

**Testimony before City Council Finance Committee
on November Budget Modification on behalf of Lillian Roberts,
Executive Director, District Council 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO**

Thank you City Council Members for holding these hearings. On behalf of Lillian Roberts, Executive Director, the 56 local presidents, and the 120,000 members of DDC 37, we urge you to consider the drastic impact these cuts will have on the public sector and the community we serve.

DC 37 represents workers who provide the social safety net, which in this time of economic downturn is vital for the protection of our citizens. While there are many cuts of concern, the specific budget modifications we wish to address are as follows:

- **Department of Health** - The reduction of 57 full time and 35 part time positions in school based dental clinics. This cut has been offered up before and the City Council has fought to preserve these jobs. You recognize the critical need for dental services for children in underserved communities and we count on your continued support.
- **Housing Authority** – you heard testimony on Friday regarding the closure of 18 Community Centers. This will lead to the layoff of **236** workers – in early January of 2009. These are workers who are the front line defense in their communities for young people who may be at risk, who need after school programming and mentoring. NYCHA is relying on other providers to pick up the services, but it is difficult to see how that can

happen when those agencies, both public and not for profit are also experiencing cuts in funding.

- **Department of Education** – on Friday you heard testimony from the Department of Education representatives regarding cuts to administrative staff and facilities maintenance. We submit to you that these jobs are more than just bureaucrats. This system is too large and complex for teacher and principals to be expected to do the jobs they are expected to do, teach our children well, AND do all of the back office and support work that makes the schools run. In August, 50 DC 37 members were laid off, including clerical staff in the ISC's and District Family Advocates work with parents on a local level to solve problems of more than ordinary difficulty, of which there are many. Additional cuts to the administrative staff will leave the school based staff with the untenable choice of who to respond to – the children or the administrative demands that still remain.
- **ACS** – the modified budget calls for not filling 127 supervisory vacancies. What this does not show is that these positions are in Child Protective Services, and these workers are dealing with the most difficult types of cases, and spend many hours in court on one case at a time. To put the workload of 127 supervisors off onto the remaining workers, will create an unworkable situation.
- **HHC** - The reduction of \$1.676M in FY 2010 to HHC clinics for mental health service will stress the overburdened alternate providers, if any deny these clients supportive drug treatment, detox and counseling which

will lead to a further deterioration in the quality of life of these patients and of the residents of the communities in which they live. Failure to provide services will lead to much greater costs later on in incarceration and inpatient treatment.

- **Parks Department** – the partial hiring freezes in FY '09 and FY '10 will eliminate entry and mid level positions, including seasonal positions that are sorely needed to help New Yorkers get on the track to employment and who maintain and support the clean, safe operation of the Parks.

In a city budget with over \$9 Billion in contracted services it is our position that there is more fertile ground to be plowed than cutting these jobs and services. City tax dollars should be used to directly provide services that are transparent and accountable to you, the Council members and to the tax payers.

District Council 37 is a member of the ONE NY Coalition – Fighting for Fairness. Our coalition, and our Union is saying loudly and clearly that cuts to the safety net are not sustainable – children, elderly, needy New Yorkers will suffer visibly and painfully. The alternative that the ONE NY Coalition supports is to increase revenue in a progressive manner. We can not cut our way out of this crisis and it is not fair to the least among us.

North Brooklyn Tenant Anti-Displacement Collaborative

c/o North Brooklyn Development Corporation

147 Huron Street

Brooklyn, New York 11222

Williamsburg-Greenpoint Housing Leaders Claim Mayor's Proposed Budget Cuts Will Provoke Massive Displacement of Long Time Residents

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Leaders of major North Brooklyn housing groups will testify at tomorrow's (Monday, November 24, 3pm, City Council Hearing Room at City Hall) hearing on the Mayor's proposed budget cuts, that the planned 30-43% \$300,000 reduction in tenant anti-displacement funding constitutes "an egregious breach of the agreement that was essential to the City obtaining community approval of the Williamsburg-Greenpoint East River waterfront rezoning."

Richard Mazur, who leads the "North Brooklyn Tenant Anti-Displacement Collaborative," declared that the cuts, if implemented, would "totally scuttle the vital neighborhood effort to ameliorate the awful displacement pressures resulting from the waterfront rezoning, that has served as a magnet to rich people to swamp our neighborhood, forcing out long term residents, including large numbers of senior citizens!"

The Collaborative, made up of Churches United, Southside United, St. Nick's Neighborhood Preservation Corp., People's Firehouse, Neighbors Allied for Good Growth (NAG), North Brooklyn Development Corp. and Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A, together have teamed up to provide support and assistance to tenants and businesses subject to inappropriate and often illegal efforts to oust them from their long term homes in order to make room for the more lucrative newcomers pouring into the "hot" neighborhood.

The Collaborative was recently advised by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) that the \$1.3 million, two year contract that it had been awarded to protect current residents from the massive impact of gentrification exacerbated by the rezoning, would be reduced by 30% in the first year retroactive to July 1, 2008, and then reduced by 43% as of July 1, 2009.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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FOR THE RECORD



Community Health Care Association of New York State

**Financial Plan Budget Modification Hearing
Monday November 24, 2008
Darryl Ng, Director of Government Affairs, CHCANYS**

Good afternoon, my name is Darryl Ng and I am the Director of Government Affairs for the Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS). I want to thank the City Council for this opportunity to testify. Community Health Centers (CHCs) are nonprofit health care practices that provide high quality and cost-effective primary care to anyone seeking care. In New York City, 35 federally qualified community health centers provide care to over 700,000 individuals in approximately 200 sites. These sites are situated through out the 5 boroughs and located in designated underserved areas or assist underserved communities, like the homeless and migrant workers.

Together, New York City's Community Health Centers comprise one of the most comprehensive primary care networks in the five boroughs. These centers provide an impressive scope of medical services targeted at those who are the most difficult to reach. CHCs focus their services on families that live near or below the federal poverty level and specialize in providing care to people battling serious chronic illnesses such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and HIV/AIDS.

CHCs provide general medical and specialty services that include obstetrics and gynecology, pediatric, dental, mental health and substance abuse services. Community health centers provide a "one-stop" approach to care that has repeatedly produced outstanding health outcomes for individuals and communities.

Founded in 1971, the Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS) has represented the community health centers of New York for over 35 years. CHCANYS works to increase access for those who would otherwise go without care through advocacy and education and also creates major new programs and initiatives that showcase community health centers as centers of excellence. CHCANYS works to ensure that all New Yorkers have medical homes. Our key policy priorities are:

- Ensuring health insurance coverage for all New Yorkers;
- Ensuring access to a high quality health care delivery system for all New Yorkers; and
- Ensuring investment in community-based primary care.

NYC FY 09 Financial Plan (Mid-Year Budget Modification)

On November 5, 2008, the Mayor released a modified budget for FY09 to close a cumulative \$4 billion budget gap for FY09 and FY10. The Mayor plans to close the budget gap through a reduction in city spending and an increase in city revenues. New York City obviously faces a budget crisis of historic dimensions. We must make some tough decisions and allocate resources wisely. At the same time, we must not be "penny wise and pound foolish." Decades of under funding for community-based primary and preventive health care have left safety net primary health care very vulnerable. New Yorkers that depend on the City's safety net of health services are losing care and this will result in more emergency rooms visits, which is less efficient and ultimately more costly for the City.

The Mayor's mid year budget modification states reductions in city spending of \$137 million for FY09 and \$400 million for FY10. Below are proposed reductions in the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Department of Homeless Services that will impact the patients that we serve in community and homeless health centers:

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Issues:

1.) Eliminate Oral Health Program -- Eliminate directly provided dental services at 44 sites and retain staff to promote city-wide access to dental care and maximize Medicaid and other publicly provided dental benefits. This will result in the layoff of 57 full-time and 35 part-time staff.

FY09	FY 10	FY 11	FY12
\$0	(\$2,511)	(\$3,386)	(\$3,459)

The shortage of oral health services have been cited and documented in the City's recent Primary Care Needs Assessment. Community health centers provide care to patients regardless of ability to pay and many of our dental patients are uninsured. Due to the high volume of unmet need, many dental patients have to wait longer than a month for a visit opening. Community health center dental programs are already understaffed and at maximum capacity. Eliminating the City's Oral Health Program will exacerbate the already difficult situation, leaving dental patients with no other resource to turn to for help. Although the City's Oral Health Program is not administered optimally, the need for dental services remains of top priority. Improved outreach and administration will increase the program utilization greatly.

2.) Revise State Funding -- Revise the Department's budget to more accurately reflect all available state funding.

FY09	FY10	FY11	FY 12
(\$3,747)	(\$2,729)	(\$2,530)	(\$2,530)

The reduction of State's matching funds for certain eligible services contracted through DOHMH would be problematic. Would city council discretionary contracts which go through DOHMH such as city council HIV contracts and other community initiatives, be reduced? If so, who will provide these essential community services?

3.) Mental Hygiene Contracts -- DOHMH will reduce contracted mental hygiene services (excluding Early Intervention), including program closures and targeted service reductions. Consumers will be redirected to remaining programs; overall contracted service capacity will be reduced.

FY 09	FY 10	FY11	FY12
\$0	(\$2,729)	(\$2,729)	(\$2,729)

Community providers such as community health centers that have contracts with DOHMH to provide mental hygiene services will be impacted greatly by these cuts. The vulnerable patients that are losing other essential services in the city budget are likely to have mental health service needs.

Department of Homeless Services Issues:

1.) Reimbursement for Homeless Prevention -- Emergency financial assistance and budget counseling services provided to families at Home Base prevention programs will be claimed against federal funding streams

FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12
(\$3,617)	(2,775)	(\$2,775)	(\$2,775)

2.) Graduated Payment System for Family Shelters -- Redesigns family payment structure to incentivize permanent housing placements.

FY 09	FY10	FY11	FY12
\$0	(\$5,364)	(\$5,364)	(\$5,364)

Even if all the Mayor's proposed spending reductions are adopted, The Mayor's Financial Plan still predicts that New York City will still face budget gaps of approximately \$1.3 billion in FY10, \$5 billion in FY11, and \$4.9 billion FY12. Along with spending reductions of \$137 million for FY09 and \$400 million for FY10, the Mayor has introduced the following revenue proposals:

1. Personal Income Tax Options:

Plan A- 7.5% across-the-board rate increase (effective 1/1/09). (FY09 Revenues = \$223 mm)

Plan B- 15% across-the-board rate increase (effective 1/1/09). (FY09 Revenues = \$446 mm)

2. Property Tax Options

Plan A- Rescinding the FY09 property tax rate reduction immediately, rather than waiting for July 1, 2009 as planned. (FY09 Revenues = \$576 mm)

3. Sale Tax Options

Plan A- Repeal of the Sales Tax Clothing Exemption: Clothing under \$110 (FY10 Revenues = \$317 mm) and Clothing above \$110 (FY10 Revenues = \$119 mm)

Plan B- Restore 1/8 percent sales tax surcharge (FY10 Revenues = \$146 mm)

Plan C- Impose 1/4 percent sales tax increase (FY10 Revenues = \$292 mm)

CHCANYs has joined a large citywide coalition called One New York, Fighting for Fairness,

which focuses on budget advocacy. We believe that increasing city revenues is a necessity during this tough fiscal crisis. To that extent, we support progressive taxes where the burden is not shouldered by the poor. Of the tax plans outlined by Mayor Bloomberg, we feel that the plan to repeal sale tax for clothing under \$110 is the least progressive and will negatively impacting the poor. We see the other revenue proposals as viable and will call upon New Yorkers for much needed shared sacrifices. In addition, other states and localities have implemented items as 'luxury taxes.' For example, our neighboring state, New Jersey, has a tax on cosmetic surgery. New York should take advantage of this booming luxury industry and tax "luxury" items such as this. Other feasible revenue options should also be explored so that all New Yorkers, especially those most in need, can weather this difficult fiscal period.

I appreciate the opportunity to present my testimony to you today. Thank you.

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FOR THE RECORD

Testimony of
Staten Island Chamber of Commerce President Linda M. Baran
NYC City Council Finance Committee
Mayor's Financial Plan
November 24, 2008 – 3:00 P.M.

Good afternoon. My name is Linda Baran, President of the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce. On behalf of the Chamber's Board of Director's and our 900 members, I would like to thank Chairman David Weprin and the members on the City Council Finance Committee for allowing me the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

I am here today to comment on Mayor Bloomberg's recent proposals to close the current budget deficit and the growing deficits being predicted for the next three fiscal years per his press release on November 5th. The Mayor more recently proclaimed that our City Council members and the general public simply must realize that the city does not have any money. Well, I am here to inform the Mayor and members of the committee that many of our members; and small business owners all over this city aren't doing so great these days either. If the small business community is viewed as a means to help close the deficits, many of them will be forced to shut their doors. These businesses are presently dealing with rising energy, water/sewer, and healthcare costs in an economy where they can't access capital and consumers are drastically cutting back. If this administration sees fit to put more burdens on them, it will be the straw that breaks the camels back.

There are many different budgetary aspects that this committee needs to evaluate and I certainly am not qualified to address all of them. That being said, I want to address the Mayor's proposed property tax rate hikes, the reinstatement of NYC sales tax, and the rate hikes for fees and fines.

In regards to the property taxes, this is obviously the most high profile revenue increase being discussed within the confines of this building and throughout the five boroughs. This increase is will hurt consumers two-fold; they will see it reflected directly in their bank accounts and also when they are paying more for the items they purchase on a daily basis. Obviously, the increased taxes will lead to higher rent payments for business owners. Guess what, we are all going to have to cover that increase since the businesses will be necessitated to pass down the increased expense. You think restaurants and retail establishments are hurting now with unemployment on the rise; just wait until the property tax is raised.

The Staten Island Chamber of Commerce has been advocating for the elimination of the sales tax for clothing and household items for the last several years. We considered the elimination of the NYC portion of this tax a couple of years back a monumental victory. The subsequent elimination of the state portion on clothing under \$110 was viewed as another necessary step towards our ultimate goal. But now the administration is proposing the reinstatement of this regressive tax. Staten Island residents can completely avoid paying sales tax by traversing any of the three bridges which connect us to New Jersey. While it often takes them 90 minutes or so to get into midtown Manhattan, they can drive to these areas of New Jersey in less than 45 minutes. Heck, the Woodbridge Mall has a sign outside their entrance which says, "Welcome Staten Island shoppers". These same consumers fill up their gas tanks and eat their meals off our borough in most instances as well.

The Staten Island business owner is already operating on an unfair playing field with their New Jersey competitors. If this tax comes back, it will just provide another disincentive for people to shop on Staten Island. This is the last thing that businesses in our borough need right now. I understand that this is more of a parochial issue for the Staten Island Chamber due to our proximity to New Jersey; but I implore the City Council to consider the ramifications of reinstating this onerous regressive tax. The negative impact outweighs the revenue that would be generated in our opinion.

The issue of increased fees and fines on businesses is naturally something that a Chamber of Commerce opposes. But I think it's important that people understand just how burdensome the practice of imposing these fines can be for a small business. Over the past 90 days, a former Board Member of the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce who has been established for 22 years has been fighting against violations that she had NEVER been subject to prior to this inspection. To make a long story short, she was given a list of tasks she needed to implement to her operation in order to avoid future fines and potential shut downs. This past Thursday, she informed us that the cost of this mitigation will run her approximately \$20,000. Additionally, she has had to pay legal fees while also consulting her accountant on numerous occasions. This is a business person who constantly gives back to our local community, works diligently to remain cognizant of city regulations, and this is how she is treated. Personally, I think the whole situation stinks!

I know I have just used this platform to voice a state of affairs that does not necessarily fall under the jurisdiction of this committee, but I felt it was important to illustrate what hard working and well meaning business people can be put through. I am not naïve enough to think that this just happens on Staten Island either; I am sure that it occurs in every Council district in this city. Empowering these agencies to invoke more stringent regulations on businesses sends the wrong message. The escalation of these "fees" would be very ill-timed and potentially another cause for businesses to throw in the towel in this city.

I will conclude by pleading with the committee to pursue all cost-cutting measures that you can before you begin examining ways to raise revenues. Small businesses just can't sustain increased expenses in this fiscal climate; and let's be mindful that the cost of doing business in New York City is already the highest in the country. I truly feel that the short-term revenue gains that would be generated for city coffers via these taxes and fees will be offset in the long run by the continued loss of jobs and revenues that businesses create. I thank you for allowing me the time and for your efforts in these trying times. Thank you



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DEMAND HOUSING
FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE
LIVING WITH AIDS & HIV

FOR THE RECORD

Housing Works' Testimony Before the New York City Council Finance Committee Concerning the Proposed Budget Reductions in the FY 2008 – 2009 Budget Modification

24 November 2008

**Housing Works' Testimony Before the New York City Council Finance Committee
Concerning the Proposed Budget Reductions in the 2008 – 2009 Budget Modification
24 November 2008**

Good afternoon Finance Chair Weprin, members of the NYC Council and public, my name is Terri Smith-Caronia and I am the Vice-President of New York Public Policy and Advocacy at Housing Works. I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on behalf of the clients, volunteers and staff of Housing Works – the nation's largest minority-controlled community-based AIDS services organization. We provide a wide-array of comprehensive housing, medical, legal, job training and support services to people living with AIDS and HIV here in New York City. The majority of the folks that we serve are some of New York's most vulnerable: people in poverty, people who are unstably housed or homeless, people who have chronic health and psychosocial needs, all navigating a complicated and fragmented system of prevention, care and treatment.

At this past joint hearing of the Finance and General Welfare committees I was concerned to see that the Human Resources Administration was planning to eliminate case management as a service provided by community-based providers to those HIV positive folks living in scattered site 2 housing. The reason given for this move was that the State would no longer provide their share of funding to cover this service and therefore the City decided to shift the clients receiving this service to the City's HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA).

You should know that this proposed redirection of services was not only ill-conceived as a service model, it was also not the most cost-effective way to leverage funds. Moreover, case management provided by the community is different than what happens at HASA – it is really apples and oranges.

Case management provided to HIV positive persons within a community-based setting is a model that provides a comprehensive psychosocial set of services. The case management provided by the HASA is not at all comparable. The only services that HASA case managers provide are benefits and entitlement services. And when these do not happen in a seamless and timely manner, it is the community-based case managers that push to ensure that their clients are not left without food or access to their medical provider.

Housing Works has proposed that an already existing network of 38 NYC community-based COBRA case management providers provide scattered site 2 case management services.

COBRA case management is a Medicaid reimbursable program set up as a statewide initiative in 1990 by the NYS Department of Health's AIDS Institute and the Medicaid Management Information System to provide comprehensive services to Medicaid-eligible HIV positive individuals and families who have had difficulty accessing medical care and supportive services either due to issues with follow-up or because of barriers to service. Program goals are to provide access to services that foster independence and self-sufficiency, work to ensure adherence to care and treatment, prevent or delay

institutionalization, increase universal access to HIV-related services and to promote early intervention. This model utilizes a team of case managers and paraprofessionals to provide this comprehensive case management.

Offering those clients in Scattered Site 2 the option to receive their case management through a COBRA program would: 1. Provide the best possible services for the clients, 2. Maximize the use of an already existing care structure, and 3. Reduce the cost to the City for the provision of these services.

When this was raised at the hearing, HRA Commissioner Doar agreed that this is was indeed an approach that he would consider and that clients would indeed be assessed by HASA for their enrollment into this program.

While we are pleased that this is now on the table for consideration – and we strongly urge them to follow through, we also believe that it is unnecessary for HASA to have to do any “screening”. Rather, all clients currently in the scattered site 2 programs should simply be told that COBRA programs exists and offered the option to enroll in a COBRA program of their choosing if they decided this is a service they would like to receive.

As a member of One New York, a 150 strong coalition fighting for fairness in both the NYC and NYS budgets, we urge the members of the NYC Council to remember that it is New York’s poor, disabled and elderly that bear the lion-share of the burden brought on by this economic disaster. We also urge you to remember that it is indeed the role of government, the duty of government to ensure that those of the poorest among us are the most protected.

When the cost of food, transportation and other commodities go up, and the rate of public assistance continues to stagnate at \$215.00 per month, it is unconscionable to think that anyone would want to repeal the sales tax exemption on clothing under \$110.00. Making the purchase of clothing unattractive and unavailable does nothing to help stimulate the economy in the neighborhoods that are in need of such. It is also unconscionable to think that there should be any discussion about the need to implement a progressive personal income tax structure as the Council has proposed.

In times of fiscal hardship, it is wise to look for more revenue and to skin from our Big Apple those less than necessary projects. But cutting the Big Apple at its core will do nothing except cripple an already ailing city.

Thank you.

For more information, please contact terri smith-caronia, VP of NY Public Policy and Advocacy and 347-473-7418 or at smith-caronia@housingworks.org.

CHEKPEDS

Clinton/Hell's
Kitchen Pedestrian
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OUR MEMBERS • 9th Avenue Association • 43rd Street Block Association • 44SW • 44th Street Block Association • 45th Street Block Association • 46th Street Block Association • 47/48th Street Block Association • 55th Street Block Association • 344-348 West 38th Street Tenants Corp. • Actors Temple Theater • American Home Hardware & More • Baryshnikov Arts Center • Basilica • Brazil Brazil • Central Fish Market • Chimichurri Grill • Clinton Housing Development Corp • Costa del Sol • Cupcake Café • Delphinium Home • Domus • Econolodge • Empire Tailors & Cleaners • Times Square • Galaxy Diner • Hartley House • Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association • Housing Conservation Coordinators • Hudson Crossing Tenants Association • International Foods • Jezebel • J. Seffens Studio • L'Allegria • Larissa Designs • Le Madeleine • Manganaro's Food • Manhattan Plaza • Metro Bicycle Stores • New Dramatists • Nice N Natural • Orion Condominium • OsteriaGelsi • PetsNYC.com • Poseidon Bakery • Project FIND • R/GA • Revolution Rickshaws • Rockrose Development • Sea Breeze • Saint Vincent Midtown Hospital • Sunnyside Records • Smiley's • Sonja Wagner Gallery • Costa del Sol • St. Lukes Theater • Studio LLC • Tagine • Tartare • The Ritz • The Door Lounge • Thrift & New Shoppe • Trattoria Pesce Pasta • Urban Affiliates • Vintner Wine Market • Zipper Theater

November 24, 2008

David I. Weprin, & Peter Vallone
City Council, City Hall

New York, NY 10007

RE: New York City Budget Cuts hearings

FOR THE RECORD

Dear City Council Committee Chairs,

My name is Christine Berthet. I am the co founder of Chekpeds, a coalition to advance Pedestrian safety in the West of Manhattan. Chekpeds is an active member of the Mayor's Campaign for New York future. I am also the co Chair of Transportation committee of Manhattan Community Board 4 but will not speak to day in this capacity.

Before the council cuts services for law-abiding citizens who pay taxes to receive services, you may want to consider raising revenues from citizens who do not abide by the law and therefore cause law enforcement costs to increase. Citizens whose behavior, although legal, increases government costs (health care comes to mind) are also to contribute.

In 2008, the city collected \$ 825 million in fines. I wonder when was the last time the fines amounts were adjusted. Doubling or tripling this amount would generate a budget surplus.

Building Department fines are so small that developers routinely accept them as the cost of doing business, it is evident that doubling or even tripling some of them would do a world of good to the city budget and our quality of life. In our neighborhood, a developer was fined 14 times for creating dangerous conditions for pedestrians, to no avail. Clearly, the amounts need adjustment. Those developers who are good citizens would not suffer.

Similarly if the NYPD Traffic department was concentrating on giving out summonses (enforcement anyone) rather than directing the traffic (task meant to be performed by \$ 5,000 traffic lights) then the streets would be safer and the city budget in better shape. This is particularly true of the gridlock law, and honking laws, which need massive enforcement. Those drivers who do respect the law would not be penalized.

Red light cameras fines deserve a particular mention : they are expected to bring \$ 32.5 million¹ in 2009. Had the state legislature approved more red light and on-bus cameras, this amount could be easily increased fivefold.

Although I do not know the total cost of law and rules enforcement in the city (police, inspectors in buildings, noise, DEC etc.), it seems that these functions should be self-funded thought fines and summonses. Indeed if everyone was respecting the law, these functions would be unnecessary.

An additional avenue to explore would be to increase fees of activities, which although legal have side effects that bring considerable costs to the city and to its citizens. In 2008, the parking tax generated \$ 164 million² in revenues. This amount could be increased considerably at least in the Central Business District to both raise revenues and

¹ Source OMB FY 2009 budget

CHEKPEDS
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 • 44th Street Block
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 Association • 47/48th Street
 Block Association • 55th Street
 Block Association • 344-348
 West 38th Street Tenants
 Corp. • Actors Temple Theater
 • American Home Hardware &
 More • Baryshnikov Arts Center
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 Square • Galaxy Diner • Hartley
 House • Hell's Kitchen
 Neighborhood Association •
 Housing Conservation
 Coordinators • Hudson Crossing
 Tenants Association •
 International Foods • Jezebel
 • J.Seffens Studio
 • L'Allegria • Larissa Designs •
 Le Madeleine • Manganaro's
 Food • Manhattan Plaza • Metro
 Bicycle Stores • New Dramatists
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 Breeze • Saint Vincent Midtown
 Hospital • Sunnyside Records
 • Smiley's • Sonja Wagner
 Gallery • Costa del Sol • St.
 Lukes Theater • Studio
 LLC • Tagine • Tartare • The
 Ritz • The Door Lounge • Thrift &
 New Shoppe • Trattoria Pesce
 Pasta • Urban Affiliates • Vintner
 Wine Market • Zipper Theater

reduce driving. As the gas prices have decreased, there is room in the overall cost of driving to generate revenues. If the MTA fare is going up, should not the cost of driving go up as well even more? In addition, recent DCP parking studies have demonstrated that most drivers are not sensitive to price but rather to convenience. Similarly, Parking meter revenues of \$ 121 millions² could be increased significantly by installing more meters and adjusting to performance pricing to reduce cruising and congestion.

Beyond the pure costs, these groups of citizens do have a considerable negative impact on the quality of life in the city and increasing their contribution would be the easiest and fairest way to close the budget gap .

These choices are politically easy compare to the alternatives, and they happen to be right .

Thank you

Cc: City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn

Cc: City Council Member Gale Brewer

Cc: State Senator Tom Duane

Cc: Assembly Member Richard Gottfried

Cc: Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal

Cc: Borough President Scott Stringer

² Source: OMB FY 2008 revenues

³ Source: OMB FY 2008 revenues



THE COALITION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

FOR THE RECORD

New York City Council
FY 09 Budget Modification Hearing
November 24, 2008

Testimony of Coalition for Asian American Children and Families

Hello, my name is **Choua Vue**, and I am here today on behalf of the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families. CACF is the nation's only pan-Asian children's advocacy group. We are dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Asian Pacific American (APA) children and families in New York City. CACF has a membership of over 35 community and social service organizations serving a multitude of different Asian ethnic communities in New York City.

Asian Pacific Americans (APA) are by percentage the fastest growing group in New York City, nearly doubling every decade since 1970 and making up nearly 12% of the population. In fact, NYC has the largest Asian Pacific American population of any U.S. city. Of the nearly 1 million Asian Pacific Americans in NYC:

- 4 out of 5 Asian Pacific Americans are foreign-born.
- 1 out 3 Asian Pacific Americans are linguistically isolated, meaning that no one over the age of 14 in a household speaks English well.
- 1 out of 4 Asian Pacific Americans lives in poverty, the second highest rate of poverty of any racial group.
- 1 out of 5 Asian Pacific Americans does not have health insurance.

Despite these needs, there is a disparity between the resources available for the APA community and its growth. Asian Pacific Americans are not getting our fair share of public and private resources. The APA community receives 0.24% of social service contracts in NYC and 0.38% of foundation grants in NYC. This means that the increase in the APA population of NYC has been met with a decrease in financial resources and, hence, a decrease in much needed services.

With this economic downturn, a cut to our community will have detrimental effects because current resources already do not meet current needs. Cutting vital services will only exacerbate existing financial conditions by creating long term economic and human costs. Unfortunately, many vital programs targeting APAs were cut and eliminated from the FY'09 budget. These include:

- ❖ **B FREE NYC** -15% of Asian Pacific Americans have Hepatitis B in NYC, whereas in the general population the rate is under 1%. **B Free NYC was the only initiative specifically targeting the APA community.** For 4 years, it established a network of community-based screening, vaccination and referral clinics for Hepatitis B throughout the 5 boroughs of NYC; and to expand the capacity of its no-cost Hepatitis B care and treatment program for uninsured New Yorkers to prevent liver disease among Asian Pacific Americans, recent immigrants, and pregnant women. Thousands of uninsured individuals are struggling to continue their care.
- ❖ **TEMIS SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION**- New York City is home to more than a million residents who don't speak English well or at all. TEMIS simultaneous translation, a model program nationally, served a vital service offering limited English proficient individuals a means to communicate with their provider. The capacity of the City's public hospital system is severely diminished with the loss of \$1 million for the TEMIS. Language barriers preclude effective communication between patient and provider and can lead to medical errors, increased medical costs, and at the very worst death.

- ❖ **IMMIGRANT OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE** – Two-thirds of all New Yorkers are immigrants or children of immigrants. The Immigrant Opportunities Initiative funds programs that help these New York immigrant families obtain citizenship and language skills necessary for decent jobs, and to protect their legal rights. For the past several years, the City has funded \$10 Million towards the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative. However, this only met 10% of the need for ESOL and legal services programs. An additional cut of \$6.3 million hinders the full integration of immigrants in becoming active New Yorkers who can participate in building a stronger economy and civic foundation for the City's future.
- ❖ **PREVENTIVE SLOTS** – The total number of families in the New York City foster care system has decreased by 50 percent in the past decade, but the percentage of APA families in this system has increased during that same time. The City eliminated 1,000 child welfare preventive slots for families with specific linguistic needs. The reduction of these slots result in higher caseloads and a greater likelihood of children being separate from parents and put into foster care. Foster care is more expensive and less efficient at meeting the needs of the children and their families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Asian Pacific American community is demanding our fair share in the City budget to ensure that our community does not get left behind. Therefore, we put forward the following principles in how our City government should address the financial crisis.

- ❖ **THE CITY SHOULD ADDRESS BOTH THE REVENUE AND EXPENSE SIDES OF THE BUDGET.** There are always two sides of the budget, and the State and City must focus on balancing the budget, not cutting expenses only. The City must increase revenue and decrease expenses in a responsible way. CACF is a member of One New York, a 150 organization strong coalition Fighting for Fairness and advancing a balanced approach to weathering the economic crisis. The coalition supports rescinding the 7 percent property tax reduction and the 400 dollar rebate. We would also like to see progressive increases in the PIT similar to what was done in 2003. We are wary of sales tax increases on purchases of under \$110 and the bag tax because they are regressive.
- ❖ **THE MOST VULNERABLE MEMBERS OF NEW YORK MUST BE PROTECTED DURING THESE TOUGH FINANCIAL TIMES.** Budget cuts should not be detrimental to New Yorkers with the greatest needs. According to New York City's Center for Economic Opportunities, Asian Pacific Americans have the second highest rate of poverty at 26%. The City must preserve services to our most vulnerable, including recently arrived immigrants, low-income, limited English proficient, children, and seniors. Services such as workforce development, ESL, adult literacy, and child care all promote economic self-sufficiency. Therefore, cuts to these vital services hinder the participation of these communities to contribute fully to the economic growth of the city.
- ❖ **THE CITY SHOULD ENSURE THAT SMALL, COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBOs) THAT SERVE EMERGING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES BE SUPPORTED.** These organizations are rooted in and have the trust of their communities. They are often the first to become aware of and respond to the community's needs in a culturally competent and linguistically appropriate manner. However, the funding for services these small CBOs provide are often not baselined. Therefore, they are first to be eliminated. A decrease in funding to these grassroots organizations translates into a diminished capacity to address the community's needs.

FOR THE RECORD

CHEKPEDS Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Pedestrian Safety Coalition



400 W. 4th Street - #432N
New York, New York
10036
(646) 623 2689
info@chekpeds.com

OUR MEMBERS • 70+
 Avenue Association • 43rd
 Street Block Association • 46th
 • 48th Street Block
 Association • 49th Street Block
 Association • 47th Street Block
 Association • 50th Street
 Block Association • 54th Street
 Block Association • 58th Street
 Block Association • 60th Street
 Block Association • 64th Street
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 Block Association • 200th Street

reduce driving. As the gas prices have decreased, there is room in the overall cost of driving to generate revenues. If the MTA fare is going up, should not the cost of driving go up as well even more? In addition, recent DCP parking studies have demonstrated that most drivers are not sensitive to price but rather to convenience. Similarly, parking meter revenues of \$ 121 millions* could be increased significantly by installing more meters and adjusting to performance pricing to reduce cruising and congestion.

Beyond the pure costs, these groups of citizens do have a considerable negative impact on the quality of life in the city and increasing their contribution would be the easiest and fastest way to close the budget gap. These choices are politically easy compare to the alternatives, and they happen to be right.

Thank you

Cc: City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn
 Cc: City Council Member Gale Brewer
 Cc: State Senator Tom Duane
 Cc: Assembly Member Richard Gottfried
 Cc: Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal
 Cc: Borough President Scott Stringer

* Source: OMB FY 2008 revenues
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November 24, 2008
 David I. Weprin, & Peter Vailone
 City Council, City Hall
 New York, NY 10007
 RE: New York City Budget Cuts hearings

Dear City Council Committee Chairs,

My name is Christine Berthel. I am the co founder of Chekpeds, a coalition to advance pedestrian safety in the West of Manhattan. Chekpeds is an active member of the Mayor's Campaign for New York future. I am also the co Chair of Transportation committee of Manhattan Community Board 4 but will not speak to day in this capacity.

Before the council cuts services for law-abiding citizens who pay taxes to receive services, you may want to consider missing revenues from citizens who do not abide by the law and therefore cause law enforcement costs to increase. Citizens whose behavior, although legal, increases government costs (health care comes to mind) are also to contribute.

In 2008, the city collected \$ 825 million in fines. I wonder when was the last time the fines amounts were adjusted. Doubling or tripling this amount would generate a budget surplus.

Building Department fines are so small that developers routinely accept them as the cost of doing business. It is evident that doubling or even tripling some of them would do a world of good to the city budget and our quality of life. In our neighborhood, a developer was fined 14 times for creating dangerous conditions for pedestrians, to no avail. Clearly, the amounts need adjustment. Those developers who are good citizens would not suffer.

Similarly if the NYPD Traffic department was concentrating on giving out summonses (enforcement anyone) rather than directing the traffic (task meant to be performed by \$ 5,000 traffic lights) then the streets would be safer and the city budget in better shape. This is particularly true of the gridlock law, and honking laws, which need massive enforcement. Those drivers who do respect the law would not be penalized.

Red light cameras fines deserve a particular mention: they are expected to bring \$ 32.5 million* in 2009. Had the state legislature approved more red light and on-bus cameras, this amount could be easily increased fivefold.

Although I do not know the total cost of law and rules enforcement in the city (police, inspectors in buildings, noise, DEC, etc.), it seems that these functions should be self-funded through fines and summonses. Indeed if everyone was respecting the law, these functions would be unnecessary.

An additional avenue to explore would be to increase fees of activities, which although legal have side effects that bring considerable costs to the city and to its citizens. In 2008, the parking tax generated \$ 164 million* in revenues. This amount could be increased considerably at least in the Central Business District to both raise revenues and

* Source: OMB FY 2009 budget

FOR THE RECORD

Testimony to City Council on Plan to Eliminate Elder Abuse Programs

By Margie Roldan – 11/24/08

- I. I, Margie Roldan, was referred to JASA's elder abuse program in January 2007 by Beth Israel Medical Center because of the stress and depression I felt due to the crowded conditions in my apartment and my son's verbal abuse, constant arguments and cursing at me. At that time I often felt suicidal, and I was agoraphobic, afraid to go out. My son, his wife and their 5-year old son and my daughter-in-law's daughter and newborn baby moved in with me in my small 2-bedroom NYCHA apartment in 2001 after they were evicted from their apartment for nonpayment of rent. Their stay was supposed to be for a short time, but they stayed for over six years. My son refused to work, my daughter-in-law sometimes worked, but we were all living essentially on my \$660 per month Social Security, so that we had trouble paying our bills, the furniture was ruined, and sometimes we lacked food.
- II. JASA's elder abuse social worker respected that I felt I could not just have my son and his family removed from the apartment through an Order of Protection. I did not have the money for a lawyer to get legal advice. The social workers counseled me over a number of months, and I felt less stress, and JASA also helped with small grants to help pay some bills, but my son's verbal abuse and the financial problems continued.
- III. This spring, JASA's elder abuse social worker brought in other services that thoroughly cleaned my apartment, obtained more benefits for me, and over time obtained a new sofa and chair for the living room. JASA's social worker also made a referral to ACS (Administration of Children's Services), and that agency arranged to move my son and his family to a shelter and then also enrolled my son and his wife in a jobs program.
- IV. I am feeling much less stress now, living in my apartment with home care. JASA's elder abuse program understood the problem and helped me understand it and made referrals so that my son and his family could be moved but be helped at the same time.
- V. *What would happen if these services did not exist and what will happen if they are eliminated?*

If these elder abuse services did not exist, I don't think I could have been helped in this way. JASA understood my problem and was able to find a solution without charging me any money.

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