the cultural community of New York City and for the opportunity to brief you on the implications the reductions have had on the museum's educational programs.



Testimony of
John F. Calvelli
Executive Vice-President, Public Affairs
Wildlife Conservation Society
Before the New York City Council Committee on
Cultural Affairs, Libraries & International Intergroup Relations and the Committee on
Finance
November 24, 2008

Good afternoon Chairman Recchia and Chairman David Weprin, members of the Cultural Affairs Committee and Finance Committee. My name is John F. Calvelli, Executive Vice-President at the Wildlife Conservation Society. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today.

WCS has been dedicated to saving wildlife and wild places through its management of the world's largest system of urban wildlife parks that includes the New York Aquarium, the Bronx Zoo, Prospect Park, Central Park and the Queens Zoo. With a combined collection of more than 20,000 animals, WCS' zoos and aquarium serve as the foundation of the WCS mission.

I am here to speak about Council funded initiatives, critical funding that was eliminated in fiscal year 2009. It included such funding as leadership, new needs and security. This loss of funding totaled \$10,391,000 for the CIGs. The Council investment was unique because it strengthened and leveraged the Administration's private/public partnership with the CIGs. The CIGs are in many council districts and provide unparalleled local and citywide services. The loss of this Council investment, the mayoral cuts and proposed loss of operating support on the state level may bring institutions to a breaking point that many may never recover. The Bronx Zoo, Brooklyn Botanical Garden, New York Botanical Garden, and the New York Aquarium in addition to losses on the city level now face a potential 55% state cut that goes directly to the maintenance of our living collections.

Examples of the impact of lost council initiative funding are deep. The New York Aquarium received \$75,000 in FY 08 as part of the Security Initiative. These funds allowed us to hire a team of four part-time security aides who played a critical role in providing a safe and secure facility for both our visitors and our

precious living collection. Although the institution is clearly committed to this goal, the needs of the living collection and the necessity to maintain essential infrastructure have impeded our ability to increase funding in this area. Also, the Bronx Zoo used to receive \$400,000 from the Council and that went to fund 11 positions; mostly zoo keepers.

In addition, the Museum of the City of New York and the American Museum of Natural History had to dismantle education programs and even lay off vital jobs such as security. Carnegie Hall had to reduce programming for a popular program named *Neighborhood Concerts*; these concerts were free and held in most council districts. The Brooklyn Botanical Garden used to receive \$200,000 in leadership funding to support Project Green Reach, BBG's science-focused school outreach program that plays an extremely important role in the education of the 2,500 annual participants from Brooklyn's primary schools; it is now defunct. With the loss of the council initiatives CIGs will be further constrained in providing core services to every neighborhood each of you represent.

The current news on the state of the economy is not welcoming and in this time of economic uncertainty it makes support for the CIGs all the more important because everyday New Yorkers need us more.

The economic downturn has left families with less financial opportunities to travel. Cultural institutions like the Bronx Zoo and New York Aquarium appeal to a diverse group of people and will be a place where more families will visit as many will not be able to afford to take travel outside of the New York Metropolitan area.

We saw this phenomenon take shape in an astounding way. In April, the Bronx Zoo experienced an unprecedented 263,000 visitors in seven days, and in one day brought a record 83,331 visitors. That was the highest number of visitors in one day since 1941 and the second highest attendance in the history of the Zoo. Why did so many people come to the Zoo? It was a day the Zoo does not charge admission, it was warm and sunny, and New York public schools were on vacation. In every other way, *except for the City's current economic climate*, the day was unremarkable. With less available spending money, people came to the Bronx Zoo and New York Aquarium. WCS believes this trend of increased visitors will continue to grow as people search to find inexpensive ways to spend time with their families. **Increased visitation means increased expenses as demand for our programs and services rise.**

The citizens of New York need us more than ever and the loss of the Council initiative funding may jeopardize our ability to provide support to New Yorkers in this time of economic upheaval. The funding from the New York City Council was a lifeline where private dollars fell short. **As general operating support, it provided for staff salaries such as zoo keepers, security, maintenance and horticulture.** Our collection care and facility maintenance continues to grow and the Council funding was invaluable. **This loss when visitor demand is increasing may reduce our positive contribution to our local economy and neighboring communities.**

As we sit here the incoming leadership in Washington DC is working to create a stimulus package that will address the negative impacts of the economy and working to save and maintain industries that provide stability to the national economy. I ask that New York City Council think about doing something similar for sectors vital to the stability of New York City's economy such as the tourism/cultural sector.

The Wildlife Conservation Society looks forward to working with you to ensure the cultural institution community maintains the necessary resources to continue our mission and to provide stability to the New York City economy. The City Council's support is critical to that end.

Thank you.

Caregiver, Social Adult Day + Overnight Respite Program

November 19, 2008

New York City
City Council

FOR THE RECORD


To Whom It May Concern:

I firmly disagree with any decision to close down the outstanding facility – Ridgewood Bushwick Respite Center. To say that this would be a huge mistake, is a **definite understatement**. Alzheimers is an emotionally horrific disease for both the patients and their families. Not only has this facility proven to be a tremendous service for the member, it provides a period of relief for their families as well; especially those who need to be employed. The Ridgewood Bushwick Respite Center serves as an arena of socialization, recreation, and a safe haven for these unfortunate people. This center is not only essential for the well-being of the members but it also provides peace and contentment to the member's families, knowing that their loved one is safe and well taken care of.

I personally know the staff, since my mother is currently a member. I can honestly say that I feel as though they are my own family. They treat every individual with unbelievable kindness and patience, such behavior that one would think would exclusively be demonstrated only onto their own family. The sensitivity and love that is projected on to these people is incomparable to any other Senior Center I have been associated with.

I know I speak for many families. The closing down of this facility would be a grave injustice to all involved, especially the seniors and the ill, who enthusiastically look forward to going to this center everyday. To take it away would be like refusing to give medicine to the sick, or blood to someone who critically needs it to survive. This center serves as survival for many, how could anyone in good conscience take it away?

Attached, please find a list of signatures from fellow New Yorkers who fully agree and support these services.

Sincerely,

(Mary DiMambro
Middle Village, New York

Thomson

Thomson

Kenneth Jones

E. S. Am

Robert Palmer

Don

Inoue Sakura

Gene Sabato

Kisha Clark

Michael Lewis

R. M. Higgin

Yvonne Tripoli

Yvonne Tripoli

Matthew Simone

EIEI G. McKinnon

Bing Ho

Sara Clay

Joe Vd

Thomson

Joseph R. Adams Jr.

Samuel Jones Jr.

Thomson

Queen 11/1/4

Queens 11/20

Queens 11/

QUEENS

Queen

QUEENS

QUEENS

Queens

Glendale Queens

Queens

Ridgewood

Ridgewood

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|------------------|---|--|
| PATRICIO CAMACHO | — | MINEOLA, NY, 11501 |
| FRANK DZIUBA | — | LEVITTOWN NY 11756 |
| Allen GAY | | BKlyn N.Y 11234 |
| Robert Clemente | — | ROOSEVELT Glendale NY 11388 |
| George MARINCHAK | | Green Point BKLYN N.Y. 11222 |
| DOUGLAS CHIN | | Floral Park NY 11001 |
| Michael Seewald | — | Ridgewood NY 11385 |
| Ron Plumer | — | Floral Park NY 11001 |
| Chf. | — | Corona NY 11368 |
| Steven L. Bader | | Glendale NY 11385 |
| Joynt Runk | | Ridgewood NY 11383 |
| T. Chapman | | Bklyn NY 11207 |
| Alfred Tan | | RIDGEWOOD 11385 |
| Peter Bobbin | | Maspeth 11378 |
| Kelley R. Cabett | | BKlyn N.Y 11207 |
| Yusuf Vasa | | Ridgewood 11385 |
| Andrew Levors | | Brooklyn NY 11234 |
| J. Rattaloh | | Elmont, NY 11003 |
| Qaida L. Mendez | | BKlyn NY 11213 |
| Michel Di Muro | | Roseland N.Y. 11368 |

Karaya Yun ~~NYC~~ NY.

~~NYC~~ - Maspeth, Queens

E. Brunches New Gardens

Robert Victor

J. D. S. Rockaway NY

John Hughes Middle Village NY

Yvonne De Leo Ozone Park, NY 11417

Mary Itax - Glendale, NY

Joann Rodriguez Middle Village NY

Catherine Santora Middle Village NY

sd

Ginette Rapoport Howard Beach NY.
Johnnie Atjes, Middle Village, NY
Alyson Felcher Belle Harbor NY

Glenda Kaye Woodall Hempstead NY.
Phyllis Foo, Long Beach, NY

Jason Greco, Valley Stream, NY
Paul Karonick, South Richmond Hill, NY

K. G., Ozone Park, NY

Josephine Graci Staten Island, NY.

Noreen Longconio - So. Ozone Park, NY.

A. H., Ozone Park, NY

Frank Cruz Rosedale, NY.

R. A. Canto, Ozone Park, NY

April Grosso, Woodhaven, NY

Grace Zullenberg Ozone Park, NY

Debra Willins

101-02

Rockaway Blvd. Ozone Park

Heidi Bland Ozone Park, NY

Andrea Morris - Valley Stream, NY 11580

Richard Kech Syosset NY

Madeline Pladell, Howard Beach, N.Y. 11414

Bridget Jordan

R. Muller

Alexis Chen

Kim Lee

J FANLEY

James Rahner

Christine Byrne

Chloe Wilson

Julia Medina

Kenneth Hager

Stephanie Strachan

Maureen Wilson

Jo Anne Copeland

C. VA

And Defu

Joseph Langman

Michael Smith

Wick

Michele Cacioppo

Van M DM..

Bklyn, NY 11222

Ridgewood, N.Y. 11385

Ridgewood NY 11385

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RIDGEWOOD, 11385

Ridgewood 11385

P.O. Box 860402
Ridgewood, NY 11386-0402

Ridgewood 11385

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Jo Ann Mangavacine
Betty J. Gaglione
Eileen J. Banner
Thomas M. [unclear]
Patricia A. O'Brien
Walter Anasta
Regina M. Horton
Joy Grieb
Adam Landman
Barbara Fischer
Lisa Yikiel
Kerstin
Pat Miller
Pat Green
Orlanda Joncalves

Woodhaven Queens NY
Howard Beach, N.Y.
Ozone Park, N.Y.
Franklin Square N.Y.
Richmond Hill N.Y.
Babylon N.Y.
Bellmore, N.Y.
Rocky Point, LI
Syosset, NY
Bayside, N.Y.
East Rockaway, NY
Stoney Beach, NY
Massapequa Pt., NY
Howard Beach NY
East Meadow NY.

Karen Malament - N. Bellmore
Mark O'Connell FAR Rockaway N.Y.

Angela Salerna So Ozone Park N.Y.
Randy Menches Brooklyn N.Y.
~~Alan Webb~~ Bayside, NY

W. J. Volchun S. Ozone Pk NY

S. Goddard S. Ozone Pk NY

R. Schildman S. Ozone Pk, NY
W. Dasher Valley Stream, NY

L. Harris Bellmore, N.Y.
J. Fischer Valley Stream, N.Y.

R. Mark Baldwin, NY 11510

M. Lamotte Jamaica, NY 11431

Sylvia Stewart Far Rockaway, N.Y. 11692
De Berti Belle Harbor, NY 11694

Mc Wilson CAMBRIA HEIGHTS, N.Y. 11411

April Winston Brooklyn NY 11210
Sean O'Connell Brooklyn NY 11210

Caregiver, Social Adult 11-20-08 (1)
Day Program

To Whom it may Concern:

My Aunt Susan Colombo is a 82 yr old sweet lady. She has Dementia for the past 5½ yrs. She was living in a co-op. She fell asleep with the gas on (making ten) She received a letter. It said either you get help or they were going to serve her an eviction notice.

She was very unhappy there. I asked her if she wanted to come live with me. Her eyes lit up. When she came with me. All she did was sit and stare into space. I knew very little about dementia but I did know that this was not good.

I made phone calls and I finally got in touch with the Respite Center. We went together the first day I drove. When I left her there she was crying + so was I. I picked her up at 3:30 that afternoon. She was like a new person. When the door opened at the center she was dancing with one of the

aides. I was in total shock from that day on. She has never missed a day unless it was a doctors appointment as we were going away. She is very happy there and her whole being has changed. What the care & dedication of the personnel at the center my Aunt by this time would probably have been sores. She has a reason to get up in the morning. Please find in your hearts to make it stay.
Thank you & God bless you.

"Now let's talk about me"

To tell you all the truth, if it weren't for the care & dedication for my Aunt at the Respite center. I really don't know if I could handle the situation of my aunt's Dementia. She is there from 9³⁰ - 3³⁰ Tues - Fri. it gives me time for my husband & my children.

& myself. Taking care of a disabled person is a 24-7 job. I use to feel guilty but after talking to several people

I realize the respite center is not only for my Aunt, but my family as well.

I know now she has an active lifestyle of singing, dancing, (which she loves) & playing games going for trips;

My aunt worked into her early 70's doing hair at a local nursery home. I don't want her to end up there. Thank you, Mary Pelton

**New York City Council:
Committee on Cultural Affairs and Libraries
Committee on Finance**

“FY2010 November Plan”

Monday, November 24, 2008, 1:00 PM – Council Chambers

**Testimony by Kate D. Levin, Commissioner
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs**

Good morning. I am Kate Levin, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), and I am here today to testify with regard to the Mayor's FY10 November Plan. With me here today are...

First, let me discuss our expense budget outlook. As you may recall, DCA's FY2009 Adopted budget was \$152.5 million, with a baseline of \$144.1 million and one-time allocations of \$8.5 million.

A few weeks ago, the Mayor reported on the pessimistic economic forecast for New York City. The national credit crisis and market volatility have prompted Wall Street layoffs and a slowdown in real estate transactions. These factors will significantly reduce the City's revenues for the foreseeable future. In response, the Mayor has asked every City agency to forecast a 2.5% reduction for the current fiscal year, and a 5% reduction baselined in FY10. This translates to a \$3.8 million reduction for DCA in FY09, bringing the current year's budget to \$148.8 million.

In applying the reductions, we have focused on preserving and protecting our core funding for cultural organizations. We have always tried to mitigate the impact of budget cuts on the field, and to be as fair as possible in their application. Accordingly, we prorate budget reductions between our two expense funding pools: the City-owned Cultural Institutions (CIGs) and the Programs groups:

- For FY09, CIGs would receive a total reduction of \$3 million from their base of \$ 118.2 million.
- Programs groups would receive a total reduction of \$800,000 from their base of \$29.7 million

Looking first at the CIGs, I'd like to offer some context for the way we have proposed to apply the reductions. As you know, City support for the CIGs includes both operating and energy subsidies. It is our policy not to cut the energy payments we make on behalf of the CIGs, which are projected to be \$43.8 million in FY09. Therefore, the FY09 2.5% reduction translates to a 4.2% cut to the operating portion of City support to the CIGs. The FY10 5% reduction translates to an 8.6% cut to operating.

In allocating this reduction, we looked at a number of options. After much analysis, we recommended an across-the-board approach. As you may recall, the FY09 adopted budget already included a 4.6% reduction to DCA's budget. At Adoption, we tiered this cut. Our goal was to provide significant relief to smaller organizations, who tend to have less-well diversified sources of support, without penalizing organizations receiving larger amounts of City support. Because this tiered cut is already embedded in the FY09 and FY10 operating allocations, applying the same reduction to all CIGs preserves the tiers, without disproportionately impacting any organization.

Let me now turn to our Program Groups. We have not proposed tiered cuts in this area because of the number of organizations that receive funding, the sheer variety of their programs, and the range of support that DCA supplies – particularly compared to groups' overall operating budgets. We believe that the most responsible approach is to assign cuts on an across-the board basis. Therefore, the Programs groups will receive a cumulative reduction of 2.5% for FY09 and 5% for FY10.

This will be applied in two ways. Final payments to current CDF recipients will reflect the FY09 reduction. For FY10, organizations receiving multi-year contracts would see their grants reduced by 5%. And, the pool of funds for annual CDF applicants would be reduced by 5%.

The reductions in the November Plan have been asked of every City agency. DCA is not being singled out for cuts, and no City agency is being held harmless. At a time when private support is likely to be reduced, we know that it will be challenging for our constituents to absorb the DCA reductions, as well. But it is imperative that the City balance its budget. In a world of difficult choices, we have structured the reductions for the field in a way that preserves our core funding for programs and operations, and that is both responsible and consistent with past practice.

It is also worth noting that DCA's projected FY09 budget, even with the 2.5% reduction, is the third-highest in the agency's history. The funding we provide supports programs and operations at more than 900 cultural organizations across the five boroughs. Through our borough regrant program, we are providing support at the grassroots level to hundreds more organizations and artists. A strong, healthy cultural sector is vital to our economic recovery, and we will continue to work to support the field during these difficult times.

I'd now like to turn to DCA's capital budget. In recent years, we have made significant progress on expanding access to capital funding, and we now support essential infrastructure improvements, equipment purchases and facility upgrades at more than 200 organizations throughout the five boroughs.

As you may recall, the Mayor has asked City agencies to stretch the four year capital plan into five years. The goal is to relieve the pressure the City's debt-service obligations place on the expense budget. Through an intensive analysis, we broke down our budget allocations by type of project, scope and schedule. We prioritized projects that meet one or more of the following criteria: are "in the ground"; have well-articulated scopes; complete or substantially-advanced design; and/or have meaningful private support. Despite the necessary adjustments, DCA will be providing \$1.2 billion for the FY09 – FY13 Five Year Capital Plan – the second-highest in our history.

We will continue to work with organizations whose projects were moved out in the capital plan. As project plans develop further, our intention will be to move up funding - although that will ultimately depend on the City's fiscal outlook.

Notwithstanding the very challenging environment, we continue to move ahead on numerous exciting projects. Most recently, we cut the ribbon on the new TKTS booth operated by the Theater Development Fund. Its glowing red steps have already become a beacon for visitors to Times Square. We also dedicated *Swing Low*, a monument to Harriet Tubman by artist Alison Saar, commissioned through Percent for Art. I strongly encourage you to look at the work the next time you're passing by 122nd Street and Frederick Douglass Boulevard.

When so many organizations are looking to save on operating costs, the free goods and training offered by Materials for the Arts (MFTA) become even more valuable. We're particularly proud to be increasing the footprint of the MFTA facility in Long Island City from 25- to 35,000 square feet this year. We are expanding our capacity to accept larger donations of materials, and providing new classroom spaces. Materials for the Arts kicked off its 30th anniversary on October 27th at a benefit sponsored by our terrific Friends of Materials for the Arts group. The event helped raise funds to distribute donated goods to the more than 3,800 arts groups, schools and organizations in our database. We urge you to ensure that all eligible groups in your district are registered with MFTA, and actively use mfta.org to maximize the benefits they can receive.

In other news, the Mayor's Awards for Arts and Culture took place November 10 at the Apollo Theater. I know that many of you were able to attend the festivities. The Mayor presented the Handel Medallion, the City's highest award for achievement in the arts, to playwright Neil Simon. Mayor's Awards were also presented to ART/NY; Arthur Aviles; arts educator Dr. Sharon Dunn; composer Galt MacDermott; the Mellon Foundation; and the Rush Arts Gallery and Corridor Gallery. During his remarks, the Mayor emphasized the importance of the City's cultural community to our economy and quality of life.

DCA also worked with ART/NY and the Mellon Foundation to host a convening for the field at the Roundabout Theater on Thursday, October 30. More than 600 leaders from the cultural community attended, and members of your staff were present, as well. Our goal was to help organizations understand the new economic context, and think creatively about strategies for sustaining and building audiences. I presented an overview of the City's budget outlook, and Diane Ragsdale from the Mellon Foundation presented an address on "Surviving the Culture Change", which offered ideas and case studies in audience development. She focused on how organizations can respond to changing audience behavior patterns - how people choose to spend their leisure time and dollars. At the convening, we also announced that EDC's "NYC Capital Access Revolving Loan Guarantee Fund" would be open to nonprofit cultural organizations, to help them smooth cash flow for operations and small capital purchases.

Finally, I hope that you saw the report from October 21 on *The New York City Waterfalls*, the major installation by artist Olafur Eliasson that graced New York Harbor this summer. The City's analysis showed that *The Waterfalls* had an estimated economic impact of \$69 million, exceeding the initial estimate by 25%. *The Waterfalls* attracted more than one million visitors - and for a quarter of these visitors, it was their first visit to the waterfront. What's especially exciting is that 95% of all out-of-town viewers participated in at least one other cultural event during their stay. PS1, which hosted an Eliasson exhibition that overlapped with *The Waterfalls*, saw attendance jump 144%!

The Waterfalls also offered us a chance to re-launch DCA's cultural calendar in a new, user-friendly format. Organizations have to be extraordinarily nimble when it comes to navigating uncertain economic waters, but a loss of audience can pose even greater challenges. I hope that each of you are encouraging all of the cultural organizations in your district to take advantage of this free promotional opportunity provided by DCA. By posting their events, organizations reach 311 callers, nyc.gov users, and the general public. They also provide DCA with the information we need to promote organizations through other media partners.

In fact, NYCulture provided the basis for Mayor Bloomberg's announcement this morning about the many low-cost ways to explore the City's vibrant cultural life. Thanks to the City's public-private partnership with the creative community, and the strong commitment of our cultural constituents to creating access for all audiences, there truly is something for everyone - no matter your budget. The press release is available on nyc.gov for your reference, and you can always click on nyc.gov/nyculture for the full cultural calendar.

In closing, I would like thank Chairman Recchia, Chairman Weprin, the members of these Committees, and all the City Councilmembers for your continued support of the cultural community. As we work through challenging fiscal times, your partnership becomes even more critical. I'd be happy to answer any questions that you have.

Testimony of Cuthbert Dickenson
President of Local 374, District Council 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
Before the City Council Committees on Finance and Cultural Affairs,
Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
November 24, 2008

Good afternoon Chairs Weprin, Recchia, Gentile and members of the City Council. My name is Cuthbert Dickenson and I am the President of Local 374 of District Council 37 (DC 37), AFSCME, AFL-CIO. I represent Brooklyn, Queens, New York and Wave Hill Botanical Gardens.

Today, I am here to talk about various titles that I represent in the cultural institutions, specifically in the city's three largest Botanical Gardens and Wave Hill.

These titles vary from sales clerks, security guards, clerical workers, as well as maintainers and gardeners, which is equivalent to approximately 281 members. Although I am grateful the city has increased the budgets of most of these institutions in the past, I understand that the city is now looking to reduce the budgets of these beautiful facilities due to the economic downturn. The fact remains in FY 2009 alone, the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens lost \$335,000, New York Botanical Gardens lost \$395,000, Queens Botanical Gardens lost \$165,000, and Wave Hill lost \$111,000 compared to FY 2008 levels.

These institutions are a haven for all city residences, not to mention a vast educational tool employed by almost all of the city's public schools. Tourism is another factor, which must be considered when reviewing city funds for these institutions.

Since September 11, 2001, the city's support has been declining. This decline in city support directly affects these institutions ability to continue to support a qualified workforce in both numbers and experience. These institutions are forced to seek outside donations, dip into their reserves and raise admission fees. With today's economic climate the way it is, private and corporate donations are slowly drying up. These institutions can not remain an all-attractive haven for city residences, tourists and a viable education tool for generations to come if funding levels are not maintained.

Again, thank you for permitting me the opportunity to come before you.

Testimony of Reggie Qadar, President of Local 1306
The American Museum of Natural History Employees
District Council 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
Before the City Council Committees on Finance and Cultural Affairs,
Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
November 24, 2008

Good afternoon Chairs Weprin, Recchia, Gentile and other distinguished members of the City Council. My name is Reggie Qadar and I am the President of Local 1306, District Council 37 representing workers at the American Museum of Natural History. I represent approximately 230 members in the titles of Attendant Guard, Senior Attendant guard and Supervising Attendant Guard at the Museum.

I would first like to thank the Council for its past support of the \$2m for security enhancements for various cultural institutions. Unfortunately during the adoption of the FY 2009 budget this past June, the city's budget reduced funding to the Museum by \$2.3m, which included over two million dollars allocated for security. Fortunately for the public, attendant guards and other staff employed by the Museum, the Museum absorbed those cuts and maintained the necessary security force. Now, once again cuts are proposed for the remainder of FY 2009 reducing the city support to the Museum by another \$427.9m. These cuts amount to a 19% reduction in support for FY 2009 by the city in less then six months. I am very concerned that the Museum will no longer be able to absorb these reductions in city support and be forced to severely reduce staff at the Museum through layoffs.

As you know, the American Museum of Natural History is a major tourist destination returning seven dollars to New York City for each dollar of support the Museum receives. These probable staffing cuts could keep the Museum from acquiring prize exhibits such as the successful Diamonds exhibit a few years ago. In addition, the Museum may be unable to design and create new exhibits without proper security staff to guard them. The guards I proudly represent ensure that these treasures can be exhibited to the public and that any revenues produced from these exciting new exhibits are returned to the city sevenfold as I mentioned earlier. The Museum on a busy day can have as many as 25,000-30,000 visitors and a properly staffed security force is imperative to the safety of the public, as well as Museum staff.

I ask that these proposed budget cuts be reinstated into the Museum's FY 2009 budget. I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**Testimony of Peter Vreeland, President of Local 1559
New York City Museum of Natural History Employees
District Council 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
Before the City Council Committees on Finance and Cultural Affairs, Libraries and
International Intergroup Relations
November 24, 2008**

Good afternoon Chairs Weprin, Recchia, Gentile and members of the City Council. My name is Peter Vreeland and I am the President of Local 1559 representing approximately 150 members in the titles of maintainers, preparators, photographers, clerical, museum instructors, scientific assistants, artists and technicians at the American Museum of Natural History.

Since the Museum's founding in 1869, it has not only become a major tourist destination, attracting 4 million visitors a year, it also provides a crucial science and educational component to the many school children who visit.

My members play an integral role in the education component since some of them work in the professional development programs which help train science teachers by allowing them to use the Museum as a teaching resource.

The other members of Local 1559 are trained on how to handle special specimens and documents. They handle special skins, furs, textiles, as well as irreplaceable cultural artifacts and photographs. They take great care of these items so many future generations may enjoy these treasures for years to come.

What many people do not realize is that for every dollar the city provides in funding to the Museum, it returns \$7 back to the city. Visitors to the Museum also contribute to the economic vitality of the surrounding community by patronizing the restaurants and shops.

The Museum's objective continues to be to encourage and develop the study of the natural world, world cultures and the universe. But how can they continue to fulfill its mission when facing an additional cut to its FY 2009 budget? If the city goes forward with this cut, the Museum might have to reduce hours, shut down the number of exhibits they currently offer and limit the number of educational programs provided to school children. As a result, my members will not be able to provide the same level of exemplary service that the millions of visitors have come to expect from a world-renowned institution such as the American Museum of Natural History. Local 1559 is urging the City Council to restore the proposed cut in FY 2009 to the Museum's budget.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**TESTIMONY of EILEEN MULLER, PRESIDENT
LOCAL 1482, DC 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY GUILD
BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES ON FINANCE and CULTURAL
AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS
NOVEMBER 24, 2008**

Good afternoon Chairs Weprin, Recchia, Gentile and Councilmembers. My name is Eileen Muller and I am the President of D.C. 37's Local 1482, the Brooklyn Library Guild, representing the employees of the Brooklyn Public Library. We represent over 1000 employees at the Brooklyn Public Library. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before you today.

I have had the privilege of speaking to you for six years now about the effect the Library's budget has had on both the public and the employees. In the past, you have responded by supporting restoration of funds to the Library. We understand the economic situation is different now. But we are still working with an amount already eroded by inflation and rising costs.

Some things never change. We still need staff and supplies. I use the word supplies broadly to include not only the mundane everyday supplies like toilet paper and pencils, but also such things as computers, and in spite of new technology, we still need to provide traditional materials like books. We still need a safe, clean place for the public. And we still serve a large and varied public of all ages and backgrounds.

In hard economic times, there is one major change: libraries are used more than ever. People need information about available jobs, they need to study to make themselves eligible for new jobs, and some may need to find whole new careers. Students rely more on books that the Library provides, because their families are no longer financially able to buy them. We also provide free entertainment - people who can't afford to pay for the latest best seller or educational material or theater or twelve dollar movies will come to the library to borrow books and videos, and participate in the programs we offer.

The public always demands more rather than fewer hours of access to their library. In these hard times, we want to be available as much as we can, but this is impossible without the necessary resources. The Library's staff can work as hard as I know they do, but there are limits to what can be done without the people to do the work, and the materials needed to run the library.

I understand that at the Finance hearing, it was mentioned that the city is looking at its contract budget in order to save millions of dollars. Once again, I would like to mention the inter-branch book exchange program. Recently, the Brooklyn Public Library contracted with UPS to deliver books and materials from branch to branch. Prior to UPS, my members did the work. Even though my members who did the work were not laid off, I believe the cost of the UPS program is very costly to the city. Unfortunately, I am unable to provide any specific figures since the Brooklyn Public Library has not shared this information with the local – even after repeated attempts by the local for this information. The most recent request was made at the May 2008 Executive budget hearings before the Cultural Affairs Committee. If the city is seriously looking at every expenditure, especially contracting out, to try to save money, this is one area that should be reviewed.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

Statement of Ellen Kodadek, Executive and Artistic Director

Flushing Council on Culture and the Arts/Flushing Town Hall

Council Member Domenic Recchia, Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations and Chairman of the Finance Committee, Council Member David Weprin.

November 24, 2008

Good afternoon. My name is Ellen Kodadek, Executive & Artistic Director of Flushing Council on Culture & the Arts (FCCA) since January 2008. I would like to thank Chairman Recchia, and Councilmember Weprin for the opportunity to speak with you today. I would also like to thank my colleagues in the cultural community for their staunch concern for our institution in this time of significant budget reductions.

We are one of the “smaller” CIG’s - however, our impact on the vitality of our community is quite significant. In Fiscal year 2008, Flushing Town Hall served:

- **over 30,000 audience members** with high-quality ticketed and free arts events
- **over 2,000 seniors** through our Department for the Aging programs – across multiple council districts.
- **over 2,400 students** in our school-based enrichment programs, which includes students, parents and teachers - across multiple council districts.
- **We launched the Queens Jazz Orchestra**, a 17-piece orchestra, with Queens’ own National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Jazz Master, Jimmy Heath as Music Director and Conductor. The Queens Jazz Orchestra is dedicated to preserving and rejuvenating the rich jazz tradition of Queens.
- We started a new World Music series, **New Trends/New Tracks** featuring extraordinary female vocalists who fuse music from their respective cultures with contemporary instrumentation.

- We began planning for an **FY'09 Hispanic Heritage Festival**, intended to become an annual event.

FY'08 saw great transition at Flushing Town Hall, with the hiring of a new Executive & Artistic Director in January 2008, and a new Director of Education in June 2008. Together we have developed a new and exciting format for our family and education programs – performances linked to interactive arts workshops for all ages. The numbers of audience members who are adults coming without kids, is fun to see. Staff has a renewed sense of energy and excitement. In the first 4 months of this fiscal year (FY'09), our attendance figures for expanded and re-configured arts education and senior programs has already reached unprecedented numbers, with school programs at over 1,300 and seniors at over 1,600 – all this with an education staff of 1-1/2 people. We had schools & seniors booked for our programs through the end of June 2009 – however, two weeks ago – 5 days before a contemporary dance company that the NY Times has called “superb”, we received a phone call from a local JHS cancelling 179 tickets – and we have a 300 seat theatre – they had just received a budget cut. We called them back and told them to bring the students anyway, even for \$1 a ticket, but they said they couldn't even afford the buses. Other cancellations are beginning.

The cuts we have sustained in this fiscal year to date have devastated our ability to provide year-round arts programs and educational services, having incurred a **devastating loss to FCCA/FTH of 41% of our operating support**. In addition to these losses, we have also received cuts from Department for the Aging – with our senior program support eliminated after December 31st; the elimination of non-discretionary Department of Youth & Community Development for CASA programs; and we already see reductions in foundation and corporate support.

ALL Staff have taken a 5% pay cut, and are currently also contributing 20% towards their health insurance. Two full-time positions have been eliminated (Gift Shop Manager and Director of Arts Services = Visual Arts). Their duties have been absorbed by the Executive Director and the Deputy Director. As we restructure the entire organization, four full-time salaried positions are being reduced to part-time hourly. Public hours for our galleries have been reduced to

Thursday through Sunday, noon to five – and will be further reduced to weekends only come January 2009. Our exhibition program will now consist of three local exhibits this year, instead of 4-5 professional, contemporary exhibitions, which has caused us to withdraw our application for funding from the NY State Arts Council's visual arts program. We have not hired key positions which are critical to the success of the institution, including a desperately needed Grants-Writer, Marketing & Development Associate, and a Capital Projects/Facilities Manager to manage our (circa 1862) historic building's increasing repair, preventive maintenance, and capital projects needs – including a wheelchair lift, garden renovation and brick re-pointing and portico woodwork.

We recognize that there are many issues facing the Council, and the various needs for funding support are great. However, on behalf of the 5 full-time, and 4 part-time employees that remain at Flushing Town Hall, we urge you to do all that's in your power to support our institution and the Cultural Institutions Group, as a whole.

Thank you for your time.