

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

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November 24, 2008

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HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

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

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Commissioner
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

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Local 1306 District Council 37

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Allison Cordero
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Dr. Barry Liebowitz
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Tracy Welsh
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Ivy Gamble-Cobb
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Family Center

Melissa Minegro

Rachael Kaighin-Shields
Director
Ridgewood Bushwick Respite Center

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

Martha Wolf

Director

Alzheimer's Day Care Center Parker Jewish Center for
Health Care and Rehabilitation

Kathleen Shaw

Lenox Hill Health Enhancement

Karen Anglero

President

Latimer Gardens Residents Association

Patricia Dolan

Executive Vice President

Queens Civic Congress

Erin Brennan

Senior Programs Director

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Kathy Fitzgibbons

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Federation of Protestant Welfare

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Carter Burden Center

Mary Anne Flanagan

Community Service Society

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Queens Community House

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Director
Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation

Marcia Friedlander
Director of the Caregiver Program
Services Now for Adult Persons

Ann White
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Riverstone Senior Life Services

Alan Flax

Marya Gilborn
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The Family Center

Josephine Torasano

Sandra Christian

Jamil Hatcher

Les Davis
Program Coordinator
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Virginia Muson

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

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Hudson Guild Fulton Senior Center

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Queens District Director and the Director of Elder
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Sandy Daniels
Stein Senior Center

Michelle Coombs
Program Director
C.V. Starr Adult Day Services

Paula Rice

Wendy Hanscom-Bolton
Director of the Social Adult Day Program
Riverdale Senior Center

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

Martha Kausek

Alice Hampton

Marian Marafchic

Shirley Joseph

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Commissioner,
3 you can have a seat at the table so we can start.

4 [Pause]

5 [Off mic]

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Finance is back
7 in session and we are now joint with the Cultural
8 Affairs Committee and also we will be joined by
9 the Subcommittee on Libraries. The Cultural
10 Affairs Committee, of course, is chaired by my
11 colleague to my immediate left, Council Member
12 Domenic Recchia and the Libraries Committee is
13 chaired by Vincent Gentile who will be here
14 momentarily. In the interest of time, I'll--
15 keeping my remarks to a minimum so we can hear
16 testimony from Commissioner Kate Levin. Before we
17 hear from the Commissioner, I just want to quickly
18 highlight the proposed cuts in the Mayor's
19 November plan as it relates to cultural. For the
20 2.5% fiscal year '09 and 5% fiscal year '10 PEG
21 program, cultural will see a 766,000 reduction to
22 its programs in fiscal year '09 and 1.3 million in
23 fiscal year '10. The Department of Cultural
24 Affairs applied the PEG across the board, but not
25 to the Office of the Commissioner. As of today,

we have not received an answer to the impact of the PEG to the programs and institutions. We hope to hear greater detail of the effect of the PEG on programs. After we hear from Commissioner Levin, we'll be joined by the Subcommittee on Libraries, as I mentioned. All libraries have seen a reduction to their programs due to PEGs and later in the afternoon we'll hear how those cuts will affect those services. Right now we know that this PEG program would reduce headcount and services, including reduce six-day service or no six-day services in some cases. I will now turn the microphone over to my co-chair Domenic Recchia.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you, David, and good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This afternoon we're going to hear from Kate Levin as far as Cultural Affairs is concerned and we're going to hear how the effects--the budget cuts are going to affect the institutions, the program lines, and how, overall, what she has in mind for the future of the cultural community. As you know, the cultural community, they have thoughts in their opinion on what is going on because to

1
2 them it's that the cuts should be overly spread
3 out through every city agency. The Cultural
4 Affairs Committee and cultural institutions,
5 especially, they feel like their cuts are more
6 than 2.5% and more than 5.0%, which is slated for
7 next year. So we're going to hear from
8 Commissioner Kate Levin and hope you address that
9 issue because the cultural institutions will be
10 testifying after you and they will lay out why
11 they feel they're getting a larger cut. Many
12 cultural programs feel that they've been cut more
13 than other agencies and they feel that they should
14 not take a big cut like the one that is being
15 proposed by the Mayor at this time. In addition,
16 we'll be hearing from the libraries and we're
17 going into the--the three library systems will be
18 testifying after the Commissioner testifies and
19 they will be letting us know how the impacts will
20 affect each branch of the library: from the New
21 York Public Library, the Brooklyn, and the Queens
22 branches. Brooklyn and Queens are facing the same
23 cut, I believe it's about 4.1 million, and New
24 York Public Library is facing much more than that,
25 but we will hear from the three library systems

and we will hear how it's going to affect them and if there's any way they can still keep six days a week service going with the cuts that they are facing. So at this time, Commissioner, like to say a few words. I'd like to recognize all my colleagues [off mic]

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. We have Oliver Koppell from the Bronx, we have Jimmy Vacca from the Bronx, we have Mr. Jackson from Manhattan, we have Ms. Gale Brewer from the upper West Side, we have Leroy Comrie, we have myself, David Weprin, and Councilman Gentile will be joining us shortly, he's in the committee room in a hearing next door. Commissioner?

KATE LEVIN: Good afternoon. Thank you. I'm Kate Levin, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and I'm here today to testify with regard to the Mayor's FY '10 November plan. With me here today are General Counsel Tracey Knuckles, Chief of Staff Jamie Bennett; Assistant Commissioners Kathy Hughes, Susan Chin and Tim Thayer; Finance Director Phillippa Shao and Director of External Affairs

Kate deRosset. First, let me discuss our expense budget outlook. As you may recall DCA's FY 2009 adopted budget was \$152.5 million with a baseline of \$144.1 million and one-time allocations of \$8.5 million. Some time 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 FY '10. This translates to a \$3.8 million reduction for DCA in Fiscal '9, bringing the current year's budget to \$148.8 million. In applying the reductions, we 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, or CIGs, and

the program groups. For FY '09, CIGs would receive a total reduction of \$3 million from their original FY '09 allocation of \$118.2 million.

Program groups would receive a total reduction of \$800,000 from their original FY '09 allocation 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 FY '09. Therefore, the FY '09 2.5% reduction translates to a 4.2% cut to the operating portion of city support to the CIGs. The fiscal year '10 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 FY '09 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 FY '09 and FY '10 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 program groups will receive a cumulative reduction of 2.5% for FY '09 and 5% for FY '10. This will be applied in two ways. Final payments to current CDF recipients will reflect the FY '09 reduction. For FY '10, organizations receiving multiyear contracts would see their grants reduced by 5% and the pool of funds for annual CDF applicants would be reduced by 5% for FY '10. 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 FY '09 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 FY '09 to FY '13 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. In addition, DCA has begun two

initiatives to help organizations make the smartest choices and the best decisions related to their capital project. First, DCA has partnered with the New York State Council on the Arts to develop a three-part workshop designed for organizations with annual operating budgets of less than \$1 million that have capital projects that are receiving city capital funding. The first workshop laying groundwork for organizational sustainability was hosted by Time Warner. The next two workshops will take place in the first half of 2009. Together, these workshops are designed to help organizations plan effectively in the early stages of capital projects. Second, DCA administers the Community Arts Development Program, or CADP, through our capital unit, which is funded by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. CADP has developed a new capacity building initiative designed for those organizations that serve low and moderate income populations. It is also designed for organizations with capital allocations in DCA's budget that have annual operating budgets of \$1 million or less. Groups

will apply to do board development, strategic planning, or business planning over an 18-month period. All of the funded projects will include an organizational assessment, a consultancy with a management expert, and supplemental workshops and peer learning exchanges. This is meant to be a more intense one-on-one resource for organizations. Notification of this program was just released to the field and information is available on DCA's website.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Excuse me, Commissioner, everything you just said, I can't find it in the testimony that you gave us. Is it not in here?

KATE LEVIN: [Off mic]

[Off mic]

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. 'Cause it wasn't in here. All right. That's okay. It was omitted, that's why I thought I was going crazy, but I just ask my colleagues. Okay. Go ahead.

KATE LEVIN: Apologies. It's all good news so, you know.

[Off mic]

KATE LEVIN: Notwithstanding the current economy, the city continues 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 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're 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 raised 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. [Pause] In other news, the Mayor's Awards for Arts and Culture took place November 10th 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 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 and 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 30th. 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 the Economic Development Corporation'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 21st on the New York City Waterfalls, the major art installation by 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 about 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 exhibit that overlapped with Waterfalls, saw attendance jump by 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 your cultural organizations in your district to take advantage of this free promotional opportunity. 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 organization through other media partners. In fact, NYC culture 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 calendar. In closing, I'd like to thank Chairman Recchia, Chairman Weprin, the members of these committees, and all City Council Members for your continued support of the cultural community. As we work through challenging fiscal times, your partnership becomes even more critical. I'm happy to answer any questions you have.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Off mic] Thank you, Commissioner. I'm just going to ask a generic question, you know, tourism has generally been up in the city, although, you know, with the economy, you know, that may be falling off. But I'm always nervous when I hear about proposed cuts to cultural institutions because, as you pointed out, with The Waterfalls and we had the Gates in Central Park, you know, the economic activity that our cultural institutions generate really help

significantly overall in the economy, as well as encouraging tourism and expanding tourism and create direct economic benefit, as you pointed out, with the \$69 million, which exceeded estimates, you know, then predicted. So I'm a little hesitant about--you know, I understand every agency is having cuts and the PEG program is--doesn't really have any sacred cows, but does it make economic sense to cut cultural institutions that are actually going to be generating revenue and economic activity through tourism and other direct benefit?

KATE LEVIN: I think the Mayor's point of view is that the city's best economic interests are served by continuing to have a balanced budget and the need in doing that is to be fair to all city services, so the best strategy is to ask all agencies for the same level of reduction. Every agency is providing vital city services and has their strengths, so obviously it's going to be tough for every sector to absorb the cuts and we hope to be able to work with the cultural community in a variety of ways to make sure they continue to do what they do so superbly

for our neighborhoods and in terms of attracting tourists.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Is there an analysis of which cultural institutions generate more economic activity or income and is that somehow weighted in this decision? For example, you know, using a different analogy, the police department is cutting uniformed police officers, but they're hiring significant number of additional ticket agents which are generating revenue for the city. I mean not everybody--that's the kind of revenue that the public often doesn't like, but the kind of revenue that cultural institutions generate are the type of revenue that the public does like. Is there some kind of financial differentiation or analysis being done as to which parts of your budget vis-à-vis various cultural institutions actually generate more revenue or economic activity than others?

KATE LEVIN: The Alliance for the Arts' most recent study says that nonprofit culture generates around \$5 billion a year in economic impact. The nuances can be a little tricky, and, frankly, sometimes counterproductive

from an advocacy point of view, because certain organizations, due to their size and international stature are going to have a more obvious economic impact, they're the ones that pull in foreign tourists and they're the ones that are able to directly employ more New Yorkers. That said, many other kinds of organizations--those that are smaller, those that work for our school system--are also part of this larger network of economic impact and so to just stick with the impacts you can quantify and not think about it more broadly would be doing the field a disservice. Coming up with the kind of nuanced study that you're looking to do, unfortunately we don't yet have the social science to do it as accurately, certainly as accurate as I would like, but we are mindful of the fact that cultural institutions generate different kinds of economic impact and all them are valuable.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. I'll grant you that it's hard to determine which ones to cut and which ones not to and which ones, you know, generate more revenue and others that don't. But can you tell me with these proposed PEGs, what

the potential reduction can be in services vis-à-vis different institutions? Are there some institutions that are going to have to close an additional day? Are there some that just going to reduce hours? Are there some that just going to alternate? I mean, can you give us some kind of indication what these cuts will mean to some of the cultural and, also if you can kind of let us know, is there some consideration being given for some smaller cultural institutions, as we've had this discussion many times, in a lot of cases outside of Manhattan that are not able to raise the funds privately, that some of the larger cultural institutions are able to.

KATE LEVIN: To take your second question first--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right.

KATE LEVIN: --for this round of cuts we're proposing an across-the-board approach partly because we are already well into the fiscal year and having organizations adjust their budgets in a particularly dramatic way is especially difficult. So the idea of asking some organizations to take much more substantial cuts

at the moment, we feel would be more destabilizing to them. I think the overall kind of impact these cuts will have, as in the past, every organization is going to have to respond themselves. For better and worse at the moment, the City of New York looks to be, frankly, the most stable funder out there. Many organizations are being much harder hit by reductions from foundation, corporate, and individual sectors, so we are doing our best to try and be as straightforward and steady as we can, and a 2.5% reduction, while certainly not a good time for anyone, we believe shouldn't drastically stabilize organizations, although, again, our sense is they will each take individualized approaches to how they absorb that the reduction.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Thank you. I'm going to turn it over to Chair Recchia.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Yes, Commissioner, thank you for testifying here today. First, I want to--my colleagues, I'm going to ask a few questions, then my colleagues have questions, I'll let them go since I'll be here for a while.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Not as long as me.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Right, not as long as you, right, David. First, dealing with the CIGs, okay? They claim that because you take the total number off their total budget of the energy and the operating, okay? Then the only thing you cut is the operating expense, okay? Therefore, they are taking more than a 2.5 cut and you admit that in your testimony here. But what is the reason why you're not taking the money off of the energy because I think in this tough economic times, we have to make exceptions and by not taking the money out from the energy part, they're getting less money to operate on. So could you explain to us why you do that and is there any way that we could include the energy?

KATE LEVIN: Sure, the overall support for each CIG is not being disproportionately reduced, it's a 2.5% cut. From a policy standpoint we feel that the city dollars should keep the lights on, keep the--keep and--these buildings functional, they belong to the citizens of this city and that's a major

obligation for us. The dollars that the city is spending on heat, light, and power are real dollars, so were we to cut them, the organizations would have to make them up in the same way that they make up operating expenses. The complexities of trying to shift back and forth between energy and operating don't seem to us to make a whole lot of sense from a policy point of view.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: But if we were to take some savings away from the energy part of the budget, then the institutions, before they have to figure out how they're going to pay it, all right? If they find a shortfall, that they could find a way to conserve energy, you see? If we would take some of that heat and energy money away, then we would force them to find a way to conserve energy and they would be saving money. You see--

KATE LEVIN: [Interposing] Our expectation is that they are always looking to save energy dollars and we are absolutely open and have--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: [Interposing]
But now we're putting pressure on them because if

they save this money, they're not getting cut from the operating part, so they would have more money to operate their institution.

KATE LEVIN: Our concern is, and it happens routinely every year, that certain organizations, and it changes year to year, spend more than the amount that we have estimated to cover their energy costs. So part of the problem is--the downside of an approach in which we might want to try and incentivize conservation by making less dollars available than they would need to cover heat, light, and power would be that organizations would have to go dark or close 'cause they couldn't pay their energy bills. So, again, it's a conversation we are willing to continue to have--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Right.

KATE LEVIN: --have had it frequently with OMB and with the field to try and work out a package by which we could, in exchange for reduced energy costs, make more operating dollars available for the CIGs, but it's--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: [Interposing]
Well I think now is the time that we should really

1 sit down and really talk about this 'cause I think
2 in a time of crisis this could be one way how we
3 could help the institutions. But also in your
4 testimony where you spoke--you discuss that this
5 was like one of the largest budgets for Cultural
6 Affairs, which is very good and, you know, we
7 worked well together and that's great, but also in
8 this past year, okay? The CIGs, the cultural
9 institutions did not receive any other funding
10 like they have in the past. There was no other
11 City Council funds added to their budget that's--
12 is that correct?

14 KATE LEVIN: There were some, there
15 were some dollars added for the CIGs.

16 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: But that
17 money--

18 KATE LEVIN: It was not as much as
19 in the past.

20 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Right, but
21 that money came from individual Council Members,
22 not from the speaker--

23 KATE LEVIN: I believe that's
24 correct, although I honestly don't know.

25 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. And

'cause the point that I want to try to get at here is that there was no additional money given by the Speaker's office to this cultural institutions, so, therefore, their cut gets even larger because in the past years they always receive funding from the Speaker's office, this year they did not receive any funding from the Speaker's office. So when you look at their total overall budget they're going to cut, I mean, close to, you know, 18%. It's the way I look at it.

KATE LEVIN: And we have a philosophical disagreement because what we look at is the baseline dollars that they--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: I know it goes to the baseline--

KATE LEVIN: --should be.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: But I have more questions, but I know my colleagues have more questions. At this time Jimmy Vacca. Jimmy Vacca.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Thank you, Chair. Let me ask, these cuts between this year-- this year you're requiring 2.5% across the board next year it is 5% not across the board?

KATE LEVIN: Five percent across the

board.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Five percent across the board?

KATE LEVIN: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Each institution determines what they're going to cut basically.

KATE LEVIN: That's correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Okay. I'm looking at an analysis which shows that if you look at the budgeting we've done in the past year or two, you have cultural institutions with 30% cumulative cuts, 28% cumulative cuts. Have you seen an analysis, are you aware that we could be cutting institutions much more than what the intent is at this point?

KATE LEVIN: I am aware, the reason for those--the size of some of those cuts is that organizations in the past were very fortunate to receive member items at the time of budget adoption which gave them dramatically more resources. I don't minimize the impact on those organizations but, again, what we pay closest attention to and try and steward is the baseline

amounts that organizations, we hope, are able to depend on year after year.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: You acknowledge in your testimony that many of these organizations may be losing out on private donations and endowments and other type of outside resources that they had counted on over the years?

KATE LEVIN: Absolutely, yep.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Are we facing a time where some of these institutions may just close their doors?

KATE LEVIN: I hope not, I have not yet heard of institutions that are seriously contemplating that yet and, no--we still continue to hear very mixed things from the field. Some organizations continue to have robust attendance, continue to pull in donations, we have a number of major new capital cultural projects announced in the city last week that said from other quarters we're hearing that ticket sales are starting to soften, that year-end projections aren't going to be met. So, you know, I am--I have yet to see some real trends that will help us focus our attention. I think, you know, that that's part of

what's very difficult right now is so much remains unknown. Bottom line, I think everyplace is going to feel some pain and the question is how nimble organizations can be in adapting to their own particular set of circumstances.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I know that in other agencies when we talk about next year's proposed 5% cut, there seems to be a willingness not to go across the board, but when I listen to this, I'm hearing an across-the-board cut that's going sometimes probably below the bone to the marrow. Are we committed to keeping all these institutions open? Is New York City committed to keeping the existing cultural institutions open to its residents in light of the budget cuts, the reduction in private support, the reduction in user use that we may be facing due to the economic crisis the country faces? Are we committed to keeping these institutions open?

KATE LEVIN: We are absolutely committed to doing everything we can to work with them and I think, you know, to your point, we will need to be flexible in looking ahead to next year. At the moment though, to give organizations the

best possible capacity to plan ahead we believe an across-the-board cut is the fairest and most appropriate way to go.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: The chairman alluded to the energy mandate and you're not relaxing the energy mandate. If there's a cultural institution that feels that they could save on energy costs, where does that accrual go? Is that budgeted and if it's--if there's an energy savings, it does not go into their operating budget because DCA has determined that you are funding that period? How do we encourage agencies perhaps to save energy and have that money go back into their budgets to their bottom line to ameliorate some of the cuts that your agency is making if you've determined that that's not going to be the case?

KATE LEVIN: To start with, the Office of Energy Conservation is usually pretty uncannily accurate at estimating the energy costs of cultural organizations. They're, you know, usually a little overestimated here, a little underestimated there, but it's not as if they're far off. So it's not as if we're doing cultural

organizations a drastic disservice in estimating and then paying for these charges year to year. But to your point, we have yet to come up with a comprehensive way of looking at and using the potential crossover between the energy subsidy and the operating subsidy as a way of incentivizing reduced energy costs. Again, we expect organizations to be as mindful as possible of the resources that they're using and would love to be able to come up with a more broad-based strategy for doing this. We are working with the CIGs that are eligible for PlaNYC dollars to come up with sustainable strategies and that may well prove the best possible route to try to figure out how to use the allurements of cutting energy costs as a way of rewarding these organizations on the operating side. But the portfolio of organizations that we have, the nature of their facilities and the nature of their businesses is so diverse, you know, that, frankly, I just haven't been smart enough to figure out how to do this in a way that takes care of everybody. But, again, we're certainly open to that and look forward to working with you to be able to do it.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Commissioner,

I appreciate that and I appreciate your openness in wanting to work with the Council, but I think that it's something that your agency and the city has got to pursue. I think that we have to have a strategy in place anticipating that we're going to have some very lean years. I think we have to have a strategy in place that maximizes the dollar and that doesn't hit these organizations the way I see they--that they're being hit. I can easily see these institutions being open two and three days a week if this continues down the line, if not some of the smaller groups being threatened with closure and if there's not a strategy right now that looks at each institution and tries to maximize the dollars that they're getting and that we can leverage through the city, I think the future is kind of bleak. I'm concerned that these across-the-board cuts are going to have a disproportionate impact on our cultural institutions as we go forth and that's what attracts people to our city, that's--these cultural institutions provide a hook for a lot of people to come to New York City and spend their

money here and give us tax revenue, as well. So I would hope that you would look at expediting that effort and getting a multi-agency approach to it if that's what we need, but I see an opportunity that we haven't really exhausted.

KATE LEVIN: Thank you.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Council Member. Are you finished? Yeah, thanks. Council Member Tish James.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: First, Commissioner, let me thank you for organizing an event in my district where you had some cultural organizations reach out to members of CUP--

KATE LEVIN: Yep.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: --which is an urban professional organization seeking to diversify the boards in Brooklyn and, at some point in time, I just wanted to get an update on whether or not we were successful in diversifying any of the boards. Obviously, I share, and other members of the City Council, share the concerns with respect to the boards of some of these cultural organizations looking very monolithic.

And--thank you--

[Off mic]

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: --not representing or reflecting the diversity of the City of New York, I too share the concerns with regards to the cultural organizations--I have one, thank you--but I'm more concerned at this point time because we had planned a major capital project in my district known as the BAM Cultural District and I did receive a report last week that one project, the BAM Annex, was kicked out to 2013, I believe, or 2011? Or, if I'm wrong, then can you just give me an update--

KATE LEVIN: Sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: --on some of the projects in the cultural district?

KATE LEVIN: If you want real accurate information 'cause I'm probably I'm not going to remember it--

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay.

KATE LEVIN: --perfectly, I will happily--

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay.

KATE LEVIN: --sit with you and go

over each project, but the BAM Annex has been scheduled where we believe the actual dollar spend will occur. So I don't remember at this point, if it's in '10 or in '11, but I believe those dollars are very much surgically placed where they will--

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay.

KATE LEVIN: --need to be spent.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: And are we still on schedule for TAFANA and has TAFANA met their target goal?

KATE LEVIN: I believe we are with both, but, again, I will get back to you with more solid information.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: And Brick?

KATE LEVIN: Brick and Strand, we are hoping to submit a finalized concept for design in the next month, so that's moving ahead well.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: And the Plaza?

KATE LEVIN: The deal, I'm not sure whether it's just the terms have been finalized or the deal's actually been signed for the romantically-known South site, which includes the

Plaza and a cultural space for a number of organizations in the base of that tower, so--but the deal terms have been worked out and they--

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay.

KATE LEVIN: --are appropriately favorable to the cultural institutions.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: I know talking to the Commissioner of HPD there were some issues with the North site and I'll defer to the Commissioner with respect to that site 'cause I know that there were some concerns. I too shares the concerns with the energy initiative, I know that energy costs have come down somewhat and so obviously if organizations--if cultural organizations could dip into that--to the energy fund, I believe that would go a long way in addressing their operating costs. So my question to you is, I know that there has been a PEG to the cultural programs and to the cultural institutions, but there's not been a PEG to your administration in the November plan. Why--what's the rationale?

KATE LEVIN: Ninety-seven cents of every dollar in our agency goes to cultural

organizations. We believe we have the lowest overhead of any city agency and in order to serve the field at an appropriate rate we really--we can't slash any deeper. We are the leanest, and hopefully not the meanest, city agency there is and we need to protect the personnel that make that possible.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. I know that The Waterfall, as you mentioned, we were able to collect--generated \$69 million in revenue to the City of New York, but I do know in downtown Brooklyn, particularly the residents of Brooklyn Heights, were concerned about the damage to some of the trees and in downtown Brooklyn. Have we sought to mitigate the damage as a result of The Waterfall, particularly in the Brooklyn Heights community?

KATE LEVIN: Absolutely. I don't know the exact status of that 'cause that's under the jurisdiction of the Parks Department.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. And recently I attended an event, well two events, at Brooklyn Museum, this last week I was at the Black List Project and then there was a feminist project

that I attended several months ago or a couple of months ago and obviously the Brooklyn Museum is still raking them in and--but I am very much concerned about cuts to the Brooklyn Museum, to BAM, to the Children's Museum, and all of the cultural districts in and around my district because I recognize that they generate business and they generate business for all the businesses that are facing challenging times and so if we could do anything so that they could at least dip into that energy fund, that would be greatly appreciated. And I believe those are all of my questions and issues and I thank you for all that you are doing in the City of New York.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Commissioner, just to follow up on something that Councilwoman James said, it's--tell me if I'm correct or not, but if a capital project that is out there for 2013 or 2014 that got pushed out, if their planning goes according--gets moved--goes ahead and they start planning and scoping and if their project is ready to begin before 2013 and if you have funding, it's very possible that you'll move

up the project, is that correct?

KATE LEVIN: It is our desire and intention to absolutely do that, but in doing this exercise, we had to prioritize organizations that did have defined scopes that were under way, that were--

Count CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Right.

KATE LEVIN: --absolutely packaged and ready to go.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Right, but I just want to make it clear that those--

KATE LEVIN: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Just follow up on that, so have there been any projects specifically, since politics is local, are there any projects in my district that have been reduced or been further pushed out?

KATE LEVIN: Again, I'm happy to sit with you--

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. Okay.

KATE LEVIN: --and give you the real facts 'cause--

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.

KATE LEVIN: --my made-up ones won't

be so good.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: We don't want you to make anything up. We want real, we want the real stuff.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: If she makes things up that says that everything in my district is going forward, that would be good.

KATE LEVIN: Yeah, but it would be even better if it was true, right?

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Council Member Dickens.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Commissioner, it's good seeing you again. I have just a couple short questions, number one, the Studio Museum in Harlem and Museo del Barrio are two of the six that are very near and dear to me and I fight very hard for both of those. And I heard you when you mentioned the 2.5% reduction across the board and then subsequently the 5% reduction across the board and these are two CIGs that their operating budgets are significantly lower than most of the other

CIGs listed. So I've got some real concerns because when we talk about a 2.5 per cent reduction to budgets that are already significantly reduced, then it severely impacts their ability--and by the way, these are two that provide free and open access to the communities, they don't charge for their events for the most part. So I'm very concerned about the Museo del Barrio and the Studio Museum having a 2.5 reduction, you know--and when I look at the operating support that some of the other CIGs get that are so much higher. For instance, the operating for Studio is 676,000 and for the Museo del Barrio, 457,000. And so when we talk about impacting upon those two, we're talking about, you know, almost putting them out of business. So I'm really very, very concerned when we do these cuts just across the board without looking at how much money each one gets--so, you know, I want to know is that something that can be revisited?

KATE LEVIN: It can, but you should know that the reductions that were baked into the FY '09 adopted budget did include a tier reduction to the CIG world with the smaller organizations,

including both El Museo and Studio, receiving a much smaller percentage reduction--

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: What is it-

-

KATE LEVIN: --than larger organizations.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I'm--I beg your pardon, I'm sorry, what is their reduction for the Studio Museum?

KATE LEVIN: For the current plan that we're discussing, it is the 2.5. What I'm just saying is that in the past, we've tiered cuts and we have done our best to protect them. It's just in this particular exercise that we're doing it's now almost the middle of the fiscal year to continue to disproportionately reduce rather than go with across the board seem to us to be unfair. We certainly thought about it long and hard, but that has been our decision. Looking ahead to what we do for FY '10, obviously there will be lots of conversations about how to proceed there, but in our experience, anytime you do a mid-year cut, it's more destabilizing to do it disproportionately for everybody involved.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I

appreciate, you've been, you know, a very, very, very much a strong advocate for our cultural, however, I beg to differ with you when we talk about disproportionate because they already are disproportionately receiving funds in operating support. So I disagree and I think it does need to continue to be tiered because we're talking about, you know, significant reductions to their budget and these are two that provide access and they service communities that are severely impacted with gang warfare, turf war, they act as anti-gang and they're not getting paid for it. Youth-on-youth violence, these are the communities that these two institutions service, not other communities and that doesn't mean I'm against any other cultural because all of our cultural need to be protected and fought very hard for, but I'm now really talking about the operating budget and I am very concerned that it is not continuing to be tiered to the organizations that service communities such as mine that have, you know, the type of war going on in our community.

[Pause]

KATE LEVIN: Happy again to continue to look at this, but our sense, given the balance of everything that we're dealing with in a portfolio that is so varied at the moment across the board, is the fairest way to go. But, again [crosstalk]--

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: All right. If--

KATE LEVIN: --revisiting that with you for '10.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: --if, Commissioner, if you are willing to look at other avenues such as going--and since the cost of heating, etc., has gone down somewhat, maybe that is something you could consider and would--if so, would you consider revisiting a tiered thing for certain CIGs?

KATE LEVIN: Probably not for the current ongoing fiscal year, but, you know, given the number of unknowns out there, we may be continuing to have this kind of conversation all year and any good idea is a welcome idea. We will certainly continue to have the discussion about energy. I mean, the--unfortunately, we are

projected to have a much colder year this year than we have in the past, so while heating costs may be down in the aggregate, they may be up, we just don't know.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Now to my colleague's question, you said it was about \$69 million in revenue for The Waterfalls, is that [crosstalk]--

KATE LEVIN: That's correct, yep.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: And what was the cost to construct The Waterfalls, to maintain them, and to--are we going to take them down [off mic]?

KATE LEVIN: They're mostly gone and going faster by the minute.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: And what was the cost of all of that?

KATE LEVIN: It's \$50 million that was raised almost entirely privately. The LMDC I think contributed some dollars to the project, but the rest of it was privately raised.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: All right. Now you also mentioned about surgically placed capital funds and I'd like to have a conversation

at another time, but I just wanted to put it on the record about the one major capital in my district as it relates to the 125th Street rezoning and I want to know--

KATE LEVIN: Only one?

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Well, no, it's not only one but I mean there's one specific one that I'm asking about and that's the 125 March and about the surgically placed financing for that.

KATE LEVIN: Those dollars are in '10 and '11, which is when we believe that they will be spent, you know, if an RFP goes out now and a cultural partner and developer deal is put together in the spring months, those dollars would be needed by the selected culture, we believe certainly no sooner than July 1st of the coming fiscal year.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: '09?

KATE LEVIN: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Well, that's not too bad.

KATE LEVIN: Yeah, I mean our sense is they're where they need to be.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: All right.

Well, those were my questions, I just wanted to know about surgically placed, I like that.

KATE LEVIN: We...

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Yeah, all right--

KATE LEVIN: [Crosstalk] With a scalpel, thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: --thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Council Member. Council Member Gale Brewer.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Well when you look [pause], when you look at the material that the CIGs provide, it says that Lincoln Center gets a 42% cut in the November mod and I love the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but they get a 13% cut, and the American Museum of Natural History--I would say these three institutions are the reasons that many people come to New York--22% and then I won't even--18% New York State Theater. So why are my institutions getting cut more than Dan Garodnick's institution?

KATE LEVIN: Because they have been

more successful in the past in getting support from City Council Members for one-time allocations as part of the budget process. I have not seen what the CIG has shared with you, but, you know, that's basically the story.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All right, so in other words, what you're saying is that Lincoln Center gets screwed because they didn't get enough from the City Council, is that what you're saying?

KATE LEVIN: I wouldn't put it that way, no.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Well, that's the way I would put it. Okay, but that's not--is there--how are these decisions--this is an across the board of 2.5, but the CIGs say it's an across the board of 4%. Why do you say it's 2.5 and they say it's 4%?

KATE LEVIN: I'm assuming because it's 2.5% to their overall allocations, but those allocations go for two different things. There's a pot that's spent on energy and there's a pot that's spent on operating. Because we choose not to cut the energy percentage by definition, the

amount that comes off the operating piece is higher, but the amount that the city is spending on these organizations in toto is just being reduced by 2.5%.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Now when you--did these institutions, I know that earlier you asked about the energy, did these institutions want to have their cut taken in a different way like the energy? Did that come up in discussions with them?

KATE LEVIN: Many of them have asked if, again, as an incentive to reduce energy, if they did so, those dollars could be paid over to them on the operating side and it's a complicated conversation, again, that we continue to have. I'm assuming ideally organizations would like not to have to worry about where the money for their energy comes from, but the fact is it's real taxpayer money going to those and I do know that CIGs appreciate the fact that the city is picking up that cost for them.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All right. I mean, this is horrific. The other question I have is, what other ideas has the department been

thinking about to come up with other funding for the economic engines for the City of New York? Obviously, you know, is there anything that's being discussed? Are you just kind of saying, folks, you're on your own and this is all we can do and good bye?

KATE LEVIN: We never say that.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know, but this is how it looks.

KATE LEVIN: No.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Because yesterday the Mayor said, and I know that, for instance, a smaller organization, The Coffin Center [phonetic] is here and I spent the weekend talking to them about ways that they could work with seniors, for instance, because there's a lot of vacancies in some of those seats and to the credit of the Coffin Center, they're going to be working with some groups to try to do something that's good for the public and, you know, they want the seats to be filled. Every seat for performing is likely to be not as filled as it would be under other circumstances--

KATE LEVIN: [Crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: --and
certainly the--so I'm saying as the Mayor stands,
you know, talking about the cultural institutions
and everybody needs to work together, it does seem
like it's a burden on them because they have to
reach out in a way that they're not able to. So
how are we trying to think of ways to--maybe it's,
for instance, more advertising, working with
countries that still do have the opportunity to
travel? I don't know.

KATE LEVIN: I think there are
several things that we're doing, for the CIGs that
are eligible for PlaNYC money, we are actively
working with them to try and--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:
[Interposing] Now how do we know who is eligible?
Like Lincoln Center should be eligible since they
didn't get--

KATE LEVIN: [Interposing] I believe
they are--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: So how--

KATE LEVIN: --I mean, we have
convened the organizations that are eligible to
have access to those dollars. It has to be an

organization for whom the city pays heat, light, and power.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

KATE LEVIN: So we are working with them to try and come up with projects that hopefully PlaNYC will find competitive and compelling and that we can fund--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

[Interposing] And is that tied into NYSERDA in some way or not?

KATE LEVIN: In some cases, ultimately it's tied into NYSERDA, but primarily it's about overall kinds of projects that are going to reduce dependency on conventional energy sources.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: But do they-- does that provide cash or is this a question of--

KATE LEVIN: [Interposing] In some cases, it provides cash, in some cases, it provides funding for capital projects that will reduce the layout of cash.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah, but that doesn't help you with cash right now. I'm interested in right now.

KATE LEVIN: They tend to be longer
lead--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yes.

KATE LEVIN: --I mean, one of the
things that we worked with them--with many
organizations, for example, is we came up with a
fund to replace light bulbs with CFLs and many
organizations have taken advantage of that. So--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, but
that doesn't help you with cash, it helps long-
term.

KATE LEVIN: And any energy
sustainability kind of project is likely to be
[crosstalk]--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:
[Interposing] Okay. What else are we--

KATE LEVIN: --term capital
projects.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: --what else
are your other ideas that are out of the box to
help these institutions? [Crosstalk]

KATE LEVIN: [Interposing] I don't
[crosstalk] out-of-the-box any of this is, but we
are working much more aggressively to help promote

organizations both through our website and I just came from a press conference with the Mayor this morning talking about culture as accessible and affordable--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know, but with all due respect, you know, the cultural to be affordable, then the person go in, certainly those that charge a dollar or more--let me give you an example, a lot of them really need the \$20 or the \$15 for the person coming in and the writing for the family coming in is very small where it says you can only pay a dollar, it's very small because they need the extra money. So are you telling all of the CIGs that they can charge less?

KATE LEVIN: Absolutely not, what we are--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

KATE LEVIN: --telling all New Yorkers is that in a very tough economic moment they should not give up the main reason why New York is a wonderful place.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know, but New Yorkers often don't have the funding either to be able to go to these institutions.

KATE LEVIN: But many, many of them are there and accessible precisely for New York families and aside--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:
[Interposing] What are we doing--

KATE LEVIN: --from seated venues--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: --what are we--

KATE LEVIN: --and ticket venues--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: --what are we doing for tourism, which still exists, I hope, to be able to get more tourists to come? What are we doing on that front?

KATE LEVIN: We're working with NYC and Company on their Just Ask the Local campaigns in particular to help not only make people aware of large organizations within Manhattan, but those beyond Manhattan, as well. And, again, through the new portal that NYC & Company is planning, we look forward to having a robust cultural search engine as part of that.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And what are we doing with Washington's support, which hopefully is forthcoming, in this regard?

KATE LEVIN: There are dollars that have just been announced that are about infrastructure improvements. It is, frankly, not clear to me yet how many cultural organizations would be eligible for those, but we have already been part of a meeting with the relevant city agencies to figure out if there are some of our projects that will be. The requirements are quite stringent, it has to be 120-day payout, etc., but we'll see if we can use some of that money for our projects.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And what are we doing to shake loose private money that already the large--a lot of the institutions work on, but what is the Mayor doing to try to shake loose more? 'Cause he has always he told us that we don't need to fund the culturals as much 'cause there's private money, that's--to his--that's what he's always told us. I never believed it, but that's what he's told us.

KATE LEVIN: The very existence of public dollars tends to be the biggest generator of private matching funds and, you know, by being a strategic as possible, for example, with our

capital budget, we have worked to maintain and, in some cases, to encourage important private support. The St. Luke's project, the DiMenna Center for Classical Music, I think is an excellent example of a situation in which coming through with capital dollars, even in a very tight year, has made it possible for them to raise substantial funds.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. But I mean, I'm talking more about expense than capital. My groups need expense money, they're okay on the--never okay, but [crosstalk]--

KATE LEVIN: [Interposing] If there are [crosstalk]--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: --expense money.

KATE LEVIN: --in which we can be helpful--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [Interposing] Well is there anything like the--

KATE LEVIN: --including the Mayor in terms of appearing at fund-raising events or other kinds of initiatives, happy to do that. It's, of course, not possible for us to fundraise

for specific organizations.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I do it all the time, I know I'm not supposed to, but I do it all the time. The question is--I just do it--the question is, what is--is there another Waterfall or Christo Orange [phonetic] things? Is there anything new like that coming along?

KATE LEVIN: Yes, it probably won't be Orange, but we're working on--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Referring to The Gates?

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The Gates. Christo Orange [crosstalk]--

KATE LEVIN: --we're working on something for the summer.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: What are you work on, something that will draw people here? It's a surprise?

KATE LEVIN: Hopefully it won't repel them, yes, it's--if it works out, it will be a wonderful event for the city.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And it will bring a lot of people. Now can any--I know we're not supposed to take money that's generated to go

to the general revenue, but is there something like that thinking outside of the box that could be targeted towards the cultural when the surprise is announced?

KATE LEVIN: Anything--we're open to any ideas. We have to wait and see what--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

[Interposing] But is that something that you might suggest? Instead of targeting just general revenue, that it could go directly into the culturals?

KATE LEVIN: The problem is figuring out what revenue is generated by nonprofit culturals 'cause it tends to be indirect. That said, the more culture is shown to be an economic driver, the easier it is to figure out how to direct dollars towards it.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. I still need, for my three, I know everybody feels strongly, they got disproportionate cut and they need more--

KATE LEVIN: Duly noted.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: --they need more money. Thank you.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And the last questioner, unless the Chair has some more questions, is Council Member Leroy Comrie.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Well I hate to start in the same place that Council Member Brewer left off in, but if--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: It's called a tag team.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Yeah, but, clearly, the--my institutions in Queens took a disproportional hit also if we're looking at the, if we're looking at the amount of cut. The Flushing Town Hall and the Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning and also the Queens Museum of Art, they all took, I think, disproportional hits in this breakdown that I'm getting from the CIGs and I'm trying to understand why especially two institutions that are both trying to expand their opportunities for service and diminishing resources and don't have the historical fund-raising background that some of the larger institutions have. I need to get an explanation on those cuts.

KATE LEVIN: For what it's worth, we share your particular concern about Flushing Town Hall and Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning. The good news is that they receive very generous allocations from the city last year and those allocations in terms of one-time member items were not re-upped this year, so it's a no good deed goes unpunished kind of situation. But, again, we are very concerned--

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE:

[Interposing] But that we have [crosstalk]--

KATE LEVIN: --for their fragility.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: --

[crosstalk] Because we're being told that we can't do the member items and that--and, you know, my second analysis of what I'm looking at here is that you took all of the member items and--or the member-funded initiatives and then cut by that--cut that proportionately so it comes to a net zero for most of the institutions in general. If you look at the DCA operating support and you added the City Council Member items in and then once the adjustment is made, that all of those member items, the member item money comes to a net zero.

And I don't understand how we're going to continue to have these institutions operate at a level that will continue to generate money for the city when tourism is now going to be primarily the attraction that we need to depend on in the city, especially in a down economic time, you need to have the entertainment and tourism industry operating at full strength. I don't understand how these cuts help promote that and I'm curious to know what exactly is being done as far as savings with heat, power, and light and how come we haven't seen savings from your agency with heat, power, and light when other agencies have been able to show a savings in those categories? Why is there not the ability of DCA to have the similar 10 to 15% savings in heat, power, and light that we're seeing from other agencies?

KATE LEVIN: In terms of DCA's own administrative office, it's extremely small, all our lighting is on timers and, you know, our energy costs as an agency are de minimis. In terms of being able to show larger energy savings, that would be calculating the savings that our funded organizations are being able to make with

their energy budgets and, again--

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE:

[Interposing] But don't you--I don't understand. You--the heat, power, and light for the cultural, how is that administered? You just give them the money and they pay it directly or--

KATE LEVIN: [Interposing] The Office of Energy Conservation pays it directly for those organizations. In other words, the city gets the bill for the 33 city-owned institutions.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Right, so isn't there a way to get cost savings from that if the Office of Energy Conservation is negotiating the bill for all 33 CIGs?

KATE LEVIN: Is it possible to get energy at a lower rate from the folks actually providing the energy? Those organizations already benefit from the discounted rates that the city receives. With individual organizations, we are working with them to reduce their overall energy costs, in particular, by building and retrofitting facilities so that they are more energy-efficient. Many of our organizations are in extremely old buildings where it's actually quite difficult to

come up with energy savings, but, again, the ideal would be to work out a program whereby we would incentivize organizations to reduce their costs in exchange for being able to give them saved dollars or some proportion of them back on the operating side and we have yet to work out a useful way of doing that, although we continue to try for it.

[Pause]

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: So you're saying that right now your--that the costs for energy that you're receiving through the agency is the lowest available because they're already giving you a low rate for nonprofits, is that what you're--

KATE LEVIN: [Interposing] That's correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: And are they working with you with an energy savings reduction plan or on that at all to--

KATE LEVIN: The Office of Energy Conservation is working--

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Right.

KATE LEVIN: --with us constantly, they're part of the team that makes up the various

PlaNYC initiatives and we funded a couple of very successful demonstration projects, one of them at the Museum of Natural History. What--while new construction like the Queens Botanic Garden is, in many ways, very exciting or the new Brooklyn Children's Museum, because those incorporate new green strategies, really the big payoff is going to be for the city in figuring out how to retrofit our older buildings and cultural institutions like Natural History, like the New York Botanic Garden are working on very innovative projects to try and help us understand how to work with our older building stock and make it more energy-efficient.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: But that's why you can't show us those estimated savings over time, because it's going to take a while to come back with us--to us with the--

KATE LEVIN: That's accurate.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: -- information on, but you expect to have that information within the next budget?

KATE LEVIN: I would hope to, I mean, partly we have to figure out what actually

works. You know, you can try some things and sometimes the payback doesn't work as quickly, sometimes it works much more quickly than you'd think.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay. Okay. 'Cause I was curious as to know why all of the other agencies that came in today were able to show energy savings and you weren't, but I'd like to get--hopefully see that over time. I still want to go back to the reductions in DCA operating support as it relates to the fact that it seems like our Council funding was added in as a net zero at the end of the day, and that's very problematic for us because it's important that the Council funding was supposed to be in addition, and not wind up as to happen with the lottery where it turned out to be the basis for support or the--added into or your support is being reduced proportionately to what we've added in and which adds a net zero gain for the culturalists which is not what they were looking for. You know, to take that out after they worked so hard to get it just seems to create a level of frustration for the culturalists and for us, frankly, that doesn't help

1
2 them to have any growth. I mean, they're having
3 operating expense growth and personnel expense
4 growth and purchasing expenses as well. You know,
5 what are we doing to help offset those real costs
6 that are going up for them if we're constantly
7 taking out the diminish results that we have on
8 our end because we gave up the Speaker financing,
9 which would also have helped enhance that. It
10 seems like that our money is turned into like what
11 has happened with the lotto and education, that
12 money has created a net zero gain and we need to
13 move away from that. I think that that's a
14 critical loss for our institutions if they wind up
15 trying to work to get money and then they wind up
16 at the end of the day finding out that that is
17 only deducted from the DCA operating support
18 monies.

19 KATE LEVIN: I'm not, frankly,
20 understanding how you're coming up with a net zero
21 gain and I appreciate your spending some more time
22 with me, perhaps separately, to understand that.
23 The Council was very generous in adding a \$8.5
24 million to DCA's budget and I think what we've
25 come off of is a year of great fiscal prosperity

in which everybody was able to be very generous to cultural organizations and unfortunately we're living in very different times at present.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Well, just roughly, if you look at the operating support for just be pick an organization their operating support that was planned for this year in the '08 adopted and now with the cut, if you look at their actual operating support that they're going to receive, it diminishes the Council funding that was added to it and you could pick a cultural group across the board that winds up to be almost a net zero and across the board with all of them. And we could go--I don't know how much time I have to do details, I don't think I have time, I'm seeing that the--so, you know, but I would just strongly, you know, look at that based on what I've seen and what I've been outreached to from the groups, it turns into a net zero. And, you know, that reduces our ability to enhance, it reduces the agency's ability to grow, and it creates them no opportunity to keep up with cost, and especially, you know, groups like Flushing Town Hall and Jamaica Arts that are trying to

expand their programming and one it's expanding to a new building. How do they get the opportunity to maintain programs? And I know I'm out of time and I know [crosstalk]--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: You're out of time.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: --tell you about the support, but clearly we need to do some more to help these programs.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Council Member, the Commissioner and her staff and myself would be more than glad to sit down with you and go over this.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay. Well I'm sure--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay? I don't mean to cut you short. Tish James, you had a follow-up, a quick question.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: It's not a question--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: A statement.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: --it's just a comment. A developer came to my office recently, they're in negotiations, if they have not closed,

to purchase the Paul Robeson Theater, to develop that into, unfortunately, condos--more luxury condos and so, at this point in time, I'm sure that deal is closed and so that would, again, in my district, result in not one African-American theater having a presence in downtown Brooklyn, which is rather very, very unfortunate. So I'm saying all of this to say is we really need to maintain an African-American or an African diaspora presence in downtown Brooklyn and I look forward to working with you to ensure that. Thank you.

KATE LEVIN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: I just have one quick question, because we have to--we're way behind schedule, but, Commissioner, and just I have other questions, but I'm going to meeting with you in the days to come to go over the funding and everything. There's one thing that I just want to just point out to you that is a little bit disturbing here is that, you know, through your whole testimony you did not talk about the impact of the educational programs that this is going to have on our schools, on these

cuts and about the programs in the schools, what's going to happen and, in addition, what's going to--you know, about urban advantage the impact of the cuts will have on urban advantage. But this is something that we could talk about, I just want to point out to you that cultural institutions, especially the CIGs, you know, they contribute a lot to schools and their programs and these are cuts that are very important and that was completely not addressed, so we'd like that to be addressed. I don't have any more questions in the interest of time and to move forward.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: No further questions, except as--if you could kind of give us some more detail as time goes on, if you actually know about how some of these institutions will be meeting their PEGs and what the actual effect will be on services to the public. We understand that you don't know that yet because everybody is doing their 2 1/2 percent or 5% but we're more concerned about what that will actually mean in potential services to the public, in hours, etc.

KATE LEVIN: We are working to put together a consortium that will work with the

cultural field to track this and make sure that all stakeholders for culture are made aware of what the impact is, as we understand it.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well, we appreciate that. Thank you. We will now hear from the library systems. I assume we have all three systems here. [Pause] I see Paul, I know you're there Paul. [Pause] Just for those coming in, we're a little behind schedule, we are scheduled to hear from the libraries now and then the public is supposed to testify at 3 o'clock, we may be running a little bit late, but we already have about 80 people signed up from the public, so we're going to limit that testimony to two minutes each, of course, I'll use a little bit of discretion, depending on, you know, what the topic is, but we're going to try to panel--put people in panels, six or seven people per panel, but each individual is only entitled to two minutes. Okay. Who wants to go first? Can you choose among yourselves?

MALE VOICE: Wait a minute, I have a statement, do you have a statement?

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We are now

joint, the Finance is now joint with the Subcommittee on Libraries and Chairman Vincent Gentile has a statement to make. [Pause] In the meantime, choose among yourselves.

MALE VOICE: Okay. Yes [off mic] choose.

CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: [Off mic] I've been deputized. Okay, let me just thank Domenic Recchia for his leadership as Chair of this Committee and also Finance Chair David Weprin for his leadership--do you have all three?--for his leadership during these tough economic times. I'm the Chair of the Council Select Committee on libraries. Last year, the City Council, under the leadership of Speaker Christine Quinn, established six-day library service for our neighborhoods. For many years, the library systems, council members, and our constituents fought for the increased library hours our communities deserve. As a result of hearings, calls from the constituents, and my own visits to library branches throughout this city, I know firsthand that six-day service has not only been overwhelmingly popular, but that library usage is

on the rise. Recent data shows that more people visit the libraries of the five boroughs than all those that attend city sports stadiums and cultural institutions combined. The fact is undeniable, there is enormous demand from our city's residents for even more hours, programs, and services. Why is this so? Of course, people value having an extraordinary wealth of knowledge available at their fingertips, but libraries incredible worth is because they are so much more than just books: they are hubs of knowledge and community building, they provide the unemployed with the means to search for work, extra educational classes, and materials in a variety of languages from Mandarin to Russian to Spanish, they are neighborhood meeting places where residents can discuss the challenges and achievements in their own communities. Ad at the risk of stealing Paul LeClerc's thunder, I would go as far as to say that President-elect Barack Obama's life may have very well taken a very different path if it had not been for the New York Public Library. President-elect Obama found his first Chicago community organizing job as a result

of a job search he did at the midtown branch of the New York Public Library and through that search of the library, he found his job and you know the rest is history, right? We all know this city and nation face tough economic times and it has been proposed that funding to libraries throughout the city be cut. Seven point nine million the current fiscal year '09 and 15.1 million in fiscal year '10. We at the Council, along with the library systems in our communities, understand the realities of this city's fiscal situation. We also understand the importance of ensuring that communities continue to develop and flourish as a result of the public library systems' community-enriching role, they have continued to be a priority of the New York City leaders for decades. You know, despite the economic hardships of the Great Depression, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia made a commitment to keep New York libraries open seven days a week. Economic choices had to be made and Mayor LaGuardia chose to fund New York's libraries. He realized that in tough times diminishing the libraries as an important public resource would only make times

tougher. Let us learn from that lesson. We need to work together to make sure we continue to provide as many services as possible and avoid any sort of cut diminishing the important impact of public library service in local communities. I know and I respect my colleagues in the Council and I believe libraries continue to remain a priority of theirs. I hope today not only to talk about how the planned budget cuts will affect each system, but also about the increasing demand that each community has for library hours and its services. Besides being a discussion about necessary and citywide budget cuts, this is a discussion on the more general future of this city and the future of public libraries specifically. Thank you again for being here, all three systems, and who won the toss? You did, okay. Paul LeClerc, New York Public Library.

PAUL LECLERC: Thank you very much, Chairman Gentile and Chairman Weprin and members of the Council, Member Dickens and Member Jackson, thank you very much for being here this afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You don't have a fancy folder though, do you?

PAUL LECLERC: No, I don't.

Somebody said budget cuts, but I do have some great handouts for you. We're all here, as you know, to discuss the Executive November Financial Plan and the impact that it will have on libraries in New York City. And, as you know if you've read the details, this plan includes a \$3.6 million cut in FY '09 and an \$8.6 million cut in FY '10 to the New York Public Library. This \$6.8 million reduction, when combined with the loss of the \$7.3 million, which was not baseline--which is basically what you gave us supplemental to the baseline budget--that will be gone if this budget is approved. This would mean a total reduction to us of \$14.1 million in Fiscal '10, a huge reduction, 10% reduction in our operating budget. We're tremendously grateful for your leadership and that of Speaker Quinn in restoring the \$7.3 million in the FY '09 budget, which allowed us to maintain six days of service in all of our locations--a level of service that New Yorkers need and they deserve. Before detailing the impact of that reduction, the reduction on the scale that's been proposed, the effect that that

would have on our library services to all New Yorkers, I'd like to spend a few moments telling you how an important American not so long ago described the importance of public libraries. That important American is Barack Obama, our President-elect and here's what he is on the record of having said about libraries, three brief quotations, and the first: More than a building that houses books and data, the library represents a window onto the 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. Still, according from the President-elect, 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. And, finally, the last citation from the President-elect: 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 the 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 to help them succeed, find new jobs, repurpose themselves, and enter new careers. And they're doing so for a very simple reason: libraries are the single best free source of--free resource for job information, libraries provide access to online resources to help job seekers locate and apply for available positions. In fact, we at the New York Public Library, and I'm sure my colleagues in the other two library systems share this kind of service, we help people write resumes, we help people prepare for interviews, we have staff who coach people in how to dress for an interview at our job placement centers. Nothing illustrates what we do for people more dramatically than the editorial, I got my job through the New York Public Library, which appeared in the Daily News two weeks ago and which Chairman Gentile cited as us being the place that

Barack Obama came to for help in finding his first job as a community organizer. In addition to that, if you saw this morning's New York Post, there's another story on how there's a surge of visits to libraries by people who are seeking help in finding jobs and that is included--a copy of that piece in the Post is included in your packet this afternoon. [Pause] Our libraries and the New York Public Library are now open six days a week and 52 hours on average each week. Eight of them are open seven days a week with five of our so-called hub libraries being open 64 hours a week and one of them, the Bronx Library Center, being open 84 hours a week, 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. New Yorkers' responses to these expanded service levels, that you've given us the resources to provide the public with, the public's response to these new service levels have been simply tremendous. Attendance rose 11% in fiscal '08 and was up an additional 13--14% in the first four months of '09. Similarly circulation was up 22% in fiscal '08 and an increase--and it increased an additional 18% in the first four months of '09. If you look at the chart that follows page three

in red ink, you see the increases in usage of the New York Public Library presented in somewhat different fashion than the one I just did orally. Hours open from the start of fiscal '08 to presently we are open 30% more hours than we used to be, its gigantic. In terms of attendance, we're up 11%, but if you look month-to-month, we're up 13%, again. Circulation up 22% before six-day funding and now--and then just October to October, 20%. So more people coming through our doors than we've seen ever before, more people are checking things out, more people are availing themselves of computers, of wireless environments, and especially more people are availing themselves of the enormously important resource that is our workforce. If we were to lose the \$3.6 million in FY '09, that would result in service reductions that would be phased in as we capture the savings from a minimum of 60 positions that we hope will become available through attrition and that we will leave unfilled. If we get further budget reductions in January, we would lose more hours of service and we lose them more quickly, we would also see fewer books on our shelves, and we would

see reductions in critical physical and information technology infrastructure that is a central element in providing our services, especially job placement services. It is our goal to avoid layoffs, but the additional major reductions which are proposed for fiscal '10 is \$14.1 million that I talked about earlier, coupled with potentially serious New York State cuts would put us in a real bind. We don't--parenthetically we don't yet know what's in store for us in terms of state reductions, but the state's fiscal condition is known to all of us for the next fiscal year at least a deficit of \$12.5 billion and we all receive significant proportion of funding from the state for operations and for collections, so what we're looking at is a negative scenario, could be far worse once the numbers are in from the state. [Pause] The proposed city reduction of \$14.1 million in fiscal '10 would mean that we would have to capture a minimum of 170 additional staff positions through attrition and leave them vacant, whether or not we can capture that many remains to be seen. But with a reduction of this magnitude in the

workforce, I anticipate that the majority of our branches will be brought down to five days a week, and the schedule would substantially reduce collections in IT infrastructure, as well. The result of all this would go sharply against the central element in the New York Public Library's new strategy--namely increasing the use of our libraries by working with all of our local communities to provide the services and collections that the people in those communities really want and really need. The entire goal of that strategy is to help people advance their lives just as we did for Barack Obama so many years ago. To conclude, let me say that the funding that you provided to maintain six days of service has been proven, demonstrated, and immense results. There is no denying that six-day service was, and continues to be, a critical investment, nurturing, empowering, and educating millions of New Yorkers. As the Chairman of the Committee said, even during the depths of the Great Depression, New York City public libraries were open seven days a week. This Council has long believed that investing in public libraries is a

direct investment in the people of New York. At this critical time, we're asking your help to allow us to continue to deliver the quality of public library service that the residents of New York City have responded so positively to and that they do indeed deserve in these difficult times. Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you and I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have.

CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Mr. LeClerc, I have to apologize, we should probably compared our notes, I'm sorry, I mentioned those couple of things--

PAUL LECLERC: You're a great salesman, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Dionne Mack-Harvin.

DIONNE MACK-HARVIN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Brooklyn Public Library.

DIONNE MACK-HARVIN: Good afternoon, I am Dionne Mack-Harvin, Executive Director of Brooklyn Public Library. I want to thank Committee Chairman 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 operation. 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 Quinn and the entire Council for its steadfast support for Brooklyn Public Library, demonstrated in the budget adopted this past summer. We know you face 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 services that directly benefit customers.

Before I move on to the discussion of the November Plan, I want to highlight three additional programs that demonstrate this continued commitment to high quality service. By any measure, Summer Reading 2008 was a tremendous success. Through the 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 a
introduction of Adult Summer Reading in 2007.
Total registration 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, is a grant that's funded by the New York
State Library. This bilingual program supports
families learning and literacy among new and
recent Spanish-speaking immigrants with young
children. Nearly half of the borough's population
speak 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. Given the rise--
rising unemployment figures in New York City, the
creation of a program called STEP, Skills Training

Employment Program, could not be more timely. We recently completed this 18-month workforce development program funded by the US Department of Labor, which was designed to improve the job skills of Brooklyn residents and the ability of librarians to connect job seekers 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 created the creation of special collections for employment-related books in both English and Spanish and electronic database. Given its success, we plan to expand the program by offerings STEP services at 14 additional neighborhood libraries. Brooklyn Public Library experience with STEP demonstrates how New Yorkers increasingly turn to their libraries during economic downturns and how our programs and initiatives respond to those needs. Our first quarter and October circulation of 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 downturn 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. Program and program attendance also continue 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 the previous year. Regrettably, the proposed reductions discussed in the city's November plan puts 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. The November plan includes a \$2.2 million, or a 2.5%, reduction in current year funding. In response to this

proposal which we learned of in mid-September, we instituted a hiring freeze, filling only critical positions. We also reduced our budgeted headcount by 34 positions. Should the current year's cuts be imposed, early in the upcoming calendar year we will likely eliminate Sunday service at all but our central library and then reduce Saturday service throughout the system. In order to achieve a recurring annual savings of \$4.2 million, or 5%, beginning in July of 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 reduce--further reduce Saturday service. While our goal is to maintain the highest level of service possible, especially at locations with the greatest demand, a cut of this magnitude would force BPL to reduce Saturday services at every location. I want to discuss the impact at BPL's operation 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 the last year's Executive Budget were not baseline, we are

facing an additional reduction of \$4.7 million in fiscal year 2010, or a total 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 an accumulative staff reduction of 147 positions. Saturday services would face even greater cutbacks with BPL offering services or partial Saturday service at just 10 of our 60 locations. This reduction would bring our average hours to 41 hours a week versus 47 hours that 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 in 2008-2009. Any reductions in state funding will have an impact in these critical areas. 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. 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 [pause], 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 from 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 your unwavering commitment to BPL. I'll be happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Thank you, Dionne Mack-Harvin and now we turn to Queens and Tom Galante, Queens Public Library.

TOM GALANTE: Good afternoon. My name is Tom Galante, Director of the Queens Library. I want to begin by thanking Speaker Quinn, Chairman 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 believe in libraries and the life enhancing services that we provide. Thank you for inviting us here today to share with you the vital need for library--that our library doors remain 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 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. [Pause] Cost saving measures employed were regrettable and resulted in the elimination of 49 Teen Net Mentor positions, along with the reductions in our shipping department staff and staff at our Central library. Other services that were impacted by the cuts were the popular mobile community library, or bookmobile, which was grounded permanently and the highly acclaimed gallery, which offered museum quality exhibitions, arts education, and cultural

archives 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 libraries, an additional morning each week, and reduced funding to purchase library materials, for example, books by 10%. We reduced 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 FY '09 budget and 4,118,000 in fiscal '10. These cuts, coming on the heels of the nearly \$3 million cuts 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 all of us. 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 every day. The truth is that these 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 would lose \$2.1 million of the \$6 million we receive in state operating fund. 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 will 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 families with four children in Corona get the books that they need to further the education for their kids? Some are lucky enough to buy all their books from a bookstore, but I can tell you 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 at the library they can look for jobs, post resumes, and simply connect with others.

[Pause] In tough times, people look to us to help defray family entertainment cost by borrowing DVDs

and CDs or taking 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 this last year. Also making its repeat appearances is the New Americans Program offering beneficial programs to immigrants. One particular program was working with the city small-business services were 100 plus 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 place of worship and our schools. Now we

should all have been in coordination 'cause we also have Barack Obama remarks, that I will jump over 'cause you have heard those already, but I can--I must say that our President-elect takes library service seriously, okay? Queens Library knows all too well about the human stories that Mr.--that 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 that we circulated last year in Queens alone. These heartfelt human stories walk-through our 62 libraries, 7 adult learning centers, and our 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 the 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 the city's soul. We must do all we can to save our libraries. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you very much, all of you gave beautiful testimony, but I need concrete facts and that's what I'm not getting, so let's get down [off mic] right-- Dionne, in Brooklyn, you said that today you were going 47 hours a week--

DIONNE MACK-HARVIN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: --correct? And if these budget cuts you're going to have to go to 41 hours a week?

DIONNE MACK-HARVIN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. And that was made clear. How many jobs will be lost with your cuts that you're facing? Will you have to lay off people?

DIONNE MACK-HARVIN: Our whole-- depending on the timing for the implementation of

1
2 the cuts is that we will be able to do all of this
3 through attrition. You know, but I think that
4 until we're able to really see a clear picture on
5 the state level and a combination of contributions
6 and other things, that we probably would not be
7 able to make any firm guarantees in terms of how
8 we move forth next fiscal year. But the total
9 number would be 147.

10 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. And the
11 whole issue here is what other cuts are you
12 facing? Are you [crosstalk]--

13 DIONNE MACK-HARVIN: The state cuts
14 are significant. The state cuts are significant
15 because we are already through two-thirds of the
16 state's fiscal calendar and the funds that are
17 being held, regardless of how that whole situation
18 plays out, those are dollars that we now have to
19 back out of our budget in short order.

20 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: All right. Is
21 there any way with the state cuts and with the
22 city cuts that you're facing, what is the--what
23 else could be damaging to the Brooklyn Public
24 Library? Is anything else, will your bookmobiles
25 be grounded like the Queens?

DIONNE MACK-HARVIN: Well, our new bookmobiles have not yet come online, so I think what is at risk is any of the new initiatives that we had hoped to rollout. We have four new bookmobiles, including a Spanish-language bookmobile that's supposed to be, you know, on the road this spring; we have a couple locations that need to open with fresh collections in the spring as well, and so we have to balance the needs and commitments that we've made to those communities, Kings Highway, Fort Hamilton branch and our bookmobiles with the services that we're already providing to our communities.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: All right.
[Off mic] And is there anything else that you would like to tell us or the administration what-- how damaging this could be or what else this could--what could eventually happen with the further cuts?

DIONNE MACK-HARVIN: I think what I'm seeing most in the communities is that I think we've all worked very hard to build strategic partnerships, as the city is going to this economic downturn, I'm finding that my community

partners no longer have the funds available to provide these services, so we're really doing everything for our communities, from job placement to childcare to helping people find new homes, we're really the go-to place and we're seeing all these numbers and I think that there has to be at least one place within the community and we exist in absolutely every community to help people make those moves and have somebody who can--who they can connect to and trust that information.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: All right. Thank you. Queens Library, presently how many hours are you open per week?

TOM GALANTE: On average, it's around 45 hours a week.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: And because of the cuts, what are you facing?

TOM GALANTE: We'll be down to around 39 hours a week on average, I would say, roughly. Depending on how we deploy the cuts.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Well, is this something that you figured out, this is something you're guessing, this is--

TOM GALANTE: Thirty-nine's a good

number.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. Because a lot of times when we go to discuss this with the administration, they ask us, you know, what are you basing this on, what are--you know, where are you getting these numbers from, that's what I'm asking you--

TOM GALANTE: [Interposing] It depends on how you look at it, if, for example, if there were a layoff, you'd be looking at millions of dollars in costs which would bring hours down even more, but on an ongoing basis, you're looking at around 39, which is our old funding level a few years back.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. And as far as layoffs, what are you facing with layoffs?

TOM GALANTE: We have--we would need a cut similar to Brooklyn about 150 full-time jobs and we normally attrit, have about 12 people a month who leave our organization. Right now, it's about one or two a month, just to kind of put that in perspective. So we need to get to 150, so we will do all we can to avoid layoffs at all cost [crosstalk]--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: So you were going to do this through attrition?

TOM GALANTE: That's the goal. That's the goal.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: And now you say your bookmobiles will be laid up [crosstalk]--

TOM GALANTE: [Interposing] Yeah, it's off-line.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. What will happen with those people who work those--

TOM GALANTE: [Interposing] At this point, we've transferred them to branches that are within our organization still and we're counting on attrition to try and save the headcount that we need at this point still.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: And is there anything else you want to tell us about how these cuts will impact the Queens Public Library [crosstalk]--

TOM GALANTE: [Interposing] I think, you know, I think the key statement that sells it--that says it all is during the Great Depression libraries were open seven days a week, so I think

the city going from six to five or four, whatever the numbers are, it's a big mistake. I think that you can really--there's a lot of cuts that are going to have to happen, you know, the funding isn't there, obviously, the revenue isn't there to continue all the services, but if there's one thing that people can hold onto, that they could still go to, which would be a library at least six days a week, at least you've saved something and I think that's an important message.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. Because it's very important for us to hear from you exactly how the cuts are affecting you, how-- what's going to happen, what could happen, what is happening.

TOM GALANTE: Well the worse case for us, obviously, the \$11 million cut means just about virtually every library at a five-day schedule, losing at least one day a week and some two. So [crosstalk]--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. New York Public Library system, you--right now you're open 52 hours--

PAUL LECLERC: Right.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: --correct?

With these cuts, what are you facing?

PAUL LECLERC: Well we're facing the elimination of 230 positions, which we hope to gain, like my colleagues, through attrition.

That's a very significant number of positions that we hope will be free so that we don't have to move into the workforce in any other kind of a way.

We've been able through our new strategy to stretch the number of hours that our libraries are open relative to the funding that we receive from the city and so the reductions that we would take would move us from 52 hours down into the 40s.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: What's that?

44? 48?

PAUL LECLERC: It's hard to be specific at this point, Mr. Chairman, because there are still several factors, several variables that are out there that, you know, and we don't know how they're going to turn out. The key one, as my colleagues have said, is the state, for us that's a very, very [crosstalk]--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: [Interposing]

Well, as far as we're concerned and that, you

1 know, the state is cutting all this money from the
2 libraries, they made it very clear. You know, so,
3 I mean, we need numbers 'cause when we go to the
4 administration and we're telling them that the New
5 York Public Library system is going to be cut from
6 52 hours, you know what, we can't say 40 or 48
7 'cause that's a big difference.

8
9 PAUL LECLERC: [Crosstalk]

10 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: They want to
11 know from us--so we're trying to help you.

12 PAUL LECLERC: Approximately, I
13 would say approximately 45 hours. [Pause]
14 Another thing to be interesting to look at is as a
15 percentage reduction also. In addition to that,
16 we'll be taking money out of collections, we'll be
17 taking money out of all kinds of different
18 services, we won't be able to keep the IT system
19 as fresh as we want it to be. There'll be pain
20 across the board, no doubt, people will feel the
21 effects.

22 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: And--

23 PAUL LECLERC: And now we also have
24 one funding source that the other two systems
25 don't have to rely on as substantial as we do and

that's the private sector, which, as you know, pays the lion share of the cost of running our research libraries. And--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Are there any other reductions that you are facing besides the layoffs through attrition? The library hours--

PAUL LECLERC: [Interposing] No, no, I did not say layoffs. I did not--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Possible layoffs.

PAUL LECLERC: --I did not say possible layoffs.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. Then, what were you saying?

PAUL LECLERC: What we hope to find are 270 positions that become vacant through attrition.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Two hundred and seventy--

PAUL LECLERC: Two hundred and--I'm sorry, 230 positions.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Through attrition.

PAUL LECLERC: Through attrition.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. I just want to be clear on that. Anything else--

PAUL LECLERC: I want to be clear also on what [crosstalk]--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: All right. And what about the research Library?

PAUL LECLERC: Well, the research libraries are strongly--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: [Interposing] 'Cause they're facing a big cut.

PAUL LECLERC: The research libraries are facing a big cut not only from the city, but there's a significant erosion in the value of the endowment, this is the case in endowments all across America and the foundations that we rely on for operating support and for special initiatives also have their endowments down anywhere from 20 to 35 or 40%. So there'll be a lot less private sector giving from the foundations and I imagine from the--from individuals and corporations as well as we go forward. The biggest business that we run is the space rental business with a lot of that money coming from corporate rentals, we anticipate

reductions there as well. So we're looking at significant declines on the private sector.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Before you cut hours severely on the research libraries, we would appreciate it if you contact--

PAUL LECLERC: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: --this committee and let us know so we can tell our members.

PAUL LECLERC: I will tell you, our first priority is to have the libraries open as many hours as we humanly can, that's the single-- and we did this with our board last week, that's the overriding priority is to serve our publics and that means physical libraries being open, as well as what we do online.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: My colleagues have questions, I'll come back, but I just want to thank Brooklyn Public Library and Ms. Harvin for the great job that you're do and for bringing us up to date on what's going on in Brooklyn. It's very good and I'm glad to see that you're out there getting other funding sources. So that's very, very important, especially in these times.

Councilman Gentile.

CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What we've heard here this afternoon is very bleak, it's a bleak picture. We're talking about the loss of over 500 positions among the three systems and the percentage of those that would be achieved through attrition, no one is really sure what percentage of those 500, 500 and plus jobs could be achieved through attrition. You also talked about the endangerment of the six-day service, so we're really facing double-barreled danger here. And I'm just wondering if we put this into a wider picture and a larger picture because we're not the only city that values its libraries, we're not the only community that said--that continually says we have to keep our libraries at full utilization. I'm curious, if these cuts were to be realized, where would this put us as a library system compared to other large cities throughout the United States?

[Pause]

DIONNE MACK-HARVIN: I just think it's important to note, I think, as my colleagues have presented previously, that other library

systems around the country are already open 70 hours a week and so if they're losing--

CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Seven-zero.

DIONNE MACK-HARVIN: --70.

CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Seven-zero.

DIONNE MACK-HARVIN: So if they're losing a proportion of their hours, even 10%, they're offering much more service than we're able to. I think, you know, our library system as compared to many others, is the amount [off mic] we offer are so greatly reduced that any reduction will not put us, you know, in a favorable position when we look across the country at what's being offered in other places.

PAUL LECLERC: A testimony that we gave not so long ago, I think it was maybe two sessions ago, when things were good in America and things were good in the Metropolitan region, I remember pointing out that libraries in Newark, in New Rochelle, and in Yonkers were open 60 hours a week.

CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: So even within the state of New York.

PAUL LECLERC: And we were

[crosstalk] what we were trying to get to at that points was 45 hours. So they start from, as Dionne said, they start from a much, much higher base. You know, other than the numbers which, you know, are telling and are powerful, I think one has to look on the qualitative side as well when you make decisions about how you fund libraries. The bottom line is that people have not used libraries in the numbers that they're using them now and as intensely as they're using them now, in decades. I mean, our libraries are open more than they've been open in 35 years and we we're being overrun with people. So the desire for use of these facilities and access to the wonderful staff that exists in them across the board for all three of our systems, is simply huge and the Obama story is a significant story in lots of different kinds of ways, but I think one has to imagine, I mean, we've got what probably 3 million visits or more to our individual library systems each month.

[Pause] Now how many, you know, young Barack Obamas are there using libraries to get ahead in the world? You can't even begin to imagine them or count them and that's the magic of a library, I

mean, we don't ask each person as he or she leaves, what did you gain by being in the library today, but we know anecdotally and from--now from the highest, you know, office of the land, what a library can do for somebody, it can help them find a job of their dreams and then they can go on to become the President of the United States. It's just an amazing kind of story, but I think that happens continuously, it happens day and night from the people who use their libraries. And so when you make a decision as to what all of you in city government are going to do for the people of New York through funding libraries next year, one has to come home again to the human side, the personal side, even the anecdotal side, but not in a dismissive kind of way, but because these stories are so compelling and, as Tom said in his testimony, we're talking about human beings who are writing their own stories through the use of libraries. We happen to be lucky to have a great story to tell you about the President-elect, but multiply that story across the neighborhoods of our city and I think you'll get a sense of how deeply important we are to the welfare of our

communities, to the individual wealth of New Yorkers, and to the collective well-being of this town.

CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: I think you say it well, Mr. LeClerc, and I think part of the problem we have in government is sometimes the bureaucracy doesn't understand the human impact of what happens with libraries particularly, in other areas too, but particularly with libraries and hopefully your testimony and testimony of your colleagues here today will try to get through that message to the bureaucrats who crunch the numbers here.

PAUL LECLERC: Well thank you, one number to keep in mind is that we're going to have in our three systems about 36 million visits this year. I don't think there's any city in the world that has that many people using its libraries. Certainly not that I know of, and it's an amazing testimony, not only to our staffs and the extraordinary services that our staffs provide to New Yorkers, but it's amazing testimony to the New Yorkers themselves as to how they know--how they have decided to exploit these libraries and

collections and staffs to advance their lives, the welfare their families, to teach the kids to read, to learn how to speak and read English themselves. I mean it's just God's work that we do, but the proof is in the numbers in this case: 36 million, that's just a gigantic number, something that we can all be proud of and something that should simply drive home if there's any doubt whatsoever about the essential nature of these places, that's what it is: 36 million visits a year by New Yorkers.

CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Well certainly that's a--I believe that's a heavy burden on all of us here to make sure that continues to happen. I know, Mr. Chairman, that others have questions and we are running late, so I thank you and I thank all of you for being with us.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Gale Brewer.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Robert and I are sitting here stating that libraries should be open seven days a week and we are--I guess my question is are there any other ways that you can think of partnering or anything else that would

1
2 keep this--I guess it's a \$7 million kit right now
3 for this November plan and are there any other
4 partnering suggestions that you can think of that
5 would help with some of the funding gap--

6 PAUL LECLERC: Well there's--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: --I don't
8 know if the answer is yes or no, but I'm just--I
9 have some ideas, I'm not going to say right now, I
10 have a couple ideas that might come [crosstalk]--

11 PAUL LECLERC: --there is one idea
12 that carried over from the prior testimony where
13 the Chairman asked about energy savings.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah, I was
15 just--I wrote down NYSERDA, so what--

16 PAUL LECLERC: --I mean, if--we have
17 our own making the New York Public Library Green
18 Initiative internally, but I've been told--we've
19 all been told that if we save energy costs, we
20 will not see those, we can't convert those energy
21 costs into collections and staff positions. So if
22 there were a way that if we brought our energy
23 costs down by 10%, 15%, whatever, we could then
24 use that to support the library's functions and
25 its operations.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: This is something we've been working on for years, we're trying to come up with a program, we're trying to come up with there has to be a program to implement some type of encouragement for the institutions to save energy, but also to be rewarded, not penalized in the future.

PAUL LECLERC: I mean, we're doing it because it's good for the planet. I mean, we're doing it because it's the right thing to do, but it would be great if there was some recognition of the value of what we're doing by way of some of those savings coming back to us. Ideally, all of them.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know you mentioned that in terms of the research libraries, you're able to have events and I know I've been too many of them. They bring in some funding, I assume in terms of private parties or whatever--

PAUL LECLERC: Well, yes, indeed, that's a \$4 million business for us on an annual basis.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And is that something that can be done in the libraries in the

branches or is that a conflict in some way that I'm not aware of?

PAUL LECLERC: It's a little, I think it's little harder to do because of the limitations of space there and I--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

PAUL LECLERC: --we can look into that, but I think the volume of business that we do is--derives almost exclusively from one building.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right, I'm aware of that building. And then the other question I have is in general, with this increase in usership, is that because of--it's obviously people want books, they want information, they're looking for jobs, and, of course, the computers and I'm wondering, you know, is--do you think those are the reasons? I mean are there some other ones that I'm missing? People are not going to be able--in this time, to be able to have the \$50, \$40 connection fee and you're going to have I think even more visitors because people are not going to be able to have connection.

PAUL LECLERC: Well some of it has

to do with the classes that we provide, literacy classes, and so on and so forth, some of it has do with activities for teens, we have a disproportionate number of teenagers using libraries not relative to their share of the population. Some of it is the library is a social space where people can be together, a lot of it is after school homework stuff--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

PAUL LECLERC: --we've got tens of thousands of youngsters in our libraries every afternoon, because it's a safe place for them to be and they can do their homework in a place that's quieter than it might be at home. [Pause] So it's--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: A combination.

PAUL LECLERC: One also has to keep in mind what the demographic is of our users. In the branches, 60% of the people who use our branch libraries comes from families in which the family income is less than \$50,000 a year. So these are not folks who can afford to buy books.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah.

PAUL LECLERC: And in the Bronx there's basically one bookstore for the whole borough. It's a Barnes & Noble that is off--right by Co-op City there, relatively inaccessible to the rest of the borough, so even if they had the financial means, there aren't bookstores that people can go to anymore.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And on the good times in the way past, was there any federal money? Did it come from infrastructure? How does the federal government give money to libraries, if at all?

PAUL LECLERC: Well the federal government still does give discounted telecommunication rates--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right, E-Rate.

PAUL LECLERC: --the so-called E-Rates, we benefit from that. In the past there have been monies that have come to the library for special projects, not for basic operations, through the Committee on Library and--what is it called?

[Off mic]

2 FEMALE VOICE: IMLS.

3 PAUL LECLERC: IMLS, the Institute
4 of Museum and Library Services. Some of those are
5 member item--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right.

7 PAUL LECLERC: --initiatives that
8 are funneled through that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Is there any
10 discussion with some of the spectrum being sold
11 and so on and a new telecom bill coming forward
12 that there would be more E-Rate money?

13 PAUL LECLERC: Well there's a
14 discussion about, you know, with the change in the
15 administration, I think that--and the President
16 stated, the President-elect stated advocacy for
17 libraries and you have a copy of the whole speech--
18 -

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right.

20 PAUL LECLERC: --attached to my
21 testimony. I think that there's a chance that
22 that conversation could be very productive.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. All
24 right. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you.

Gale Brewer. Ms. Dickens? From Manhattan.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for allowing me to ask questions because I'm not a member of the library-

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: [Interposing]
We always let you ask questions, Ms. Dickens.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: And thank you so much to Tom and to Dionne and, of course, to Mr. LeClerc for the advocacy that you do on behalf of libraries. However, one question, other than our research libraries receiving private funding, what percentage of funding, if any, comes from non-city slash private sources and what needs are being met by that? This is for--

PAUL LECLERC: Can you--let's--I want to be sure I get the question so--

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Other than--because in your testimony you said that the research libraries, a large portion of their--

PAUL LECLERC: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: --funding comes from private sources.

PAUL LECLERC: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Well are there any monies derived from private sources for libraries other than our research libraries?

PAUL LECLERC: Oh, I see.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: And, if so, what is it used for?

PAUL LECLERC: Well it--there's a slight amount that there is--we have a wonderful support group called the Library Cubs Program, families with young children, and that generates \$100,000 a year and that goes into buying books for branch libraries for the children's rooms in the branch libraries. We've also had a very, very successful capital project running through the private sector to restore children's rooms in branch libraries. The objective is to restore 20 of them throughout the entire system and all from the private sector side and they range in budget from \$500,000 to \$1.2 million and we've been very, very successful, we're not all the way there, but I'm confident that we will be there relatively soon in raising all of that money. They tend to be targeted to economically marginal neighborhoods, rather than, let's say the upper

East Side, and the supporters come--

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS:

[Interposing] Does that mean neighborhoods like mine?

PAUL LECLERC: It does.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Oh, I thought so.

PAUL LECLERC: This well--the Aguilar Branch, is that in your district? Or is that a little--that might be little bit south of you, that was done recently. They have been gifts that have come from individuals, as well as from foundations. In addition to that, we have some book endowments that support branch library acquisitions and some of our other donors earmark their support entirely for branches basically aimed at support for literacy programs, there was a wonderful fellow I went to see him for the first time and he gave I think \$125,000 for adult literacy programs. So we do as much of that as we possibly can.

[Pause]

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Now and, you know, I appreciate and I'm very happy to see,

1 you know, that the libraries are open and can
2 assist with the jobless population through the
3 Internet access and whatnot to help during these
4 particularly difficult times to get jobs. And in
5 light of that, and I was reading your testimony on
6 page five where you indicate that there would be a
7 total, between FY '09 and '10, a total of
8 approximately 230 positions that would be phased
9 out through, hopefully, through attrition. Is
10 that correct? Page five--

11 PAUL LECLERC: Yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: --of your
13 testimony. Well now, if 230 positions will be
14 phased out through attrition, but they are
15 integral to the libraries now, how is that going
16 to impact upon our libraries, the number of hours
17 that would be reduced from the 52 hours to the 40
18 plus as you indicated in your testimony, as well
19 as all the other services that the libraries do?
20 So seems like to me if these positions are not
21 filled or if many of them are not filled, it's
22 going to be a significant impact--

23 PAUL LECLERC: Yes.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: --upon the
25

libraries, is that correct?

PAUL LECLERC: That is correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: So even though you're talking about doing it through attrition, 'cause, see, I didn't hear that, I just heard through attrition and everybody accepted it like, you know, it's okay, but it doesn't--it sounds like it's going to really impact.

PAUL LECLERC: Oh, it does, no, I-- I'm sorry if there was confusion--

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Yeah.

PAUL LECLERC: --I mean, I think all of us tried to make the same point that we're looking at a total of approximately 500 positions that would provide us the resources if they kept vacant and all of us have, in one form or another, sharp controls on hiring, if not hiring freezes, so that we are presently abigating [phonetic] vacant positions. But we and the public will feel the results of those positions not been filled. So what does it mean? It does mean fewer hours, it means fewer books on the shelves, as I said in my testimony, it means if not fewer computers, it means older computers or maybe slower computers,

it means fewer people in the IT sector to help. It will mean probably slower repairs of broken computers, it's a disadvantage to people who need to be online and all those kinds of things. So the library will feel different from the way it feels now as a result of that. I mean a 10% reduction, I mean imagine it in your own home, I mean, that's big.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Dionne, FY '09 and '10 a total reduction, 6.9 million, is that correct for Brooklyn?

DIONNE MACK-HARVIN: The cumulative total is 8.9.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Eight point nine, all right. And Queens cumulative '09 and '10?

TOM GALANTE: It's 11 when you include the funding not baselined in the current fiscal '10 budget.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: And Paul...

PAUL LECLERC: Yes, 14.1 million.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Fourteen point one. So then Manhattan, New York public libraries has the deepest cuts, the highest amount

of cuts is that--

PAUL LECLERC: Well that's for three boroughs, our cut is for three boroughs: Manhattan, the Bronx, and Staten Island.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Oh, so it's for three.

PAUL LECLERC: That's right.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: All right, because I was getting ready to holler. Considering that in Manhattan we get the highest number of tourism, tourists, and tourism is on the increase and so I was very alarmed at that. Last question, Schomburg.

PAUL LECLERC: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: How are these cuts going to impact upon Schomburg and for how long and the dollar amount of what?

PAUL LECLERC: Well I don't know that I've got necessarily a breakdown by--you know, we're talking about 91 facilities throughout the entire system. I certainly do not see the Schomburg being in any way impacted disproportionately to anything else. The Schomburg is one of the greatest libraries in our

system and it's one of the--

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS:

[Interposing] Oh, you do agree, Paul--

PAUL LECLERC: --greatest libraries--

-

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: --I like

that.

PAUL LECLERC: --well, you know, Ms.

Dickens, I think we always have.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I know you

have, I know you have.

PAUL LECLERC: One of the greatest

libraries in the world and of its kind, the

greatest library that there is. So our objective,

as I said earlier, is to keep our libraries open

the maximum number of hours so that everybody has

access to them. It is--it's very, very painful

when we just got to six days, after scrambling

back with your help, the Mayor's help, Chris

Quinn's help, from the disaster of 9/11. We got

it and then the--and then people are using them

more than ever, so they're voting with their feet

and now they--you know, the thought of losing it

is painful professionally and it's also painful

from a public policy point of view.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Ms. Dickens,
you have any more questions?

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: No, I just
would like him to--I would like Paul to please
share with Chair Gentile just the dollar amount
and for how long that the cut would be to
Schomburg. How it will then--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: All right.
Can we please get--

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: --myself
Councilman Gentile and Ms. Dickens and Councilman
Weprin the cut to Schomburg--

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: --research
libraries--

PAUL LECLERC: Yes, we'll do that.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: --okay and
exactly, not only the number, but the hours and
the--so all the cuts that that is facing.

PAUL LECLERC: Happy to.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. Council
Member Helen Sears.

COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: Thank you,
Mr. Chair, I'll be very quick.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Very quick.

COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: I don't know
if we have it, but do we have numbers from the
library systems as to the revenue that they raise
themselves, whether it's rentals? I don't know if
Queens has ever submitted that because--the reason
I ask that is the cuts are very bad this year and
nobody wants to have any of their projects cut,
everybody's been out on the front steps and
handing papers that we can't cut the coaches and
what have you. The fact of the matter is that
we're going to have to do some of it, so I think
my question is--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Is your mike
on, Helen?

COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: --I'd like
you to think about how we can--you can raise
revenue. The public libraries need to be free and
I don't know how you raise revenue. With that
policy.

TOM GALANTE: For Queens, our non-
city revenue, we have, depending on the year, 3 to

\$8 million in state grants that we get, which is also at jeopardy obviously. We raise 3 to \$5 million in private funding each year, and there's another 4 to 5 million in interest income, investment income, fines and fees, so we've done a lot of work, as I'm sure my colleagues have, with finding other outside sources for every year and what we're faced against here really is all those other revenue sources are also falling off.

COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: Exactly.

TOM GALANTE: So it doesn't give us a lot of room to work with.

COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: And even though we won't talk about capital, but it certainly hurts the expansion, particularly in Queens, that is so very bad.

TOM GALANTE: The one, call it the silver lining in this work here is that on the capital front we had the 20% push-out, you know, the five-year, the four-year plan that became the five-year plan, which did hurt some, but we have a number of key initiatives still moving forward with three new libraries to be built. So we have a lot of good things that are still in the works

from that perspective.

COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: All right.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, 'cause more gets done in negotiating.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. You know, I want to say to all of you 'cause I know each of you very well and the hard work that you've done these last years and, you know, I agree with what Paul said about we've come so far and, you know, we really can't let it fall back and I know Dionne and Tom feel the same way that, you know, you provide three outstanding library systems and in any other city, in any other country, would each be, you know, a huge system independent of each other, independently serving so many millions of people on a daily basis and, you know, we want to work very closely with you. You know that these committees and this Council are your strongest advocates and we will continue to be, but obviously we do have to deal with the fiscal reality, we have to, but if I had to stress one thing, you know, from a public policy point of view is since we did go far to keep the six--to

have the six-day week library service, that if we could do everything we can or you can, together with us, to keep that even if it means shaving a couple hours here and there just to kind of, so we don't get set back and people get used to having those days and, you know, it becomes that much harder to bring it back later, you know, once it's been out. So if we can kind of work together on that since we came so far. Thank you.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: I want to thank you all for coming here today. keep up the good work. We do appreciate all that you're doing and we look forward to working with you in the future. Mr. Gentile, you want to say anything?

CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: We'll keep pressing on. Thank you.

[Pause]

FEMALE VOICE: Two minutes each, the CIGs are first.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Finance is going to continue with testimony from the public, I'm not going to take a break now because we have I think about 70 or 80 people that have

signed up to testify. Also, if someone has not signed up and they would like to testify, please see the Sergeant, please see the Sergeant at Arms to fill out a slip. I'm going to limit people to two minutes each, feel free for extra credit to speak for less than two minutes, but if you happen to go over the two minutes I'm going to use my discretion and I won't necessarily cut you off automatically, but please try to say what you can within the two-minute time frame. I'm going to call up a few panels and the panels are not for purposes of limiting individual's testimony, the purpose of the panels are just to save time in coming up to the front and leaving. So we don't have to spend time coming up and going back and forth, I'm going to ask you to come up in groups, but each one will be able to testify individually and forgive me if the panels don't necessarily match each other 'cause obviously there's a different range of people talking about different issues, but just keep in mind that we're calling you up in panels for purposes of expediency to get in and out. So the first panel [pause] consists of [pause] okay. The first panel consists of

Ellen Kodadek from Flushing Town Hall; Tom Finkelpearl from the Queens Museum of Art's, former head of the CIGs; John Calvelli from the Wildlife Conservation Society; Daniel Slippen, Skippen, Slippen, American Museum of Natural History; and Julian Zugazagoitia from the El Museo del Barrio.

[Pause]

FEMALE VOICE: All remaining CIGs.

[Off mic]

JULIAN ZUGAZAGOITIA: [Pause] Should we go? [Off mic] [Pause] Domenic is here.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Julian?

JULIAN ZUGAZAGOITIA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Go ahead.

JULIAN ZUGAZAGOITIA: Good afternoon, my name is Julian Zugazagoitia and I am the Executive Director of El Museo del Barrio. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you this afternoon as Vice-Chair of the Cultural Institution Group, otherwise known as a CIG. Joining me this afternoon are some of the directors and staff who represent the broad spectrum of the cultural institutions that make up

the cultural institution group, art and natural history museums, historical societies, theaters, concert halls, science centers, botanical gardens, zoos, and the New York Aquarium, located throughout the five boroughs. Collectively our institutions are a key part of a sector that is one of the few bright spots in the current difficult economic climate. Whether we speak of our role in generating more than 28 billion in economic activity through tourism, our role as anchors in many of our outer borough [phonetic] neighborhoods, the city investment in our sector has paid enormous dividends for New York City economy and its tax base, as well as the enormous contributions that we do through our community, educational, and cultural roles across all the five boroughs. I think we have demonstrated that not only are we a good investment, we are great investment. From another point of view, the unparalleled and educational opportunities provided by New Yorkers by this institutions are among the primary reason individuals like me and corporations choose to live and do business in the city. [Pause] New York's position as the first

city in the nation is considerably dependent on its dominance in such opinion-setting and culturally-related industries as communications, media, publishing, and fashion. What we call today and value as the creative economy. Together, these cultural institutions, these industries form a critical mass, which creates an intangible but powerful aura around New York. It is great to know that this very morning Mayor Bloomberg was at the Bronx Zoo letting New Yorkers know that during this economic downturn, there are still wonderful and free and low cost things to do with your family and friends during this holiday season. We are very glad that the city is looking to the CIG at times like this, it is clearly demonstrates the importance of the city's investment in good and bad times. Yet these are the very services that are at stake today. Among the free and low-cost opportunities available to New Yorkers throughout the CIG, there are many services long championed and supported by City Council that were eliminated in Fiscal Year 2009. It is not unfortunate fact that our institutions are not immune to the city current economic

downturned, coupled with the dramatic erosion of private philanthropy from foundations, corporations and individuals.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]
If you can sum up, please. Just--

JULIAN ZUGAZAGOITIA: Severe-- I'm almost there--severe reductions in city support mean that CIG members are facing abysmal [phonetic] losses greater than those experienced after September 2001. This is a critical moment for these institutions in front of you, you will receive a chart that depicts the extent of the losses in operating support our institutions receive from the Department of Cultural Affairs. If you follow the chart from left to right, you will notice the incremental effect of the cuts to each of our institutions. This November modification, which you can see was 4.19%, much higher than anticipated to 5% and that eliminates a further \$3 million in operating support to our institutions. In total, during this fiscal year our institutions have experienced more than 40 [phonetic] million loss or 18% from their DCA operating budgets. In the bigger picture, these

numbers seem small but they represent a lot to all of our organizations. These cuts have already had an immediate and profound negative affect on our institutions, both large and small. Although our institutions tried hard to avoid them, layoffs, reductions in public hours, and, sadly, elimination of public programs have been necessary. We understand very clearly that these are very difficult times and recognize the difficult decisions faced by City Council. But I want to emphasize that this is a wrong time to disinvest in one of the city's strongest economic engines, one of the greatest contributors to the quality of life of New Yorkers, and to the education of New York schools, and a fundamental reason why New York City is celebrated as a great world city. As you make your choices, the city-- keep in mind, the city's cultural infrastructure, which produces more than hundred million in tax revenues each year continues to draw visitors to our city in large numbers and has the capacity to continue to provide a return on investment that will lift the city out of this economic downturn, overall maintaining its position as a world-

1 leading city. My colleagues will explain how
2 these cuts threaten the ability of our
3 institutions to provide unparalleled services to
4 millions of people who live, work, and visit New
5 York and how critically important it is that we
6 recognize that the loss of City Council-funded
7 initiatives has a destructive impact on the
8 safety, security of our institutions, both for the
9 public and the employees and the rich cultural
10 treasure that many of these institutions holds.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I agree with
13 everything you said that's why I haven't cut you
14 off yet, but if you could kind of sum up, please,
15 [crosstalk]--

16 JULIAN ZUGAZAGOITIA: My last
17 paragraph.

18 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: --got a lot of
19 people waiting to testify.

20 JULIAN ZUGAZAGOITIA: Now more than
21 ever we need your support so the CIG can continue
22 to provide the services that New Yorkers rely on
23 us to deliver. This partnership made New York a
24 cultural capital where people gain knowledge and
25 inspiration from arts, science, history, and the

performing arts. We represent a broad spectrum of cultural endeavors, part of what makes New York, New York. No other city in the United States and few in the world can boast the group of cultural institutions that we represent. Thank you for your time and attention and now I pass on--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. We've also been joined by Karen Brooks Hopkins from the Brooklyn Academy of Music. If we have any other CIGs in the audience that would like to be part of this panel, please make your way up there as well. But please try to limit your testimony to two minutes if you can, we have about 80 people waiting to testify. By the way I have to say, you know, we normally have budget hearings in March and April and I conduct them and we usually set aside a day for the public, these are unusual historic proceedings because we very rarely have a mid-year--mid-fiscal year budget hearings on proposed cuts. Normally, if the Mayor would propose cuts mid-year or propose budget modifications, we would not have hearings, but I insisted on us having hearings because there is some major impacts on these cuts and I'm really

1
2 very happy and pleased to see so many people come
3 out from the public to these hearings and really
4 have your voices heard and I really think it's
5 very important from a public policy point of view
6 and from elected officials like us and the Mayor
7 in particular, and his administration to see the
8 public coming out in the middle of a work day, in
9 such large numbers, and I hope the members of the
10 media that are here will point that out because it
11 really is democracy in action and you notice it
12 just particularly shows how these cuts can really
13 have real-life implications to average New
14 Yorkers.

15 KAREN BROOKS HOPKINS: Thank you,
16 thank you, Council Member Weprin, I will try to be
17 brief. I'm Karen Brooks Hopkins from BAM, I'm
18 going to speak about the situation cultural
19 institutions find themselves in at this moment and
20 I would also like to propose some strategies to
21 move us forward. I'm not going to spend a lot of
22 time on the jobs, programs, and services that have
23 already been lost in our sector and others. At
24 BAM we have lost over \$800,000 causing the demise
25 of three positions, a senior cinema film program,

a proposed collaboration with dancers from Ghana, and other things. Despite all of this, and I hope that you will really hear me on this, the biggest loss here is not just the money, it's the loss of the City Council as a partner in funding cultural initiatives. This is a loss of opportunity to have both branches of government invest in our city's well-being and future because our sector is not a handout, it is an investment. As Julian just said, cultural services to thousands of children that gives our kids the edge, the New York City education system being able to participate in the culture of life, building neighborhoods and local businesses. For these funds, \$15 million overall, we are risking the viability of a five-borough cultural life which we finally have achieved here in New York. Cultural diplomacy, another situation that makes us cancel programs that deal with world and international issues and settle for the mundane and the safe. O the local economic, as I say, every single night that BAM is dark, the whole block starves, everyone on that block depends on us for their economy and we will have many more dark nights

with these cuts. Cultural tourism, where else does cultural--does culture play such a vibrant economic role. If you saw the New York Times last week, the Italian government was wondering how could its cultural institutions be stronger as a part of the economy--we already have that in New York and we already play a strong role in forming the economy. And we are steward to the greatest--city's greatest buildings, the historic buildings and now because of the loss of security funds, those buildings are less safe and are compromised today. So bottom line, here is my proposal: that the EDC, the Council, and the DCA join forces for an incentive program where we look at creating incentives for a competitive grant program for large institutions to work with small, and for seniors and other social profit-based organizations to be incented to work with cultures, for organizations to work with local businesses and a tourism strategy. Right now, for example, Lincoln Center has put together a program to celebrate their 50th anniversary that they are selling all over the world as a tourism strategy. Many of the organizations are not large enough to

do that on their own, but if we got together, we would be able to promote these things in foreign countries. There are many things that we can do and I would like to encourage the Council not to just think about business as usual, but in these tough times to work with us on strategies that have matching grants, but that keep the role of New York City government strong in supporting cultural institutions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

TOM FINKELPEARL: Thank you, Karen. I'm going to try to be brief and I'll just make a couple of quick points. First of all, that we already got hammered in the budget last year, and I--thank you for sticking to the numbers--the correct numbers at this hearing, which is not a 5% cut, but organizations like my own being cut 20% or some others 30 or 40%, those are the correct numbers, we've been cut 18% already. And here's another thing, and this is my basic point, it's not just DCA funding that cuts funding, right now at the Queens Museum there's a senior program going on and a beautiful group of grandmothers from Queens from your district, a lot of them,

David, and we're telling them we just got a call two weeks ago saying Department of the Aging funding for the Queens Museum ends January 1st, not the end of the fiscal year. We've been cut by DYCD, DFTA, and so our total cuts are not even the 18% that we got from DCA, they're \$450,000 from four different agencies. So when you look at cuts, the Department of the Aging, that's cuts at museums; if you look at the cuts to the Department of Education, that's cuts at museums as well. So it's a comprehensive problem, but what I'm saying is our organizations who provide a lot of different kinds of services in our communities have already taken a huge cut and it's time to recognize that and work together to minimize future cuts.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And you got 36 seconds to spare.

TOM FINKELPEARL: I cede to my colleagues.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Calvelli.

JOHN CALVELLI: Good afternoon. My name is John Calvelli with the Wildlife Conservation Society. Thank you very much for

this and I think the expression, everything that need to be said has been said already, but not by me, so I'm going to try to keep it as brief as possible with the one example that I wanted to give you, which was the hard times that people are facing are actually manifested in our facilities. This spring we had our number one highest attendance of 83,000 visitors on Wednesday, which is our free day. Now the impact on the Park is immeasurable because of the number of people coming and they're not paying to come and that is a service that we provide because we are a cultural institution in New York, we're mandated by the state to do that. At the New York Aquarium this year, because of funding cuts through the loss of cultural--of the Speaker's Initiative Fund and the City Council's initiatives, we've had to cut four positions in security and at the end of the day--I'm here to speak and I'll give my testimony in. We need your help from the City Council's perspective to be engaged in that process, to make sure that you're there and available because we're looking at over \$10 million of cuts from City Council funding this

year alone. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

Also under wire. Dan?

DAN SLIPPEN: Dan. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify today, my name is Dan Slippen, I'm the Senior Director of Government Affairs at the Museum of Natural History. As you know, the Museum of Natural History was one of the founding members of the Cultural Institutions Group, we've become an international scientific institution training hundreds of future scientists and thousands of New York City schoolchildren. We are a tourist destination here in the city. We employ over 1,300 New York City employees, we create approximately \$400 million in economic activity for the city every year. However, we all know that tough economic times we in the city are facing, not only here in New York, but across the country, but at the museum we've been forced to eliminate positions and we continue to make thoughtful decisions about vacant positions. But one of the key issues that we, as a group and individually, are the educational programs that we

offer throughout the city, not only to our specific districts but through everybody else's Council district in every borough. More than 370,000 New York City schoolchildren come to our institution every year, at the Museum of Natural History, that is. More than a thousand New York City schoolchildren take advantage of our after school programs, we trained more than 7,000 New York City school teachers in our PD programs and all of these programs are in jeopardy. We have been forced to make modifications to these programs, some programs had to be eliminated, and with future reductions, we will continue to assess what our institution will be able to do and what we won't be able to do. But one of the things I wanted to make clear is that in these tough economic times, investing in the city's cultural is key, not only to sustaining an industry that has made New York City the cultural capital of the world, but is key to assisting the city's formal education system. So I thank you for the time and I yield my 13 seconds.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

Ellen?

ELLEN KODADEK: I racked up all of these seconds, this is great. Good afternoon, I'm Ellen Kodadek, Executive and Artistic Director of Flushing Town Hall. I was quite heartened to come in earlier and to hear many of the comments made about our institution and I'm very grateful to that. That's why I also want to thank the City Council Members for this opportunity, but I also want to thank my colleagues in the cultural community for their staunch concern for our institution in this time of significant budget reductions. We're one of the smaller CIGs located in Flushing, however, impact on the vitality of our community is quite significant. It's little bit of a contrast between last year and this year, in FY 2008, Flushing Town Hall served over 30,000 audience members, we served over 2,000 seniors across multiple districts through our Department for the Aging programs, over 2,400 students in our school-based enrichment programs also across multiple council districts. We launched the Queens Jazz Orchestra, we started a new World music series and we began planning for an annual Hispanic Heritage Festival. We saw great a

transition in Flushing Town Hall with the hiring of myself, a new Executive and Artistic Director in January of '08, and a new Director of Education in June of '08 and together we've developed a new and exciting format for our programs which have already in the first four months of this fiscal year seen unprecedented attendance figures. In the first four months of Fiscal Year '09 from July to this day, we've seen over 1,300 school students and over 1,600 seniors at our facility, and this was with only one and a half at our Education Department. We've had schools and seniors booked through the end of FY '09, however, two weeks ago, five days before a contemporary dance company that the New York Times has called superb, we received a phone call from a local junior high school canceling 179 tickets, and we only have a 300 seat house, they had just received a budget cut. We called them back and told them to bring the kids anyway, even for a dollar ticket or come for free, but they said that they couldn't even afford the buses, and other cancellations are just beginning. The cuts we've sustained in this fiscal year to date have devastated our ability to provide year-

round arts programs and educational services because our cut is 41% of our operating budget. In addition to these losses, we've also received cuts from Department for the Aging and as well our senior program is eliminated after December 31st. The elimination of nondiscretionary Department of Youth and Community Development for CASA programs, plus we've already seen 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, our Gift Shop manager and Director of Art Services, which is our Visual Arts Program. Their duties have been observed by myself, the Executive Director, and our 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 from 12 to 5 and will be further reduced to weekends only come January. Our exhibition program will now consist of three local exhibits this year instead of four to five professional contemporary exhibitions which has

caused us to withdraw our application for funding from the New York State Council on the Arts, Visual Arts Program. We have also not hired key positions which are critical to the success of the institution--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]
Okay. If you could sum up, please.

ELLEN KODADEK: Sure. Including desperately needed staff, a Capital Projects Manager to manage our historic building, including wheelchair lift, garden renovation, and brick re-pointing. We recognize that there are many issues facing the Council and the various needs for funding, however, on behalf of the five full-time and four 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.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.
Because we have so many people signed up, I'd like to try to really limit questioning if we can, unless it's absolutely urgent. Council Member Brewer, did you have something you had to ask at

[crosstalk]--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

[Interposing] Yes, I do.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. If you could, if you have to ask it, briefly, please.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The issue of the energy savings, is that something that is possible to really create savings or not? To the credit of our wonderful Chair of Cultural Affairs, he's always trying everything that Domenic Recchia and we love him for that.

[Off mic]

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: The one to tell me to let her ask a question.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: --and so my question is, is that something that could provide support.

JOHN CALVELLI: Let me take a stab at that because the fundamental point is every cultural institution is different in terms of how they use energy and how they produce energy. So, for example, we produce our own energy, we have a cogeneration facility that actually generates one

meg of power that goes back into the grid. So we're a net energy producer for the City of New York, we do not get as much support for that and, frankly, we're helping the City of New York during difficult times. As a matter of fact, during the last blackout, we didn't know there was a blackout 'til somebody turned the TV on and neither did a lot--parts of the South Bronx. So that's us and therefore has less of an impact on us.

TOM FINKELPEARL: Can I just say, Gale, that this has been a very lengthy discussion already, the problem is and it's very--if you want to talk offline.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah.

TOM FINKELPEARL: It's a very complicated issue that has a whole bunch of nuances to it. I think every cultural institution is ready, willing, and able to save energy and is very interested in being compensated for that, but it's a very complicated formula as the Chairman would tell you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Any other ideas like Karen's ideas, which are--you know, anything that we can do, some of the overseas,

like Lincoln Center is doing or--

ELLEN KODADEK: I think there are definitely incentive packages, as I say, I think that we could submit proposals where small and large work together, where there's a private match. I think we could have tourism, I think there are local business cultural institution partnerships that could be submitted for funding, I think there are so many ways--we are a fund-raising tour de force, the cultural community. We understand if we're incented how we could respond and make more out of it, but at this point all we're doing is cutting and dealing with the impact of cuts, rather than putting our heads together to find other ways to stimulate jobs, income, and infrastructure.

JOHN CALVELLI: There was there's a great deal of talk with the new administration in Washington about a stimulus package.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right.

JOHN CALVELLI: And how do we discuss a cultural stimulus package, because at the end of the day--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [Crosstalk]

JOHN CALVELLI: --if we don't do something, there will be hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs lost within the sector and then the ripple effects will be felt throughout the city of New York.

TOM FINKELPEARL: If I could say one thing, last time I was involved in cultural when there was a really bad day in the economy, there was the SETA [phonetic] program--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right [crosstalk]--

TOM FINKELPEARL: --that was the save the day--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Because you know I have gray hair.

TOM FINKELPEARL: --it was jobs, we need a new SETA--yeah, that's why I got the gray hair.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I don't see, but half the audience never heard of it 'cause they're too young.

TOM FINKELPEARL: But you know, well--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I do. --

TOM FINKELPEARL: --[off mic]

MALE VOICE: I read about it in
school.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Oh, get out
of here.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Thank
you all very much and, obviously, if you have any
information to share with us as we go through this
process, feel free to contact Chair Recchia or
myself or any the other members of the City
Council. We're going to have a couple of union
panels of union leaders, the first panel will
consist of Faye Moore from Local 371, Raglan
George from DC 1707.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Keep it down,
please.

FEMALE VOICE: Reggie Qadan.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Reggie Qadan
from Local 1306. Neil Topel [phonetic] from 1707,
and Raglan George from 170--I think I said that,
right?

RAGLAN GEORGE: [off mic]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We got you
twice.

RAGLAN GEORGE: Ladies first.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: So, you know what, we're going to also ask--pull--we need some extra chairs, but we'll get everybody up there anyway. Veronica Montgomery-Costa from local 372, DC 37, Moira Dolan from Research Director of DC 37, Peter Vreeland Local 1559, DC 37--I don't know if you're all here--Eileen Muller, Local 1482, Brooklyn Public Library, and Cuthbert Dickerson President of Local 374, DC 37.

FEMALE VOICE: It's 10 people

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: That's all right. If you could sit in the front row if there's no room at the table.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Keep it down, please [off mic] quiet, please.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Doesn't matter.

[Pause]

FAYE MOORE: Good afternoon, I'm Faye Moore and I'm the President of the Social Service Employees Union Local 371. We represent 17,000 social service professionals working for the City of New York. I am here today to speak

against two items in the Mayor's proposed budget: the closing of 18 New York City Housing Authority community centers with the layoff of 236 workers, 165 of whom we represent, and the reduction of 127 supervisory positions in protective services for children in the Administration for Children's Services. Both of these actions, I believe, are cynical attacks on a minority communities by a Mayor who is out of touch with the daily lives of poor and working people in this city. The 18 New York City Housing Authority community centers are scheduled to close on December 31st. They are in all five boroughs and provide after school programs for teens, recreational, and other vital support--vital programs for young people and necessary support for working parents. On January 1st, these supports will be gone. The potential negative consequences for the parents and the residents and the workers are obvious, these programs have a proven track record, they are well-run and they provide services that are crucial to the stability and the well-being of the city, as well as the--to the individuals they serve. We are asking for your help to preserve

these programs and not to allow them to be closed. The ACS reduction in supervisory slots in Child Protection Services is another counterproductive move on the part of the city. ACS has spent an enormous amount of effort reducing caseloads following the tragic death of Nixzmary Brown. Eliminating supervisory positions will obviously increase caseloads, the agency's plan is to give a increasing caseloads to supervisors level one, who now assist caseworkers with their most difficult cases. Here, too, the consequences are obvious-- the caseworkers will be overburdened once more and supervisors will be asked to perform two functions will be overburdened as well. In difficult economic times, the pressure on families increase and the need for child welfare services does as well. It is shortsighted to eliminate these positions. The Commissioner is placing the priority of the agency on advancing improved outcomes for children, that is, spending of funds on this initiative at the risk of 127 front-line supervisor's work. We want to be on the record now that Phase 1 of this initiative has serious problems and we believe that Phase 2 should be put

on hold and that they should not risk protective services in a budget cut at the expense of an initiative with no proven record of success.

Thank you.

MALE VOICE: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

RAGLAN GEORGE: Okay. My name is Raglan George, Junior, Executive Director of District Council 1707.

MALE VOICE: [Off mic]

RAGLAN GEORGE: I'm also International Vice President to National Union AFSCME. I'm also a Vice President to the AFL-CIO. I thank the city Council--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]
If you have any more titles, you're going to be out of time.

RAGLAN GEORGE: That's the only way to make people understand who I am, I have to give title, they don't know my name. But thank you so much and for inviting us, Councilman. While I thank you and the City Council for the opportunity to speak before you regarding the Mayor's November Plan. While the nation prepares for change in

Washington, DC, at the inauguration of the next President of the United States, New York City and its City Council must also prepare for change, for hope in building support to help the city's fragile working-class infrastructure of essential human services. The Administration for Children's Services is threatening to under fund at least 21 or more public day care centers by January. As we have been suggesting to the city for almost a year, there's a better way. To control costs, you must maintain high-quality, our plan includes all-day fixed costs, higher quality our plan and should be fully funded, preventing backlogs and setting a transparent process to report enrollment and implement real corrective action plans. Under funding daycare will only shut down necessary centers operated by agencies with low operating funds. The better way alternative is attached to my testimony, which I'll turn in. The city cannot afford to use draconian methods to stifle the growth of human services and in particular public center-based day care and expect our children to grow in healthy circumstances. These programs do not make profit on typical balance sheets, but

supports mothers and fathers to work and young children and toddlers to be cared for and educated in secure and professional environments. And as I speak, the city is preparing to send back to Albany a projected 30 million in universal pre-K funding that should have been used to fund public day care. Last year 25 million was sent back which questions the city's priorities regarding day care and the utilization of funding available. District Council 1707 and AFSCME represents 25,000 employees in a nonprofit arena, including public day care, headstart, homecare, direct care, Meals on Wheels, employee social services, and funding and training staff. For almost 35 years it has been our job to ensure that preschool children are safe and foster children are monitored and secure and that elderly and the infirm are protected with all possible care. It is difficult to do these jobs and it is difficult to retain staff when cuts are always looming and members of families must be fed and housed. We have always indicated to the city of New York and all the agencies where our members work, we will work with ACS or any other agency to find new ways to make these programs

more effective and expand services, the city often rejects these offers much too often. Much too often there is a shortsighted approach to day care and human services that endangers programs. It is the responsibility of all of us to protect the 350 day care centers in the five boroughs. The need for day care has not diminished, but has grown. Parents are not to--are not as aware of the possibility of day care options and it does not cost the city much to use new methods of communications and computerized assessments for availability. The city must preserve, not destroy, successful program at public center day care. The future of our city depends on it. Thank you for having me.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

[Pause]

EILEEN MULLER: Hi. Good afternoon, I'm Eileen Muller, President of Local 1482, I represent all the employees--the union employees at the Brooklyn Public Library and we are over a thousand. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak with you today. In the past you have supported with restoration of funds for

the library and I understand that we are in different economic situation now, but the library is still working with an already eroded amount of money and raising costs and inflation. But some things never change, we still need staff and supplies and we still need a safe, clean place for the public. We still serve a large variety of public of all ages and backgrounds. In hard economic times there is one major change in the library, the libraries are used more than ever, people need information about available jobs, they need to study to make themselves eligible for new jobs, some may even need to find a whole new career, students rely more on the books in the library provides because their families can no longer financially support--no longer financially have the ability to buy them the material that they might need for their class work. We also provide free entertainment, people who can't afford to pay for the largest or the latest bestsellers, or educational materials, going to the theater, or going for the \$12 movie in the local neighborhood, will come to the libraries and the programs that we provide for free. The public

always demands more, rather than fewer, hours of access in the libraries. In these hard economic times, we want to be available as much as we can, but it is impossible without the necessary resources. The library staff can work as hard as I know that they do, but there are a limit to what can be done without the people to do the work and materials needed to run the library. I understand that at the financial hearing it was mentioned that the city is looking to its contract budgets in order to save millions of dollars. Recently, the Brooklyn Public Library contracted with the UPS to deliver books and materials from branch to branch, prior to the UPS project, my members did that job. I believe that the cost of the UPS program is a very costly to the library as well as to the city. Unfortunately, I am unable to provide you with any figures since the library has not provided me with this information even though we've asked for it repeatedly. If the city is really seriously looking to cut monies, I think that--or to contracts that will cut monies, I think that this is a project that needs a second look. So thanks again for letting me have this

opportunity to talk with you today. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

CUTHBERT DICKENSON: Good afternoon, Chairman Weprin and members of the City Council. My name is Cuthbert Dickenson and I represent members the three largest institution, the culturals--sorry--the three largest botanical garden in the city: Queens, Brooklyn, New York Wave Hill, and other agency, but today I'm here to speak about Queens Botanical Garden, New York Botanical Garden, Wave Hill, and New York.

[Pause] These titles vary from sale clerks, security guards, clerical workers, as well as maintainers, which is equivalent to approximately [off mic] members. Although I am grateful the city has increased the budget of most of the institutions in the past, I understand that the city is now looking to reduce the budget of these beautiful facilities due to the economic downturn. The fact remain in Fiscal Year 209 alone, the Brooklyn Botanical Garden lost \$335,000, New York Botanical Garden lost 395,000, Queens Botanical Garden lost 165,000, and Wave Hill lost 100,000, compared to physical 8, 208 level. These

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

September 11, 201, the city support has been declining. This decline in the city support directly affect these institution ability to continue to support a qualified workforce in both numbers and experience. These institutions are forced to seek outside donation, dip into their reserve, and raise admission fees. With today's economy climate the way it is, private and corporate donations are slowly drying up. These institution cannot remain an all--sorry, these institution cannot remain an all-attractive haven for city residents, tourists, and viable education tool for generation to come if funding levels are to be maintained. You do not have this in my testimony but I'm just add I got a e-mail just a few hours ago, which indicate from Queens Botanical Garden that effective Monday, December the 22nd, Queens Botanical Garden will be closed from the December 22nd to January 5th and this

time will be charged to the employees' vacation time and proceeding that the Garden will be closed every Monday from January 12 to March 16 having the workforce to work four days. And so I hope you all understand the predicament that these folks are in and do what you can do to restore some funding. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

REGGIE QADAR: 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 roughly 230 members in the titles of attendant guard, senior attendant guard, and supervisor museum attendant guard. I would first like to thank the Council for its past support of the \$2 million for security enhancements for various cultural institutions. Unfortunately, during the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2009 budget this past June, the city's budget reduced funding to the museum by 2.3 mill which included over \$2 million 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 fiscal 209, reducing the city support to the museum by another 427,000--\$427.9 million--thousand dollars. These cuts amount to a 19% reduction in support for fiscal 2009 by the city in less than six months. I am very concerned that the museum will no longer be able to absorb these reductions in the 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 are 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 to 30,000 visitors and a properly staffed security force is imperative to the safety of the public, as well as the 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. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. And Kennedy Richard, can you come up for this panel also?

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: This guy is cool. He's a scientist.

PETER VREELAND: Good afternoon, Chairs Weprin, Recchia, Gentile, and members of the City Council. My name is Peter Vreeland, I'm the President of Local 1559. I represent about 140 individuals who work in various titles from maintainers, preparators, photographers, clerical, museum instructors, such as myself, scientific assistants, artists, technicians, and other workers that do work at the American Museum of

Natural History that millions of people, like what was said before, come to see. My members play an integral role in the educational component since many of the members like myself work on professional development programs would help train science teachers by allowing them to use the museum as a teaching resource. Numbers have been kicked around and one of the numbers I'd like to talk about is the seven bucks back for every buck you give us. For example, the horse exhibit, the last attendance at the horse exhibit was something like 220,000 people have attended a horse exhibit as of October 31st so I did the Gazintas and it comes out to about \$1.5 million in tax base revenue for the city, okay? When Dan was here earlier talking about staff reduction, I can tell you staff reduction affected my Local, six members lost their jobs, three of them through negotiations got jobs back, but when we think in numbers, let's think of staffing and let's think of people, people who are ongoing workers within the museum, ongoing workers within the city of New York and pay taxes and put kids to school and the whole bit. So we talk about numbers and the whole

bit, we also a equate to people losing their jobs and that's one of the things I'd like to go on record in speaking. I'm not happy of having to help my members look for other jobs. My job as a union representative was to uphold the contract and to make sure the contract was, you know, adhered to, not to find people other work elsewhere or other places. Okay, the museum's objective continues to be encourage and to develop the study of the natural world, world cultures, and the universe, but how can we continue to do this to and fulfill its mission [off mic] facing additional cuts in Fiscal Year 2009. The city goes ahead--forward with this cut, the museum--I wrote might--will have to reduce hours, shut down a number of exhibits, and currently offer and limit the number of educational programs provided to the school and that would indicate that members of my Local would lose jobs and I do not want that to happen. As a result, my members will not be able to provide the same level of exemplary service that 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 restore proposed cuts in Fiscal Year '09 to the museum's budget. I want to thank you again and if you guys have any questions, I'd be free to help you find those out. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Kennedy.

[Pause]

SANTOS CRESPO: My name is Santos

[Off mic]

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Push the button.

SANTOS CRESPO: Can you hear me now?

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes.

SANTOS CRESPO:: I sound like the commercial. My name is Santos Crespo, I'm the Executive Director--Executive Director--Executive Vice President of Local 372 and I'm speaking on behalf of its president, Veronica Montgomery-Costa. Our Local 372 thanks you for this opportunity to comment upon the DOE and the NYPD's portion of the 2000 to 2012 Financial Plan. Local 372 is a union of more than 26,000 Department of Education employees which also include NYPD

crossing guards. Our members live, work, pay taxes, vote, and support the small businesses and their school communities. Preceding her November 21st PowerPoint presentation to your committee, Deputy Chancellor Kathleen Grimm referred to some hard choices she made with Chief Financial Officer George Raab, former managing director of the now-defunct Bear Stearns. Ms. Grimm testified, the Mayor instructed us to do everything we can to protect our core services. Local 372 challenges the Mayor's apparent definition of core services. Our members provide 1.1 million--services to 1.1 million students with what we know to be core school light [phonetic] support services. We also have little faith in core judgment of Mr. Raab, who was among the architects of the current financial meltdown. I will not attempt to dazzle you with the--and this committee with the PowerPoint presentations, I can only offer what we believe to be common sense reflection on the Mayor's 2000 to 2012--2009-2012 Financial Plan. Even before the current financial crisis, New York City was moving towards having two apparent school systems. One is a system of public schools,

usually in lower income neighborhoods which are stripped of core support services for which they have the greater need. The other consists of small academies with catchy theme names, charter schools which cipher off ever-increasing amount of money out of the DOE's budget. This drain affects the higher performing students from their neighborhood students and prevent our public schools from being academically and racially diverse. The DOE portion of the 2009 to 2012 Financial Plan contains no layoff, supposedly, but the current financial meltdown promises to far surpass the fiscal crisis that plague New York City following 911. Negative adjustments in the state education funding are likely and long-promised CFE funds seem likely to be a distant dream right now. Therefore, we have no reason to project that our out-years will suffer--or actually, therefore, we have reasons to project that our out-years--during our out-years we will suffer greater cutbacks to the core support services to the schools. The Mayor's Financial Plan also fails to consider that this economy is sure to result in a probable influx of students

from sitting--from the city's non-public-school.

The problem at hand, how do we help to increase our state and financial funding to ensure that we adequately serve the increased student population?

The economic trauma of 9/11 could surely be surpassed if our elected official apply shortsighted solutions to this problem. Local 372

contends that cutting core schools' life support services by cutting jobs will not only lead to the loss of income, tax revenue, cuts in sales tax

revenues, and invariably, cuts in corporate tax revenues as well. Cutting jobs increases costs of unemployment insurance, eventually increases

government expenditures for food stamps, welfare, and Medicaid. The employment don't deposit money in banks, let alone purchase stocks, municipal

bonds, and treasury bills. On the other hand,

maintaining staffing and services raises tax

revenues, it does reduce city government costs, it

supports the neighborhoods, and it supports small

businesses and brings more state and federal

funding into our public school. This committee

knows that increase students attendance brings in

more funding to our schools. Local 372 contends

that over the years there has been direct link between the cuts to core school life support services and the drop in attendance. In prior school years, Local 372 family paraprofessionals who also live in the school community made same-day phone calls to parents of absentee students and paid home visits to truant children and their parents.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Please sum up, please.

SANTOS CRESPO:: Yes. In conclusion [pause] There, in conclusion, we believe that these projected layoffs are in fact going to massacre our current school system and even though the changes keep reoccurring in terms of the modifying what that school system looks like, again, parents no longer know where to go to navigate the system and the loss of those services that help them to navigate the system will continue and then as a process we're going to lose thousands of our children as a result of callous cuts.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

FEMALE VOICE: Kennedy [off mic]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Who didn't testify yet from this panel? Go ahead.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Press the button please.

FEMALE VOICE: Okay?

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes.

FEMALE VOICE: On behalf of Lillian Roberts, our Executive Director, the 56 Local Presidents and 120,000 members, we thank you for considering the drastic impact that these cuts will have on our public sector workers and on the community that we serve. We represent workers who provide the social safety net that we so desperately need. There are many cuts that are of concern to us, but I'm only going to speak about a few. In the Department of Health, the reduction of 57 full-time and 35 part-time positions in the school-based dental health clinics. This cut's been offered up before and the City Council has fought to preserve these positions. You recognize the critical need for dental services for children in underserved communities, we count on your continued support. In the Housing Authority,

you've heard able testimony from President Faye Moore, remember 236 jobs is a very big deal. In the Department of Education, there are potentially 400 positions, many of whom will be represented by DC 37. These are core services as President, Vice President Crespo testified, they are not just bureaucrats, they are helping the system run. Teachers and principals need to focus on teaching and our members do the work that lets the schools run. In ACS, you've already heard about not filling supervisory vacancies, we cannot have these workers in court over and over again and not being able to deal with their individual cases. In HHC, a reductions in clinics for mental health services will lead to less detox services, drug treatment, counseling for patients, which will then lead to greater incarceration and inpatient treatment at greater cost. I just want to turn to solutions of which we have two recommendations. In the city budget with \$9 billion in contracted services, there has to be more fertile ground to plow. We have identified through our staff areas of savings, which we would be happy to meet with you and your staff, of over \$100 million in

contracted services. We are also a member of the One New York coalition fighting for fairness and we say that revenues need to be raised in a progressive manner. Thank you.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

[Off mic]

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Kennedy.

[Off mic]

KENNEDY RICHARDS: First I would like to say, good evening, Chairman Weprin and members of the committee. My name is Kennedy Richards and I am one of 5,000 public school cleaners who work to keep New York City public schools safe and healthy for our children. I'm also a proud member of 32BJ SEIU, the largest property service union in the United States with more than 100,000 members. More than 60,000 of us live or work in New York City. New York City school custodian budget has been slashed by over 26 million over the last 11 years, a reduction that has left our schools to be cleaned by about 1,000 fewer people. Now City Hall is proposing

the largest cuts to the school custodian budget ever--4.1 million in Fiscal Year 2009, plus another 6.9 million in Fiscal Year 2010, '11, and '12. That's almost 25 million over the next four years and these numbers don't even include the governor's proposed cuts to education, which are sure to affect us. In addition to putting jobs and benefits of hard working school cleaners at risk, further budget cuts could endanger our children's health and safety. If school cleaners lack the capacity of properly clean and maintained facilities, children will suffer. 32BJ has joined with more than 150 organizations to form the coalition One New York to fight this injustice against New York working families and the vital service they need to survive and succeed. We realize that some cuts are inevitable, but we believe there are ways to increase revenue so that New York City budget problems don't leave hard working New Yorkers without jobs and New York City schools without the services they need. Though this list is not exhaustive, I want to share some alternatives to devastating cuts being proposed by the city and state: tax the wealthy, this is not a

new or crazy idea. In 2003, in the face of a budget deficit similar in magnitude to the one we face today, New York City legislative imposed a temporary three-year tax increase of less than 1% on wealthy New Yorkers, this will increase revenue and help offset needs for cuts. Rainy Day Fund, New York State have the ability to access up to 1.3 billion from a reserve fund specifically designed to help close year-end budget gaps in difficult fiscal times. We need that money more so than ever. Cut the waste, the state also needs to take a critical look at its books and identify inefficiencies and wasteful spending. One area to look at is--I'm sorry--one area to look at is the state's Empire Zone Program. Beneficiaries of this corporate subsidy don't always live up to their promise of job growth and New York taxpayers shouldn't continue to foot the bill. [Pause] It is during tough times like these that our elected officials are forced to make tough choices, choices that will affect the lives of New Yorkers for years to come. Today, I am asking each one of you to commit to fighting for fiscal fairness during the budget crisis because New York City's

1
2 working family can't afford to bear the brunt of
3 these massive cuts by the current proposals on the
4 table do just that. We all want the same thing: a
5 healthy and vibrant New York City and with your
6 support we can make this a reality for all New
7 Yorkers despite the current crisis. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Mr.
9 Richards. I think that's it for this panel.
10 Thank you. I'm going to call the next panel
11 consisting of Judy Wessler, David Laporte
12 [phonetic], Richard Mazur, Allison Cordero
13 [phonetic], Curt Hill, Deborah--it looks like
14 Medina with North Brooklyn Collaborative, Terri
15 Smith-Corona, Carronia?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Corona.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Carronia. If
18 you have not filled out a slip with the Sergeant-
19 at-Arms, please do so now or else you will not be
20 able to testify, even if you signed up in advance,
21 you have to fill out a slip with the Sergeant-at-
22 Arms. While this panel is coming up, let me
23 introduce my colleagues that are--stuck around at
24 this late hour and we appreciate them being here.
25 We have Council Member Rosie Mendez from

Manhattan, Council Member Gale Brewer from
Manhattan in the front; in the back row Council
Member Lou Fidler from Brooklyn, Council Member
Diana Reyna from Brooklyn and Queens, Council
Member Oliver Koppell from the Bronx and Council
Member Tish James from Brooklyn. [Pause] Okay.
Just jump right in now.

[Pause]

DAVID DEPORT: Okay. Should I just
start talking? Good afternoon, my name is David
Deport [phonetic] and I'm here with my colleague,
my guide dog Zea. I'm here to speak on behalf of
the intergenerational program at Vision Services
for the Blind. The Executive Director of Visions,
Nancy Miller, is here and she will be testifying
later. This program provides high school aged
volunteers for people age 60 and over. I
personally spend the bulk of my time as a
volunteer, I chair numerous community--committees,
I've been President of the advocacy group Guide
Dog Users of New York for five years and many
others and I do that because I want to give to the
community, not because I expect to get anything
back. And, in fact, I would be unlikely to get

anything back, a mobility impaired person could not climb my five flights of stairs to my apartment to help me with paperwork and a blind person would not be able to help me at the supermarket or at the drugstore. I need somebody who is able to get up the stairs of a tenement-- I'm a native of the village and I still live in a fifth floor walk-up--and somebody who can see to help me, guide dogs are great, but they can't read labels and people in stores are not always willing to help. Gosh, my mind went blank, I've been sitting here for so long, I've forgotten what I was going to say.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You're doing fine, you doing fine.

DAVID DEPORT: Thank you. [Pause]
I was born in 1946, which is the first year of baby boomers, so I think that there are going to a lot more people like me coming along and this is really an inopportune time, I understand that it's a budgetary necessity, but it's an opportune time to cut out programs for older people. [Pause]
Wow, I had all these things I was going to say and I can't remember any of them, it's terrible, and

1
2 I'm a professional writer. I don't have family
3 living nearby, they cannot help me. I worked for
4 many years as a journalist and then at Con Edison
5 I went on disability when I was diagnosed with
6 cancer, so I have a bit of money and am therefore
7 not eligible for SSI and Medicaid. Could I put an
8 ad on Craigslist to find volunteers? Yes, I did
9 it once, I had a very nice person come and help me
10 twice. Before the third time he came, I got a
11 call from my credit card company wanting to verify
12 that I was authorizing--that I was authorizing
13 Western Union to wire \$1,000 to him from my Visa
14 card. So organizations like Visions have screened
15 volunteers carefully, they oversee the volunteers--
16 -

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Wonderful.

18 DAVID DEPORT: --and a person on his
19 or her own is really not in a position to do that.
20 I think that [pause] I love living in New York,
21 it's become increasingly difficult, but programs
22 like the intergenerational program of Visions are
23 enormously helpful, they make it so easy. I try
24 to help other people all the time, as I say, I
25 don't do it to get anything back and the kids who

work at Visions, the teenagers who come for 90 minutes every week are doing it because, you know, they get community service points, yes, but they're doing it--they're learning from it, it's a wonderful, wonderful program. I ask that it be continued, that somehow the means be found for that program to continue. And I guess that's really about all I can--am going to say for now. Thank you for your patience and when Nancy comes up, she'll tell you more about the program. Thank you very much.

JUDY WESSLER: Are you [off mic]

MALE VOICE: Oh, I'm not with this group.

JUDY WESSLER: Oh, okay. You don't have to... Okay. My name is Judy Wessler and I'm the Director of the Commission on the Public's Health System, CPHS, and CPHS is a member of One New York Fighting for Fairness Budget Coalition and we support raising revenues and we hope that the Council gives as much attention to some of the programs that we all are talking about as you did in fighting for the \$400 tax rebate. These programs are just a--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We're working on it, we're working on it.

JUDY WESSLER: Oh, good, because they're just as important, please.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well, you know, since you brought up the rebate and I'll give you additional time--well I don't start the clock yet.

JUDY WESSLER: Please.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Since you brought up the rebate, you know, it's not an issue of whether we can continue or not continue the rebate and going forward 'cause we do have a fiscal crisis. The issue is this is something a commitment that was made in last year's budget and we, as elected officials, like to honor our commitment and as far as we're concerned, that was already paid for but for a glitch or a delay in the processing, those checks should have been sent out already. So, you know, that's kind of like in a separate category and that's why, you know, the Council feel so strongly about that.

FEMALE VOICE: Well some members [crosstalk]--

JUDY WESSLER: Some members, right,

okay, well. It's [off mic]--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Most members.

JUDY WESSLER: --we're just asking for the same consideration for, you know, low-income populations in the city for a lot of the services they need, that's all.

[Off mic]

JUDY WESSLER: Thank you. And I just want to say that obviously we all voted for change in November, hopefully, And we hope that that comes to New York City as well. The city's public health budget took a very big hit in June already--and if somebody will come and pick up my testimony, I would be happy to share it with you, but they're ignoring us here.

[Off mic]

JUDY WESSLER: Okay. So it's two pieces, okay, it's two pieces, thank you. So I submitted what was cut in June and what I'm talking about is what's on the table right now. There are two very serious pieces, other people will talk about others, but in terms of public health, the proposal to close the STD clinic in East Harlem is pretty outrageous. We lived

through a TB epidemic because there were budget cuts and tuberculosis increased and now we're going to stare down an STD epidemic and it just should not happen. The major thing I want to talk about though is the city's child dental clinics. The Health Commissioner is claiming to save \$2.5 million on closing the--actually they've been trying to close them down for a couple of years, they sounded so sad about it, but they've been really eliminating a lot of clinics and cutting back already and I just want to raise a few points of why you can't let this happen. First of all, there's a new state law starting in September 2008, which, you know, in the past New York City was exempt from these kinds of requirements, but because we've gone so far backwards, now New York City is no longer exempt, so there is a dental requirement that children be able to bring in dental certificates in four grades and we will not be able to meet that if you allow this city to close the dental clinics. There has been a real reduction in the number of clinics, in the Council Staff Summary for the April hearing of this year, following statements were given as background:

people--proper oral health is a critical component of a healthy lifestyle, recent reports have linked poor oral health with other negative health outcomes, including health and lung disease. The problem is that the alternatives that the Health Commissioner testified to are not available. He said on Thursday--and I was amazed to hear this--that 45% of the children on Medicaid who are in managed care have not seen a dentist in the past year. A survey that was paid for by the city council and the Mayor, the [off mic] Health Care Needs Assessment that interviewed 3,000 people across the city found that 49% of the people who responded could not find a dentist, that that was the hardest service to find. You know, and on and on and on. For immigrant children--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]
Ms. Wessler, can you sum up, please?

JUDY WESSLER: I'm going to try.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

JUDY WESSLER: Thank you. For immigrant children, they did not have fluoride in their countries, so, you know, they come with worse dental problems and just on and on and on.

I think, you know, we're talking about [pause]
children losing their teeth right, okay? And all
kinds of problems. So we would hope that at a
minimum, you will respond and restore this
funding. Thank you.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

JUDY WESSLER: Just wanted to wake
you up and make sure that somebody was hearing
that this is a serious problem. Thank you.

[Pause]

VERONA ROW: Good afternoon, my name
is Verona Row [phonetic] and I work with Wingate.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yeah, sit down,
we can pull a chair up, pull a chair up.

VERONA ROW: Okay. I got it.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'll add six
seconds.

VERONA ROW: I work with the Wingate
High School School-based Health Center and the PS
13 School-based Health Center in Brooklyn and I'll
introduce my--and I'm also a member of the New
York State Coalition for School-based Health
Centers. I'll introduce my colleague, Anna

Hemanis-Beltista [phonetic] and she'll continue on. Thank you.

ANNA HEMANIS-BELTISTA: Good afternoon, my name is Anna Hemanis-Beltista and I also work in Washington Heights, in Wooden [phonetic] Harlem and with several school-based health centers and I am here on behalf of the Coalition. First of all, thank you very much for putting this together and allowing us to express our needs. I urge the City Council Members to safeguard access to school to health for children and adolescents for the school-based health centers. There at about 131 school-based health centers serving over 100,000 and 20,000 students in New York City. They are a vital safety net and the only providers who bring the wide range of critically needed primary health and mental health services to underserved children where they are each day--in the schools. School-based health centers are proven providers for physical and mental health that increase access to health care for minority use, improve schools' attendance and performance, reduce emergency visits and, thus, save a lot of money to the city and state, prevent

unnecessary hospitalizations, engage hard-to-reach populations, reducing pregnancies and birth, and lower total annual Medicaid expenditures. We need to continue receiving the existing funding to obtain new funding to maintain and upgrade infrastructure and to provide additional mental health services. We can not take any further funding cuts without creating a service vacuum that will have serious repercussions in health education and quality of life for children and their families. The New York State Coalition for School-based Health Centers is also a member of the One New York Fighting for Fairness Coalition and we support a balanced approach to weathering the economic crisis. We believe that public dollars must be prudently spent and that revenue must be raised to protect core services. The Coalition supports rescinding the 7% property tax reduction and the \$400 rebate. We also would like to see progressive increases in the PITC [phonetic] meter to what was done in 2003. We are wary of sales taxes increases on purchases under \$110 and the back tax because they are regressive. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

ANNA HEMANIS-BELTISTA: In our--we have our testimonies available.

[Pause]

FEMALE VOICE: Did you get this?

RICHARD MAZUR: Okay. My name is Richard Mazur and I represent a slightly different issue, but just as human. I am with the North Brooklyn Collaborative Against Displacement and Harassment. We formed a group, probably five years ago, even longer we had another group called Mobilization Against Displacement because the Greenpoint-Williamsburg area had been suffering over the past 12 years from displacement, or even longer. What we noticed--and this is telling, everybody talks about the DOE and overcrowded schools--our schools were losing population. We have one school in our district that went from 800 students to 500 and it wasn't because they won lotto and went off to the suburbs, it's because there was a land grab going on in Williamsburg and Greenpoint and people were buying all of the properties and raising rents so that the average citizens, low, moderate income and we're, you

know, and people on the borderline of survival, especially the senior citizens were being driven out. We [pause] when city planning came in 2002 or thereabouts to talk about rezoning our waterfront and bringing residential zoning, we said, wow, that's great, we've been looking for that for a long time, what are you going to do for our existing citizens upon whose backs this community was built for a hundred and some odd years and I personally have lived in the area--in the neighborhood since 1950, I'm one of the baby boomers, I was born in '48. And we mobilized thousands of residents in the community that said this is not just an economic development to--for you to make the developers rich, but we also need to protect our citizens that are being evicted. We had a covenant with the city, there were terms of an agreement on rezoning where we were supposed to get \$2 million for an anti-harassment project where we're going to fight against harassment to keep residents in the community. We formed a collaborative--and some of the members are here--of seven or eight--seven groups and there are actually nine groups that got the money and we had

\$1.3 million. The day after election day when the Mayor announced 2.5% cuts for '09 and 5% cuts for 2010, I said, uh-oh, things are about to happen. Instead of getting these baby cuts, our cuts are 15 and 20 times larger. The HPD called us and said we're cutting your budget for '09 retroactively to July 1 by 30% and your 2010 budget is being cut by 43%. The people that we are protecting are about 30,000 people and some of whom will be out on the streets if we're not there to fight harassment and get them housing. You have to reinstate these budget cuts 'cause these-- 'cause we have to defend our population, many of whom--30% of whom have already disappeared by the--you know, and we're here to protect the people of Brooklyn. I'm sure this is something that happens, beware of a rezoning and the promises that are made, they're not always kept. This was a covenant, this was a contract, it wasn't part of the budget, it was \$2 million that was promised. People made hundreds of millions of dollars, maybe you should charge 1% assessment to the people that build developments in Greenpoint and Williamsburg and take an annual assessment from them, I'm sure

that we'd come up with more than \$2 million a year, let alone \$2 million for two years. Thank you.

FEMALE VOICE: I agree.

[Pause]

DEBORAH MEDINA: Good afternoon, my name is Deborah Medina, I am an organizer at Southside United Housing and also member of the North Brooklyn Coalition Against Displacement. Cuts to funding from HPD to Williamsburg-Greenpoint Anti-displacement Collaborative will have a devastating impact on our community, which it has. Widespread gentrification, escalating rents, and unscrupulous tactics by greedy landlords make it impairment [phonetic] that we continue to receive funding to help low income tenants maintain decent, affordable housing in the Southside. This funding was provided for under the Greenpoint-Williamsburg rezoning for the waterfront to address the secondary displacement, which was accepted due to the development of massive amounts of luxury housing. Since the funding came almost 2 years after the rezoning displacement was well underway by the time we

received it, a budget cut is unconsiderable. An example of one of our efforts is our activity with the tenants of 363 South 4th Street, a nine-unit building where the landlord has left the tenants with no heat and no hot water, cascading roof leaks, and many other deplorable conditions. We have organized a tenant association and have enlisted an attorney from Brooklyn Legal Services Corp. to begin a case in housing court so that the 7-A administrator can be appointed to collect rent and restore services and improve conditions. In addition, we have helped over a hundred tenants in our community. Terrible--we have been going to Housing Court, we have been fighting DHCR, we have done everything we can in our community, and it just continues--the displacement continues. I have to leave right now because I'm going to a meeting where tenants are being harassed by their landlord so they can move out. So I thank you and I have to leave.

[Off mic]

[Pause]

[Off mic]

MALE VOICE: Allison or Kurt.

ALLISON CORDERO: Hi, I'm Allison Cordero from St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation. I'm testifying together with my fellow members of the North Brooklyn Collaborative Against Displacement to oppose the cuts to HPD's Greenpoint-Williamsburg anti-displacement program. As others have noted, this was a program specifically committed by the city to mitigate the impact of the Greenpoint-Williamsburg rezoning. As a member of the community boards rezoning task force of the Greenpoint-Williamsburg advisory board and as a planner community organizer and affordable housing advocate who has worked in this community for over a quarter century, I believe this cut is unconscionable. The city's own impact statements admitted that considerable direct and indirect displacement will result from the zoning. We believe that they underestimated this impact, in fact, since they did not consider among other factors the pressure to displace regulated tenants created by rising rents and the speculative land rush driven by the rezoning. We have clearly seen, as Debbie has described, that every day

tenants are being harassed, pressured, and priced out of the neighborhood. Without the assistance of the collaborative groups to inform them of their rights, advocate for them, and provide them with legal services, they have no defense. These cuts will clearly eliminate more than a third of the resources we have to carry on this fight and eliminate an essential element of basic fairness in the rezoning agreement. And, for those of you, Council Members who have rezoning agreements pending or existing in your own areas, I urge you to consider that as well, whether the city makes a commitment as part of a rezoning and whether it owes it to neighborhood to keep that commitment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well, not finished yet. No there--

[off mic]

MALE VOICE: All right. That's it, I think it speaks for itself. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. You [pause] you had a comment?

MALE VOICE: Question.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Question.

MALE VOICE: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I represent the community board that has just been mentioned here, Greenpoint Williamsburg, and I wanted to just ask, was there a conversation that took place with HPD concerning the 30% this year and 40% next year cuts in comparison to what was said to the City Council that a 2 1/2 percent would be the implemented cut. Why a severe cut 10 times or 15 times more so than the rest of the city of New York?

RICHARD MAZUR: There was nothing said to us in writing it was just a mere conversation, that's why we were so shocked because it was just a mere statement from the Deputy Commissioner and he called me up--and, again, if it's not in writing I guess it shouldn't exist, but it does--where he called up and said you're cut 30% in '09 and 43% 2010, I didn't make the decision so there was no recourse and I said well, there will be recourse, we'll go to our city Council people. There was no explanation for why we took such a draconian cut versus, you know, the Mayor's suggested cuts for other budgets.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And I would like to ask as far as the families that you have serviced already over this fiscal year, how many do you--can you presume you've tallied that you've rented services to?

RICHARD MAZUR: Well, even one minor statistic, and it's a small portion of our work, we've actually [pause] filled out 450 section 8 vouchers applications to 450 families and we have probably since the money was available have serviced I would say somewhere in the neighborhood of 3,000 tenants and their families since February 1st of this year. And because they come in in droves and we have eight--seven organizations and we see 20 people a day and you can add that up in your head almost. But, in fact, we're already--we've already paid for services that we're not going to get money for.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And so this is not just a cut implemented for the future, but a cut that currently affects your agency because you've already paid out payroll benefits, so on and so forth.

RICHARD MAZUR: Right, salaries,

we've hired people, we've performed services. In fact, a lot of the follow-up activity on these Section 8 people that may be out in the streets in the next month or two, we're going to have to fire the people that service them.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And where is the affordable housing that these--

RICHARD MAZUR: There's--

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: --families--

RICHARD MAZUR: --well there's actually an opportunity because many of you seen the advertising on New York One for The Edge?

FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

RICHARD MAZUR: Well aside from the market rate housing, there are 346 units of affordable housing, the applications are due on December 3rd and if we had the completed Section 8 vouchers for our tenants, they would qualify, so we could actually connect a good number of our tenants with existing housing because, as you know, the biggest problem with Section 8 is to find a place to put them. we've got a place we don't have the vouchers.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And so that's

another promise broken from this administration.

RICHARD MAZUR: That's part of the program and that's a promise broken because they were told when we started this--under the collaborative, we started this process of March and we--they told us that we'd have to fill out these applications by June 30th and within four to six weeks, you know, our most desperate cases would have the vouchers. We mobilized everyone, we got volunteers and we filled out 450 Section 8 vouchers. To date we have, I think, we have our fourth one today.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Yes, yes.

RICHARD MAZUR: We got our fourth one, 4 out of 450.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you very much.

RICHARD MAZUR: And we got housing for [crosstalk]--thank you.

[Pause]

MALE VOICE: That's it.

[Pause]

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Mr. Chairman,

before you call your next panel, I just want to apologize because I have to leave and I have a long-standing appointment with the Citizens' Committee for Children and I just wanted to be sure that no members of the public felt that that was, you know, reflected disrespect and I apologize, I know you've a long time to testify, but as Chairman of Youth Services Committee, this is a meeting I have to take, so I apologize for leaving.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Council Member. The next panel will consist of Dr. Barry Liebowitz from Doctors Council. [Pause] Mark Lex [pause] Kevin Blank, Jason Lippman and Tracy Welsh.

[Pause]

[Off mic]

MALE VOICE: We have copies of the statement.

[Off mic]

DR. BARRY LIEBOWITZ: Yeah, it's coming.

[Off mic]

DR. BARRY LIEBOWITZ: I was told I have three minutes, I did it in two minutes and 45.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well I've been using my discretion so, Dr. Liebowitz, if you could try to stick to two minutes and we will-- hopefully we won't cut you off.

DR. BARRY LIEBOWITZ: First of all, good evening, Council Members. My name is Dr. Barry Liebowitz, President of Doctors Council, SEIU. For the third year in a row I'm asking the Council to save the oral health program serving New York City's school children. I take issue with Commissioner Frieden's statement that the elimination of this program will have the least impact on public health. Pediatric dental disease has been called the silent epidemic. According to the Surgeon General's report, dental decay is the most common untreated chronic illness, five times more common than asthma, yet it is the one most easily prevented. If untreated, dental disease can result in serious medical problems and even death. The New York Dental Association has said that shutting down New York's dental program quote

displays a disregard for the city's most vulnerable population who most need and benefit from the access to these programs, end quote. DOH says that Medicaid managed care programs can provide dental care, but New York City Medicaid programs has the lowest percentage of children receiving sealants in New York state. DOH has not provided any solutions to these problems and without such a plan the dental safety net for our children is shredded. It is simply wrong to conclude that the elimination of the oral health program will actually save the city any money. On the contrary, it will have deep fiscal and service impacts on the public health care system and our other agencies. For example, HHC's dental clinics are already working at capacity, there's a three-month wait for a dental appointment. Delay in treatment will only worsen the problem. Think of the cost of transferring of the tens of thousands of dental visits handled by the oral health program to hospital emergency rooms. This year a new state law went into effect that requires school districts to notify parents to request that children receive a dental exam before entering

school. New York City was exempt from this law due to the services provided by the school-based dental clinics, but now the state will require the Department of Education to mail out notices to the parents of 1.1 million public school children. Another expense. The Department of Health defends the millions of dollars in advertising and outreach on anti-smoking and other preventive health campaigns. There is no question that the DOH ads are effective, but in these lean fiscal times we are compelled to make a choice: we can trim the DOH's advertising budget and it can return when the city's economy rebounds, but if you eliminate this 105-year-old oral health program that has survived the Great Depression, it will never come back and these children will suffer needlessly. As a pediatrician, I have always believed that children should be our top priority. I urge you to save this program. Thank you.

[Pause]

JASON LIPPMAN: Chairman Weprin and Koppell, distinguished members of the Council, thank you for allowing us the opportunity to

testify before you today. My name is Jason Lippman and I am the Senior Associate for Policy and Advocacy of the Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies, the umbrella advocacy organization of New York's Behavioral Health Committee, representing over a hundred nonprofit community-based mental health and some [off mic] agencies in New York City and surrounding areas. Cuts to behavioral health programs will affect some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers, including people with disabilities, such as those with severe and persistent mental illness, chemical dependency, and a variety of co-morbid medical conditions. In addition, New Yorkers who experience severe depression and anxiety from the harsh trials of life, such as the sudden death of a loved one, loss of a job, or the impacts of spousal and child abuse will have far less opportunity to access counseling and other behavioral health outpatient support services. In a time when the unemployment rate is rising and expected to rise even more dramatically, cuts to behavioral health services will be devastating to those individuals who need help coping with whatever situation the economic

crisis brings them. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene plans to reduce funding to contracted behavioral health providers by \$2.7 million. While the coalition respects the Department's stated intention to derive savings from programs that are expected to close or are underperforming rather than implement indiscriminate across-the-board cuts, they have yet to confirm which programs are expected to close or are currently not meeting their contract specific goals. Rather than wait until the end of the fiscal year to enforce liquidated damages on providers who are already operating on lean budgets and may see increased caseloads in the coming year, it would be prudent to identify these providers now and engage them in a plan that would keep their performance in line with contractual obligations. Over the last three fiscal years, the Council has funded a number of programs designed to address shortcomings in the existing behavioral health system: the special needs of children under five who exhibit signs of mental illness and the unique needs of older New Yorkers in need of psychiatric assistance. Last year, the

Council allocated \$2.4 million to fund a geriatric mental health service initiative to address the distinctive and growing needs of older New Yorkers who require mental health care. In a time where fiscal constraints and the potential cutting of senior programs citywide could create a greater need for mental health care among senior citizens, we are troubled by how long it has taken to get funding to geriatric mental health providers in this fiscal year. Less than two weeks ago, the Department sent letters informing City Council designated providers of geriatric mental health services that they have been selected as potential recipients. DOH/MH also states that it is now requiring providers receiving geriatric mental health funding to incorporate at least 60 screenings for depression by the end of the fiscal year into the scope of their programs using a screening tool of the Department's choice.

Providers have complained about this. We do not feel that this requirement should be added to the contracts, especially when providers are already using depression treating tools during initial assessment to check seniors for depression and are

for treatment. This added provision will take funding away from service provision in this time of need, was not negotiated with Council or providers, is not--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]
Please sum up if you can.

JASON LIPPMAN: --Council's expression--expressed purposes for this funding and expands the providers' scopes of work for already limited funds.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

KEVIN BLANK: Hello, my name is Kevin Blank and I'm the Director of Housing at the AIDS Center of Queens County, Incorporated, ACQC. I am here because I oppose Mayor Bloomberg's proposal to eliminate Scattered Site II supportive housing programs for people living with AIDS. The support system for low-income people living with AIDS is unraveling at the exact time we should be strengthening it. Homelessness among people living with AIDS in New York City is growing. Eliminating Scattered Site II housing will result in an increase in homelessness among individuals and families living with AIDS and will cause many

other individuals and families living with AIDS to languish in unsuitable, unsafe, and substandard apartments, and commercial SROs or welfare hotels. The city of New York November 2008 plan indicates that due to loss of state funding, case management provided by Scattered Site II supportive housing providers to clients of the HIV AIDS services administration, or HASA, will revert to the client's HASA case workers. The plan goes on to indicate that HASA will be able to absorb the additional case management needs of this population due to the stabilization of the HASA caseload. The plan does not, however, indicate how HASA caseworkers who, as it is, lean so heavily on community-based Scattered Site II programs to provide housing for their clients, will suddenly be able to secure appropriate permanent housing for their clients on their own. Over the last three months alone, ACQC Scattered Site II program has received over 600 client referrals for housing from HASA and approximately 25 unduplicated telephone referrals per week from various HASA case managers and supervisors who wanted our program to find housing for their

clients. Since its inception, the Scattered Site II housing model has secured housing for thousands of HASA clients and provided them with social services and support that have helped them maintain their housing, health, and independence. It is difficult to believe that HASA will be able to meet the permanent supportive housing needs of this population without the work of Scattered Site II providers. The Scattered Site II permanent supportive housing model is a relatively inexpensive way to secure housing for individuals and families living with AIDS. New York City gets a lot of bang for its buck from Scattered Site II housing providers. Eliminating these programs will reduce the New York City budget by only \$4,020,000 a year from Fiscal Year 2010 on, but will increase homelessness and instability indefinitely for an extremely vulnerable population. Thank you.

[Pause]

JOSE DAVILA: Good evening. Mr. Chairman and honorable members of the New York City Council Budget Committee, my name is Jose Davila and I'm the Executive Director of Bronx

AIDS Services, one of the oldest AIDS services of any [off mic] in the city of New York. I'm here to testify on behalf of the Coalition of HIV AIDS Legal Advocates of New York City of which my colleagues and I are part. My job in this short presentation is to give you a perspective on the increasing demand for housing legal services given by a growing epidemic and the continued diminishing resources to provide them.

Approximately 100,000 New York City residents have been diagnosed as HIV-positive, 80% of who are people of color, over 30% of who are women, and the majority of which are living at or below the poverty level. It is estimated that 24% of people living with HIV in New York City are homeless or living in unstable housing situations. Just two months ago, the City Department of Health released a report that indicated that the citizen infection rate is triple that of the rest of the country, with more than 4,500 new infections in the city each year. In recognition of the ongoing and pervasive nature of the HIV epidemic and in an effort to uncover the estimated 25% of HIV-infected individuals who do not know their HIV

status, in June of this year, the City's Department of Health announced a three-year initiative to test every Bronx resident for HIV. As we speak, there are private volunteer efforts to expand this initiative citywide. At the same time that the city has taken steps to identify thousands of individuals who are infected with the HIV virus, government funding for legal services with people living with HIV and AIDS has been decimated. Within the past three years, more than 2.5 million in federal and state funding has been slashed, roughly 600,000 from the State AIDS [phonetic] Institute, 1.2 million in New York City Department of the Youth and Community Development, 373,000 in federal Ryan White Care Act funding and 500,000 in federal [off mic] funding that will disappear after June of 2009. In addition to this budget cuts, in 2006 HIV legal services providers were restricted from using Ryan White monies for housing or immigration legal services. In response to these massive funding cuts and the new restrictions on Ryan White and in recognition of the fact that legal services provide crucial intervention to prevent New Yorkers from being

evicted in one of the most expensive housing markets in the country, in 2007 this esteemed body allocated \$835,000 to 11 HIV legal services providers citywide to provide anti-eviction housing work and immigration legal services. In 2008, the Council saw fit to expand that allocation to 1.1 million. That 1.1 million in New York City Council funding was cut in whole from the city's 2009 budget. We are respectfully requesting that this money be restored to provide these essential services for the neediest New Yorkers. My colleagues Tracy Welsh and Ivy Gamble-Cobb will provide you with an overview of how these funds was well utilized in the last fiscal year. Thank you.

TRACY WELSH: Good evening, Council Members. My name is Tracy Welsh and I'm the Executive Director of the HIV Law Project and I am also a member of the Coalition of HIV AIDS Legal Advocates in New York City. I'm here to talk today about the effectiveness of the City Council funding in preserving housing for people living with HIV and AIDS and also ensuring that undocumented immigrants have access a variety of

services and essential medical treatment that they otherwise wouldn't have access to. In fiscal year 2008, the City council invested just slightly over \$1 million in HIV AIDS legal counsel and HIV AIDS legal service funding. We represented over 1,050 clients in 50 of the 51 City Council districts.

We have a chart in the package that you have before you that shows that. in fact, that the clients that we represented throughout the city really mirrors the percentage of clients living with HIV in those same Council districts. So not only were the funds effectively used, but they were actually targeted to the Council districts and in which people living with HIV are experiencing high prevalence. [Pause] Another interesting thing about this funding in terms of its cost effectiveness is that the analysis is that the average cost per client was a \$1,025, that's well below the average cost of eviction prevention services handled by other government funding sources. And, as you know, for every eviction we prevent, we save the city thousands and thousands of dollars in SRO and homeless shelter services. I want to make two other quick

points and then I'll turn it over to my colleague Ivy Gamble. Something that people don't think about is how legal services that help people stay in stable housing and help them come into a system of healthcare actually reduces the number of infections and also ensures that people maintain health care and therefore are less likely to rely on emergency services, which also save money. The CDC has recently released data confirming that people who are homeless are 16 times more likely to become infected and they're also much more likely to engage in behavior that is deemed high risk for transmission of HIV. Keeping people housed and helping people get access to medical care, this is just as important to this epidemic as receiving basic treatment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

IVY GAMBLE-COBB: Good evening, my name is Ivy Gamble-Cobb, I'm the Executive--I'm sorry. My name is Ivy Gamble-Cobb, I'm the Executive Director of the Family Center and also a member of the coalition and I would like to highlight for you one of the many HIV affected families that have been served through this

funding. Danielle is a 37-year-old woman living with HIV who has small--two small children, both of whom are HIV-negative. Her husband died as a result of HIV two years ago. She lives in a small apartment in Brooklyn, she pays her rent with assistance, and is a good tenant. Her health can be precarious and she has problems, often exacerbated by almost inhumane living conditions in her apartment. Although she has complained many times, including calling 311, little has been done. The ceiling is cracking and in some places it is completely falling down because of water damage. There is mold from the damage in every room, which has effectively evicted Danielle from her bedroom, she sleeps on the floor of her children's bedroom. The bathroom is literally corroding because of the water damage and the tiles are coming off, exposing a damaged concrete wall. She wakes up every day to plaster falling off the ceiling faster than she can sweep it up. These conditions, among others, have basically aggravated the respiratory condition that has developed as a complication from her HIV. She and her family have been tenants in this building for

some time and she came to us to bring an action against her landlord for these badly needed repairs and because she was being threatened with eviction. Although she had been paying her portion of the rent, there have been problems with her government subsidies and the landlord had not received the full rent every month. Further, he told her outright if she didn't like the conditions of the apartment she was free to leave. Danielle failed to be aggressive about her action because of her HIV because of her bouts of relative good health, followed by periods of intense illness. She struggles to keep her family together. After coming to us, our legal staff drafted an order to show cause and brought the landlord to court and we won the hearing. After he failed to comply with the judge's order, our office brought a contempt action and the landlord begin to make repairs. Today, Danielle is back in her bedroom, the damage has been repaired, and they are working on her bathroom. The Family Center joins the Coalition in urging the City Council to restore this money for very needed legal services. HIV with this intersections of

poverty, racism, homophobia, substance abuse, and stigma has never purely been a medical condition and requires a comprehensive approach to help people living with HIV survive and thrive. Effective HIV treatment and prevention depends on a comprehensive system of care that includes HIV legal advocacy and the recognition of human rights of those most affected by the epidemic. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. The next panel will consist of Pat Dolan from the Queens Civic Congress, Martha Wolf from Parker Geriatric, Choua Vue from the Coalition for Asian-American Children and Families, Rachael Kaighin-Shields and Melissa Minegro [phonetic] and, Jeannie? Did you fill out a form?

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, come on up.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Mr. chairman, if I may--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Karen Anglero from the Tenant Association, Latimer Gardens, and Kathleen Shaw from Lenox Hill Health Enhancement.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: --I just
would, Mr. Chairman, if I--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Council Member
Koppell, yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: --I just
would like to--because some of the comments from
the Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies, I'd
like to say that we have asked that we look at
what specific cuts are included in the Department
of Health and Mental Hygiene's proposed cuts and
we will review them individually, as was
requested.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
thank you. That's very helpful.

[Off mic]

FEMALE VOICE: You have written
testimony? Ma'am, you have written testimony?

[Pause]

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I called her.

FEMALE VOICE: Yeah, she's--

MALE VOICE: Sitting right in front
of me, I'm sorry.

[Pause]

MELISSA MINEGRO: Good afternoon, my name is Melissa Minegro I am a student at Grover Cleveland High School and a participant in the intergenerational program at the Ridgwood Bushwick Senior Center. Currently the program has over 30 students from the Grover Cleveland enrolled in the program. Half of the participants are assigned at the senior center at 319 Stanhope and the other half at the Buena Vida Nursing Home. The students who are assigned at 319 Stanhope Street provide many services to the seniors who attend the center, as well as the members who are now homebound. One of the things we do is call members who will be celebrating their birthday each month and invite them to the senior center for the monthly party. We play board games and pool and many other activities. In the fall and winter we are assigned to a senior home to assist them with leaves and snow removal. We are also-- we also escort senior members home at the end of the day and assist them with shopping. These activities give us a chance to talk to the seniors and get to know them and learn about their lives and experience. We also do many group activities

with the seniors, such as plays and performances. This year we put on a show for Halloween and for the history of Puerto Rico, tomorrow we will be performing for the members of the senior centers with the Filipino Seniors Association with songs and dance to celebrate Thanksgiving. We are also planning a three Kings celebration for January 6. Many of the seniors request our assistant with computer training and we enjoy teaching them how to e-mail their grandchildren in the other states. We also have a nail salon, which is a big hit with the ladies at the center. We attend the center every day after school at the end of each month if we meet all the requirements, such as attendance, attitude, and participation in activities. We receive a small stipend. We cannot attend the program if we do not go to school and since we love to come and we make sure we go to school. Half of the students enrolled in the program are assigned to the Buena Vida nursing home and have to be trained to work there by the Director of Volunteer. Students at the nursing home assist the nursing staff with a lots of different activities. They do friendly visitings with the

residents, play board games, and [off mic] meals and distribute snacks. Many of the students who work there also attend on weekends to assist the residents, it is a great learning experience. Our intergenerational program coordinate, Diana Rodriguez, our teacher Mr. [off mic] from the Grover Cleveland High School spend a lot of time with us and we receive a lot of encouragement from them as well as the seniors and the other staffs at the center. This program gives us a positive place to go every day after school instead of hanging out on the streets. We truly enjoy this program. Please support the intergenerational program and help this--help keep this funding in the city budget. Thank you.

[Pause]

[Off mic]

RACHAEL KAIGHIN-SHIELDS: My name is Rachael Kaighin-Shields and I'm the Director of Ridgewood Bushwick Respite Center and I would like to thank Diana Reyna for attending today, who represents our community. We have both an adult day--a social adult day program and overnight respite program at our center. We relied on

funding from the Department from the Aging to keep both our day and overnight programs open and we were shocked to hear recently that the funding was going to be eliminated suddenly. We require funding for both of these programs in order to keep our center open, one cannot exist without the other. These programs are not luxuries for our clients' caregivers, they are a necessity for keeping families intact. Almost all of our clients are cognitively impaired because of diseases such as Alzheimer's. Without an adult day program, these family members--some of our caregivers would be faced with extremely difficult choices, such as whether to quit their jobs and struggle financially in order to care for their loved ones full-time or place a family member in a nursing home before it's necessary to do so. We have the only overnight respite program in a non-institutional setting in all of New York City, the only one. Our elder clients can stay with our center for up to three weeks at a time and receive 24 hours of care. Our costs are low and our rates are affordable. We provide services to families who need a break from the 24-hour duty of

caregiving and the overnight program is also a safety net for families caring for elders who are in crisis. We have cared for clients whose primary caregiver has suddenly and unexpectedly passed away. We have cared for clients whose caregivers have had to recover from an injury that prevents them from caring for their loved ones. We have cared for clients whose caregivers can finally get a much needed surgery that they have been putting off because it would mean that they could not care for their loved one. The alternative to our programs for most of these families would be home care, which is more expensive than our services. Many of these families who come into our center are not eligible for Medicaid and they also cannot afford to pay privately for home care, which is extremely expensive. These eliminations will cut vital services to some of the very most--most vulnerable New Yorkers and their families, and I urge the Council to please reconsider these eliminations. Thank you.

MARTHA WOLF: Hello, my name is Martha Wolf and I am the Director of the

Alzheimer's Day Care Center at Parker Jewish Institute for Health Care and Rehabilitation. On behalf of more than 7,000 older adults served by Parker each year, as well as Parker's President and CEO is Michael N. Rosenblut, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony at this hearing.

Parker Jewish Institute for Health Care and Rehabilitation now in its 101st-year of service is one of the nation's leading centers for the health care and rehabilitation of older adults. An independent nonprofit, we offer sub-acute care, short-term rehabilitation, long-term care, adult day health care, Chinese adult day health program, long-term home health care, and a community hospice program, as well as a unique Alzheimer's day program. Parkers' Councilman David Weprin is well aware of the great value of services we provide for a diverse population of older adults and vigorously shares our goal of providing the best and most compassionate health care to the greatest number of older adults. We thank Councilman Weprin for his ongoing support of senior citizens. Funds that are provided for Parkers Alzheimer Day program are not luxury, non-

core service funds, they are, in fact, key to life-saving services we provide for Alzheimer's participants and their family caregivers. Funds provided for this and many other social daycare programs are not city costs by cost savings because they help adults avoid more costly hospitalization and institutionalization. They help keep adults where they most want to be: in their communities with their families and friends and in the comfort of their homes. Parker's Alzheimer's daycare program allows family caregivers to work and work reproductively comforted by the knowledge that their loved ones are being cared for in a compassionate member and compassionate way. [Pause] A great many of our participants require transportation to the center and back home and we've been able to provide this transportation thanks to the assistance of discretionary funds. The expert in compassionate services provided by the centers of Parker at a loss to Parker. Without funding from the city, many Alzheimer's participants and their family caregivers will not have access to the services we provide or those of other social model providers

in the city. They will fall through the cracks of a system whose maintenance is one of core responsibilities of government, that is to be a key protector of people who cannot protect themselves. Ironically, it is this support--if this support is discontinued, the people served by many social daycare programs will fall into the much more expensive net and institutionalization at a time when the city can least afford it. We urge the New York City Council to explore any and all avenues that will allow continuation of funding assistance provided by social adult day care programs and Parker and similar long-standing programs throughout the city which have proven their value in helping to take care of an important segment of our most vulnerable population. At this time, I also would like to indulge the Council, the President in the New York State Adult Day Services Association, Marianne Nicolski, cannot be here and she asked that I read her testimony, which is an important one. So on her behalf and I am also co-president of Region 8 NYSADS [phonetic] and which covers New York City and Westchester. Good afternoon, members of the

1
2 City Council. Thank you for the opportunity to
3 address you in these most crucial times, I am
4 Marianne Nicolski--I'm Martha Wolf--and for the
5 past five years I've had the privilege to serve
6 New York's Adult Day services--

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]
8 Some people will do anything to get another two
9 minutes.

10 MARTHA WOLF: This is important. I
11 have been involved--Marianne has been involved in
12 advocacy for adult day services for nearly 20
13 years and count herself as influential in New York
14 City Department for the Aging's decision some nine
15 years ago to include adult day services in their
16 menu of services for older individuals in New York
17 City. For those who are not familiar with adult
18 day services, just to make it clear, there are two
19 types of adult day services: the social adult day
20 services and a medical model, which is a better-
21 known service. It is supported--the medical
22 models are supported through Medicaid dollars
23 costing close to \$200 per day for a five-hour day
24 and there are well over 40 to 45 providers of this
25 service citywide with a minimum of a hundred

individuals procession, several of them holding two sessions daily. This program requires that individuals who use and have skilled nursing need and are eligible for community Medicaid. Social adult day services on the other hand is much smaller, with only 15 funded programs in the city, it's reimbursed at a rate of about \$50 per day, and serves two types of individuals: those who are physically disabled and who can not go to a senior center due to their disability and individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related forms of dementia. The 15 programs with the Department for the Aging--which the Department for the Aging has decided to discontinue serve approximately a thousand individuals annually for less than \$2.5 million. If these individuals would transition to a more expensive Medicaid-based model, the increase costs would be well over 10 million and that is only if they qualify for Medicaid services and many of them do not. Current estimates are that less than 25% of the existing adult day services clients will qualify for Medicaid services. Tragically, their families may be forced into placing these people in nursing homes,

this choice increases the cost of care to the taxpayer to minimally \$15 million to care for the same 1,000 people that are currently being served by 2.6 million. In 1999 the Olmsted Supreme Court decision provided legal directive to every state and locality to move services into our communities and avoid unnecessary institutionalization. New York City appears to be moving away from this and we ask the City Council to examine the civil protections under Olmsted for these disabled seniors and their families. There are three questions that Marianne poses, I'll skip. Why when statistics clearly show an increase in the numbers of persons with Alzheimer's disease increasing every day is the Department for the Aging terminating its only contracts to support this population? Why when statistics show that individuals aged 70 to 85 are more likely to need the aging services network and who are simultaneously the same population most likely to develop physical disabilities and Alzheimer's disease, does the Department for the Aging feel compelled to shift their focus to serve a younger, more vibrant population of seniors? And lastly,

1 why is the Department for the Aging turning its
2 back on its neediest constituency, leaving them
3 less than five weeks to find another way to
4 survive, forcing families during the most
5 difficult with economic times to find some other
6 way of caring for their parents, spouses, and
7 loved ones? It seems like a cruel joke to tell
8 them that there are other services available for
9 them, we all know that they are not. Turning away
10 from its responsibilities to the most needy and
11 the most vulnerable is not what the department
12 needs to be doing. Terminating all of the adult
13 day services contracts in this city will leave
14 countless vulnerable older people without
15 services. Caregivers turn to providers and ask
16 the question, what am I supposed to do, just let
17 her sit home until she dies? I ask all of you on
18 this panel, what will the city's answer be to
19 these questions. And thank you for the
20 opportunity to testify on behalf of those who
21 cannot be here to speak for themselves.

23 KATHLEEN SHAW: Good evening, my
24 name is Kathleen Shaw and I'm actually grateful to
25 be following my--the previous speaker because I am

actually representing one of those individuals that will be impacted.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You still only get two minutes.

KATHLEEN SHAW: Still only get two minutes. I'm here today to--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: That works only once.

KATHLEEN SHAW: --to speak on behalf of my mother-in-law, Pauline and her children Martin and Shelley. Pauline is a member of the Lenox Hill Health Enhancement Partnership program, they're located on East 70th Street. Briefly, the HEP program is designed to provide services for the elderly who are physically or mentally frail. The program offers exercise, music, arts and crafts, trips, and cultural events.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Off mic]

KATHLEEN SHAW: Giving the numbing budgetary issues that this city is grappling with, you may think closing a small program like HEP doesn't warrant further evaluation, I'm asking you please to reconsider. As I gathered my thoughts regarding what could I possibly say that would be

compelling enough to change your mind, I thought it might be helpful to know a little bit about Pauline. She's 92 years old, she has lived her entire life in New York City, in or around New York City, she currently lives with around-the-clock caregivers on the upper East Side of Manhattan. She and her husband, Irvine, my father-in-law, of 60 years moved back to Manhattan around 1999. The plan was to be closer to their children, absorb the city life and that plan was short lived. Within a few years, Irvine passed away, losing the battle to Parkinson's disease. Again, the family thought that Pauline could reemerge from her loss by taking full advantage of all the things that she loved about New York City, that was not meant to be either. Within a few months of Irvine's death, Pauline had a series of small strokes that left her memory impaired and with some difficulty communicating. For several years, she stayed close to home with her caretakers and took occasional trips. That was quickly diminished when she became lost and was no longer--it was no longer safe for her to travel with or without anyone. [Pause] The family did

try alternate program, some at Rusk Institute, but they failed to meet their needs of community, interaction with peers, and meeting with others who shared similar limitations. That is, until the HEP program was discovered by Pauline's daughter Shelley. Since 2006 Pauline has been a regular participant, she is up and ready to go four days a week to HEP spryly walking to catch the bus, eager to get her morning doughnut, which is the key, at the center and exchange pleasantries with other HEP members and staff. You see, it's true, HEP does offer wonderful programs in the arts and music, but it really provides Pauline was so much more. It offers a safe community with trained and understanding staff who appreciate her needs and don't diminish her ability to fully participate and communicate effectively. It offers a context for her day, a sense of belonging and, most importantly, a way for her to contribute to her community. I fear if the HEP program does close, her physical and emotional well-being that she currently experiences will fade away. [Pause] And she will fade along with it. Look, I understand that

there's no way that I can find a compelling way for you to change your minds in terms of your budgetary decisions, but I ask you to imagine a couple of things: imagine your day or your loved one's day like this.

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: The Mayor's budgetary decision. We're, you know, we're trying to do what we can on restorations.

KATHLEEN SHAW: Instead of your daily banter, or the Mayor's daily banter, with the guy who serves coffee or doughnuts, you're sitting alone at the kitchen table by yourself. Instead of talking about the Giants games or the playoffs, you're paging through a newspaper by yourself. Instead of belonging to a community where people get you, you are frequently met with a vacant quizzical stare because people don't understand. Without the Lenox Hill Neighborhood program, the HEP program specifically, this is what Pauline and others' days will be like: isolated and at risk. I beg you to consider this as you make your budgetary decisions. Pauline and others still have life in them, they may have much

to give, and we still have much to learn from them. Thank you.

KAREN ANGLERO: Hello, I'm Karen Anglero from Latimer Gardens. I am here to represent the community center that is going to be closed. Our center offers recreation, education and academic program, sports and leadership, after school programs, computers, intergenerational programs, and a senior program with self-help. NYCHA's blueprints have always included a communities--a community center within their development. NYCHA always provided for their residents. It took 10 years for them to--excuse me--it took them 10 years for them to redo the center, which was supposed to be a two-year renovation. The children who were children are now grown up with children of their own who will also miss out. Now that it's open for less than a year, you want to close it after spending millions to make it. The center also services the community within and the community outside, it is entire community development and recreation center. The youth are the population at most risk. Why is NYCHA kicking our children to the

curve? They are the future, the children and teens will be victims of the street. NYCHA residents are a city within a city and we vote and we will remember on November '09. Thank you.

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Ms. Dolan?

PATRICIA DOLAN: Good evening--

Weprin, my friends from Queens. This kind of reminds me of the good old days on the Board of Estimate where we would sit and sit and sit, but I think we'll be out of here a little bit before those good old days. In any case, I am Patricia Dolan, I'm representing the Queens Civic Congress, a coalition of more than 110 civic community and neighborhood-based organizations representing homeowners, tenants, co-op, and cart [phonetic] condo owners living in every part of the borough of Queens. More than 20% of New York seniors live in Queens and many of them suffer the infirmities of old age. Many of their families and friends suffer along with them as dementia robs them of their personalities and physical disabilities limit their independence. For many of these fragile New Yorkers, the only lifeline is a local

community-based caregiver service or social adult day service program, and you've heard about both of those programs from my colleagues here before. Their programs rely on support from locally caregiver services that make life with seriously disabled person's bearable--and I'm going to digress for just a moment. One day, one of your parents or spouses may be in need of a diaper and that's what this is all about, these are elderly people who for one reason or another are so disabled that they are incontinent, their personalities have been destroyed by disease and dementia, and the only thing left that they have, and that their families have, are these services and the city of New York is now contemplating cutting those services off. We have a question for you, if the city--is the city of New York so impoverished that we must rob these seniors and their families of a last modicum of dignity?

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you all.

The next panel will consist of Erin Brennan from Self-Help Community Services, Bobby Sackman.

[Pause] Jed Levine from Alzheimer's Association,

Ken Onaitis from Carter Burden Center, Stephane
Gandall from CCC, and Kathy Fitzgibbons from FPWA.

MALE VOICE: Excuse me Mr. chair, if
I may?

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes.

MALE VOICE: Choua Vue, who was
called as part of the past panel had to leave, but
she did submit written testimony and I just wanted
for the record and for the benefit highlight the
part of the testimony referring to Be Free New
York, the Hepatitis B program which addresses a
raging epidemic in many communities and, as she
points out, if that is cut, that is a death
sentence to so many individuals in those
communities. So I direct the attention of my
colleagues to that critical portion of her
testimony and I thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: If anybody else
would like extra credit, you can submit testimony.
We have plenty people that have already submitted
testimony. Steve Spinoll [phonetic] is not in the
audience, is he? Okay. I think he submitted
testimony, thank you, Steve. [Pause]

ERIN BRENNAN: Good evening, my name

is Erin Brennan and I am the Senior Programs Director at the Self-Help Alzheimer's Resource Program, otherwise known as SHARP, for self-help community services. Self-help is a not-for-profit organization, which over the past 72 years has become one of the New York's largest and most innovative geriatric and home care agencies serving over 20,000 New Yorkers annually. Self-help's organizational mission focuses on providing seniors with the supports they need to maintain their independence and dignity and to live at home in their communities. Our SHARP program is critical in moving this direction. Since 1989, we have provided adult day care services and social activities for individuals with Alzheimer's disease, dementia, and other memory impairments. We currently serve over a hundred clients per year. If there is a need to cut non-core services, social adult day care should fall into the category of being core and vital. Private pay, limited state funding, SADCs, and Medicaid-funded programs are not sufficient to meet the unique needs to these seniors. SHARP is simply not a day care service where ill adults are housed

for the day, our program provides five hours of cognitive and physical stimulation. This stimulation helps them to be more verbal, calmer, and more manageable for their caregivers because they experience a day's worth of activity. Our program is unique in that we separate our client groups based on how advanced their conditions are. Currently, we have three separate groups: we have an early stage program, a cognitive strengthening program, an early-stage program, and a mid-stage program. This helps our early-stage patients to maintain more of their current levels than if they were to be combined into activities with later stage adults. For example, Mrs. C. has been attending our cognitive strengthening program, which is our early early-stage program, twice a week for almost two years. Shortly after starting at SHARP, her daughter continued to tell the staff how much her mother enjoyed coming to the program and how much she got out of the program. She was interested in finding other activities for her mother to participate in to help her self-esteem, the staff suggested she become a volunteer for our early-stage program on the day she does not attend

the program. Mrs. C. now attends the program, the early early-stage program twice a week for herself and, under the supervision of the SHARP staff, is able to volunteer at the program two days a week. The funding is cut, she will no longer--she's--this is not an opportunity for her to volunteer somewhere else, under supervision--in a supervised program, she has that ability to do that. SHARP provides full-time caregivers for our clients, the ability to work, attend to errands, and physical and mental rest. In addition, SHARP has a caregivers support group and offers individual and family counseling. Mrs. V has been attending our early-stage program four days a week for the last two years. When Mrs. V. daughter initially inquired about the program, she was completely overwhelmed with the caregiving responsibilities. She was looking for a program where her mom would have the opportunity to socialize and engage in stimulating activities. When she brought her mother in for the intake, she knew SHARP was where--what she was looking for. In addition to caring for Mrs. V, her daughter is also caring for her father who is in the last stages of cancer and

her two grandchildren, while her daughter is at work. For family like Mrs. V's, a program like SHARP is extremely important and helpful to fulfill the wish and desire to keep the family members at home and remaining in the community. Should access to the program be eliminated, there are many predictable consequences: lack of specialized cognitive stimulation will adversely affect the health of our patients, they will be isolated from peers in the community as a whole because no form of activities for them to participate in. As caregivers are often not specially trained since they are most often family members, we're concerned that the quality of the care our patients receive will greatly diminish. Similarly, the stress on the livelihoods of caregivers will greatly be multiplied. Some may need to quit their jobs in order to provide the type of around-the-clock care required. Frustration with conditions of their loved ones can increase mental stresses as well as the odds of cases of elder abuse. Discussion of a rationale for funding cuts involves the hope that the adults and their caregivers will be able to

1 find other programs or home care options through
2 Medicaid. The majority of our clients are not
3 Medicaid-eligible, should we lose funding there'll
4 be no other place in the community that can
5 accommodate the needs of both the ill and their
6 caregivers. Thank you for the opportunity to
7 present.
8

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

10 JED LEVINE: Good evening, my name
11 is Jed Levine, I'm Director of Programs at the
12 Alzheimer's Association, New York City Chapter,
13 and thank you, Mr. Weprin and members of the
14 committees, thank you for the opportunity to
15 testify today. Alzheimer's is a progressive
16 disease leading to total dependence and eventually
17 death. It is a fatal disease, age is the greatest
18 risk factor with prevalence increasing every
19 decade of life after age 65 so that almost 50% of
20 people age 85 and over have some form of dementia.
21 We estimate that there are 5.2 million Americans
22 with Alzheimer's disease. That number is
23 projected to increase to 11 to 16 million by mid
24 century unless we get our arms around this. Eight
25 out of every 10 baby boomers are at risk and by

2050, 1 of every five New Yorkers will either have Alzheimer's or will be taking care of someone who does. Because the individual affected by the disease needs increasing amounts of assistance, Alzheimer's takes a toll not only on the diagnosed person, but on family caregivers, predominately women. Caregivers, often aging with their own health issues, experience enormous emotional physical and financial burdens. We refer families to the DFTA-funded programs for social adult day care, case management, and caregiver respite. Although we recognize the need for reductions in the city budget, as advocates we are deeply concerned about all cuts for the aging, particularly those which affect the Alzheimer's community disproportionately. Neighborhood-based programs serve a cognitively and physically frail elderly population dependent on local services. We're receiving anxious calls regarding the closing of social adult day programs on January 1st, for some the only affordable option. We believe that reductions in services to families with dementia is shortsighted as the demographics confirm that needs will exponentially increase as

the baby boomers age. We hope that the city will not balance the budget in the short-term, only to create a shortfall in services and a substantially larger problem in the long-term. Without these programs, many caregivers will have to stop working to care for their relatives, reducing the tax base for the city at just the point in time when more services are needed. You'll be hearing from a daughter who was forced to do just that.

In conclusion, the loss of funding for the caregiver respite and social adult Day services programs which allows families to provide care on their own home, the least restrictive setting, would be a terrible blow to the Alzheimer's community. These cuts are disproportionately targeting the most vulnerable part of the senior population--those with progressive cognitive and physical impairments. There are few options for non-Medicaid eligible families. Lastly, if programs need to cut back or be eliminated, the short transition period is unrealistic in terms of finding appropriate options and completing Medicaid applications which can take an average of 60 to 90 days or more and with the increased

demand will be only longer. Thank you.

STEPHANIE GENDELL: Good evening, my name is Stephanie Gendell, I'm the Associate Executive Director at Citizens' Committee for Children, a nonprofit child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every child is healthy, housed, educated. and safe. Difficult economic times require very difficult choices on both the revenue and expense sides of the budget ledger. During difficult economic downturns like this one is important that we--more important than ever that we preserve core services for children. A balanced approach to weathering the storm will [off mic] not be able to be done by cutting our way out of the deficit. Specifically, we support rescinding the 7% property tax reduction and eliminating the \$400 property tax rebate, as well as considering other tax approaches that are progressive. As you work with the Mayor and fellow Council Members on budget reductions, we urge you not to make across-the-board cuts and instead be strategic and deliberate, funding programs and services that prevent child abuse, keep children safe, ensure children are housed,

fed, and clothed, as well as funding that goes directed to classrooms must be preserved. We have a few specific concerns from the November Plan, specifically eliminating the oral health programs that are serving now 17,000 children, reducing after school program, OSD slot reduction, the work hour reduction for summer youth employment, and ACS payments for the life program at DOE, which currently serves parenting teens so they can continue to go to school. Finally, we must address issues related to ACS's subsidized childcare program. As you know, ACS announced measures last week to close their \$62 million childcare budget gap. We are very disappointed that ACS's child care budget shortfall has been so persistent and large that, unless substantial funds are found outside of ACS, such dramatic action will be necessary. In the absence of adequate state and federal support to meet increased costs, the city appears unable to continue to fill the childcare budget gap. While we are relieved that children currently receiving child care will not lose services if there are enough kindergarten and OSD slots available,

moving forward additional resources are needed to preserve child care in the city at a time when we need more and more families to be able to work.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

[Pause]

KATHY FITZGIBBONS: Good evening, my name is Kathy Fitzgibbons and I'm the Senior Policy Analyst for Elderly Welfare and Youth Services from the Federation of Protestant Welfare agencies. FPWA is a membership organization with close to 300 member agencies and church-based human services programs that serve an estimated 1.5 million low-income New Yorkers in communities throughout New York City. We appreciate the opportunity to present testimony on the Mayor's proposed cuts contained in the November Financial Plan. With regard to aging services, we're very concerned that poor and vulnerable seniors are being disproportionately affected by the proposed budget reductions. We understand that a large proportion of DFTA's funding is dependent on city tax levy dollars. As such, it has very little flexibility to reduce its budget in ways that do not have a direct impact on vulnerable older

adults, yet community-based programs that serve seniors are already under the strain of adapting to the changes in DFTA's plans for case management and home delivered meals, which at least has temporarily caused long wait list for services.

It is our belief that the City Council must maintain its commitment to aging services. We believe DFTA should not be asked to further reduce its budget. There are very, very critical programs such as elder abuse, social adult day care, caregiver support, intergenerational services, and the congregate services initiative for which funding must be maintained. In regard to youth services, we're opposed to the reduction of hours for youth participating in this summer youth employment program. With early childhood education, we are concerned about the transferring of 3,300 kindergarten slots from childcare centers to public schools and the negative effect that will have both providers and families. With regard to child welfare, we're disappointed to see funding cuts in the area of preventative services, which is a crucial part of the city's effort to strengthen at-risk families and to keep children

1 safely at home. Furthermore, the proposed PEG
2 notes that savings will be realized from lower
3 spending in the preventive budget in FY 2010.
4 Again, the worsening economy will have its
5 greatest impact on already struggling families,
6 many of whom might turn to the preventive services
7 system for help. Thank you for the opportunity to
8 testify today.
9

10 KEN ONAITIS: Good afternoon, I am
11 Ken Onaitis, one hat I'm wearing today is as co-
12 chair of the New York City Elder Abuse Network.
13 My primary hat is as Director of Elder Abuse and
14 Police Relations at the Carter Burden Center for
15 the Aging, there I direct the elder abuse program
16 called the Community--Elder Mistreatment Abuse
17 Prevention Program. I would like to thank these
18 committees today for the opportunity to discuss
19 why the Council should not accept DFTA's proposed
20 elimination of all nine community elder abuse
21 programs. In completely cutting the programs, it
22 will be very difficult to replicate or restart
23 them in the future. And no other agency provides
24 the expertise to handle these often ambiguous and
25 difficult cases. Well I'm going to skip that part

to get under two minutes for you. Elder abuse is a complex and emotionally charged problem that knows no social or ethnic boundaries. In these difficult financial times, incidents of elder abuse and mistreatment will undoubtedly increase as people lose their jobs and their homes. Some will move in with their family, especially a parent who has a steady income like Social Security. Overcrowding, a lack of money, and the loss of hope, mean that more older adults in your district will become elder abuse victims. Our current elder abuse programs provide a crucial service to the seniors in your districts by addressing elder abuse and providing prevention programs. The loss of such programs would be immeasurable in terms of losing experienced staff who do home visits and walk into sometimes dangerous situations. Often working with a multidisciplinary network developed by them, elder abuse professionals have prevented evictions, ensured that seniors got medical care, and provided preventive services that have saved many lives. Let's look at the future without our elder abuse programs. First, the city--other city

agencies are ill-equipped to help in this complex field. Financial cuts to New York City will increase without our relatively inexpensive community elder abuse programs. More expensive 911 calls and emergency room visits will increase, our shrinking police force will receive more crisis calls, the already overburdened adult protective services will be deluged. DFTA's own citywide elderly crime victim resource center with a staff of only five, none of whom speak Spanish, is already overwhelmed with calls from 311 and they will no longer have our contract agencies to refer cases to. New York City cannot afford to eliminate community elder abuse services at a time when our residents need help the most. Thank you.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Thank you. I'm going to call some names, some of you may have left or not, but I'm just going to, you know, if you hear your name come up. Michael Adams from Sage, Michelle Neugebauer from Cypress Hills, I mentioned Bobbi Sackman before, I don't think she's here anymore. Naomi Altman from Queens Community House, Mary Anne Flanagan from

Community Service Society, Ann White from Queens
Community House, Rebecca Carel.

[Off mic]

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Laura Scharf
from Visiting Neighbors, Joyce Salomon from
Weinberg Center.

FEMALE VOICE: She left.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: The number of
them that left already so [pause] Marcia
Friedlander from SNAP. [Off mic] SNAP.

[Off mic]

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Sure.

[Pause]

MARY ANNE FLANAGAN: Good evening,
my name is Mary Anne Flanagan of the Retired and
Senior Volunteer Program of the Community Service
Society, here to speak on behalf of the
intergenerational programs and I'm here to start
with a story. It's about Sam Posner [phonetic]
was is a 60-year-old retired Con Edison worker who
meets every week in Brooklyn to mentor an 8-year-
old boy named Nicholas. Nicholas' mother is

incarcerated and he is living with a caretaker, he's struggling in school, and peer relationships, but, more importantly, Sam and Nicholas have been able to spend every week together. This October, Sam and Nicholas hiked to the top of Beacon [phonetic] Mountain. This was the first time Nicholas traveled outside of New York City. While this may seem like an easy weekend activity for most, it's the first time this 8-year-old boy climbed to the top of anything. Sam is able to share his skills, his time, and his support for a boy who so desperately needs it. You see, Sam is one of over 60 older adult volunteers matched with youth who have an incarcerated parent. The volunteers are part of the Retired and Senior Volunteer program of the Community Service Society who serve in the Mentoring Children of Incarcerated Program. Volunteers currently serve in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens at eight sites and they give over 3,000 hours of service. For children like Nicholas, the RSVP mentors are the only positive adult relationship in their life. If funding loss is permanent, it would be detrimental to the relationships currently

established. Intergenerational mentoring programs provide for the promotion of physical and psychological safety for youth, the building of supporting relationships, the creation of a sense of belonging and skill building, and the integration of all generations in community efforts. Please note that this is the only intergenerational site-based programs serving children of incarcerated parents in New York City. The Mentoring Children of Incarcerated Parents is not only unique in the population it serves but also is an award-winning program. Needless to say, continued funding from the New York City Department for the Aging, is not only essential, but it's important to support healthy aging for older adults and to continue to participate in society as vital contributing members. I urge the Mayor to reconsider the funding cuts as of January 1st. Thank you for your time.

NAOMI ALTMAN: Good evening, I'm Naomi Altman and Executive--Assistant Executive Director of the Queens Community House and I'm responsible for a broad range of services for older adults. I served as President of the New

York City Chapter of the New York State Adult Day Services Association from December 2000 through 2003. As importantly, or perhaps more so, I am also a former caregiver. It was an experience of caregiver that caused me to make a midlife career change because I saw firsthand how frail elderly are made to feel small and marginalized in our society. I had a vision for how my father would be better served and as a social work intern found that it existed as social adult day care. I heard Commissioner Mendez testify on Friday that only one-quarter of 1% of seniors served were in these programs. I don't know where his figures come from, but I'm not surprised because these services are only available in 3% of our communities. SADS are cost effective alternatives to premature nursing home placement, they have never been adequately funded to serve the vast numbers of the city's most vulnerable older adults and their caregivers. SADS offer caregivers who silently burden--shoulder the burden of caregiving for chronically frail loved ones, respite so that they may continue to provide the support for the long haul. In addition to escort transportation,

assistance with mobility, feeding and toileting, participants have nutritious lunches, snacks, join in specially designed exercise and cognitive strengthening activities. They have an opportunity to be part of a community of caring, to once again be a part of something. In the senior center RFP, DFTA says they want to help folks stay healthy. How about making--or helping the most vulnerable to feel good? I understand that there are hard choices to be made in hard times, however, having seen first-hand the value that these programs offer to friends and their families, I urge you to resist the knee-jerk reaction to shutdown programs that instead need to be expanded. I would urge each of you to visit a SADS program in your community before they are closed. However, there probably isn't one in your community, you're welcome to visit ours any time. In the meantime, I would urge you to stop the closing of these programs and if they move forward with center modernization, to require that DFTA make SADS a requirement for all hub programs.

MICHELLE NEUGEBAUER: Good evening, my name is Michelle Neugebauer, I'm the Director

of the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation. Cypress Hills is located at the Brooklyn Queens borderline, we're a neighborhood of neighborhood of 45,000 people strong, a low or moderate income community that really relies on the social service safety net that's being torn apart by this midyear budget mod--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

[Interposing] You're famous, you're famous.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: If Gale Brewer says you're famous, you're famous.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Everybody loves you. [Off mic]

MICHELLE NEUGEBAUER: That and a metro card gets us all on that J Train, hopefully on the J Train after the cuts. I'm here to talk about the intergenerational services program, it was the first program of our organization 25 years ago and it was founded really to bring old-timers and young residents together and rebuild the fabric of a community that was torn apart by blockbusting and mortgage foreclosures and lots of other terrible things. Intergenerational services is not a fluff program. It's not bingo, it's not

pinochle, for most of the 80 seniors that we serve, it's a lifeline to the community. It's the one time a day or the week that they get to see another resident of the community, young people who really come out and shine in providing support services for them, whether it be food shopping, or chores, snow shoveling, a friendly visit. It really has rebuilt the fabric of our community and for it to be eliminated again five weeks before the end of the year during the holidays is an incredible disservice to neighborhoods like Cypress Hills, the 14 contractors that currently hold intergenerational services programs contracts. I would urge you to try to negotiate with the Mayor to save these essential services. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

MARCIA FRIEDLANDER: Hello, my name is Marcia Friedlander and I'm the Director of the Caregiver Program at Services Now for Adult Persons. The SNAP caregiver program has been in existence since January 2003. During the past five years it has grown and assisted almost a thousand caregivers and their families. It has

become an integral an important component of services now for adult persons and the many programs that serve seniors and their families in Queens. The caregiver program provides essential assistance for any caregiver, child, spouse, relative, friend, neighbor, who cares for a person over the age of 60. It provides support to the caregiver in caring for a person who has dementia, Alzheimer's, any kind of cognitive physical or mental impairment. With the expected extensive budget cuts proposed for the caregiver program, there will be no respite or supplemental services and there will be less staff to work with families. Respite allows the caregiver several hours a month to take care of themselves, something they do not get to do when they are caring for their loved one all day and night. Caregiving is an insurmountable, demanding job. Respite allows the caregiver the time to take a walk, socialize with friends, go to a doctor, do food shopping, get their hair done, go to the bank--anything they choose to do. The average person takes this for granted, if you have been a caregiver, you know that you do not get a chance

to take time for yourself, unless someone provides you with relief. Respite services are crucial to the functioning of the caregiver program and critical for the well-being of caregivers. For example, I have one caregiver client who we provide eight hours of respite services to once a month on a Saturday. She spends the day with a cousin going for lunch, getting her hair done, seeing a movie or a show. She is energized and rejuvenated after this time away. She has much more compassion, patience, and energy to provide the level of care that is needed in caregiving. With these respite services, she has nurtured herself, which makes her able to nurture the care recipient. Without respite, the caregiver feels burnt out, a very common phenomenon, exhausted, and resentful. Caregiver services such as counseling, respite, support groups help the caregiver and maintaining their loved one in a safe environment. Without these services, we are slowly killing the caregiver and the senior citizens they serve. Thank you.

[Pause]

ANN WHITE: Thank you for the

opportunity to give my testimony today. My name is Ann White and I have been a volunteer as an adult day program at the Queens Community House for over four years and have seen the care and quality of the programs the staff put together for the frail elderly in my group, which is called LIFT, which is Living Independently with Friendship and Togetherness. We have exercise classes, creative dramatics, movies, word games, arts and crafts, things that our members can look forward to and participate in before and after their lunch. I feel this is such an important service to our community, not only for our group who have the opportunity to share with each other quality time away from home, but also for the families involved, helping them to protect their physical and emotional health. In two years ago, I found the need to reach out myself to the Queens Community House for help when a friend was diagnosed with hydrocephalus, a rare illness where the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord is unable to drain normally. This gradually caused my friend mental decline and lack of mobility. I was provided with important resources to help me

get started in finding out what could be done to help my friend. I had started to attend the caregiver meetings given by the Queens Community House staff and have received advice on how to get my friend to give up driving his car, how to make the bathroom safe, how to deal with his aggressiveness, how to find satisfying activities for him now that he can no longer read or write. But perhaps the most important aspect was that the Queens Community House provided a place where I could share and learn from others in the same situation. This is such an important service to our community, with all the practical advice given by the Queens Community House staff and the help to cope with the sadness. The adult day and caregiver services allow older adults, frail and disabled, to stay in their homes and communities where they want to remain and the help to their families and friends is equally tangible. Thank you.

LAURA SCHARF: Good evening, my name is Laura Scharf, I'm Director of Community Development for Visiting Neighbors. For more than 36 years Visiting Neighbors has served frail and

homebound seniors in lower Manhattan and parts of Queens, providing vital support services including escorts to medical appointments, help with shopping and errands and friendly visiting that help seniors stay independent. With the support of our dedicated professional staff and more than 400 volunteers trained and supervised by our staff, 1,000 seniors are able to remain in the community safely. They have nowhere else to turn. These cost effective life-saving services save the city money. The seniors we serve cannot afford to pay privately for help on a regular basis and have a little too much money to qualify for Medicaid-funded in-home services, which would cost the government much more--excuse me. Without the support we receive from the Department for the Aging, Visiting Neighbors cannot maintain these vital services. Through two separate contracts, one for our intergenerational program and one for our friendly visiting program, one-third of our agency's budget is funded by DFTA, funds from our City Council Members, and borough presidents. Without the funding from DFTA, we will be forced to drastically cut our services, without Visiting

Neighbors to turn to, these seniors will die. There are no alternative services to help them get to doctors, to go shopping for them, to provide relief from the isolation of their lives, to encourage them to eat, take their medications, and to help them face the challenges of aging alone in our city. Our intergenerational program, which is targeted for elimination, serves more than 150 students a year, most of whom are considered to be at risk. They improve academically and through their involvement helping our seniors, they learn valuable life lessons and career skills so they can become productive taxpaying New Yorkers instead of falling prey to negative influences of their communities. While Visiting Neighbors intergenerational program benefits the students, it was created to fill a gap in the services for frail seniors. Many of our seniors live in walk up buildings and cannot get outside without assistance. Even if they use Access-A-Ride or other para-transit to get to medical appointments, they cannot get downstairs on their own to get to the van and drivers are not allowed to come up to get them. They cannot go grocery shopping and

they can't afford the \$10 delivery fees that most stores charge. We have been told that DFTA does not consider friendly visiting program a core service and that its funding too is scheduled for elimination. Friendly visiting is not just a nice service, it is a life-sustaining one. Our volunteers are extra eyes and ears for our professional staff alerting us immediately if any change in a seniors mental or physical condition, so they can get prompt attention, helping to avoid a life-threatening and expensive emergency. And even more unconscionable, we have been told that the elimination of these cost-effective services will take place as of December 31st. The winter is the most difficult time for a senior to be alone, they spend the holidays alone and cannot go out alone into the cold weather onto the icy streets. without someone to help them, they will be found on the floor of their apartments, then everyone will say, oh, she died? How terrible, how sad, too bad, she was such a lovely lady. We urge the Council to maintain funding for these vital cost effective programs that save the lives of our seniors, help our youth build brighter

futures, and save the city money. Thank you.

REBECCA CAREL : Good evening, I'm
Rebecca--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing] I
guess it is evening.

REBECCA CAREL: It is evening. I
had to cross out afternoon and put evening. I am
Rebecca Carel, Executive Director of Riverstone
Senior Life Services. Thank you. We sponsor a
dual-language Spanish and English adult day
program in Robert Jackson is area of Washington
Heights. Our program targets people with
Alzheimer's disease and everything that has been
said today about services for people with
Alzheimer's is something I would just like to
applaud and agree with. And in the--to sort of
save time, I'm going to summarize my whole
testimony, because everything I have to say--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Sounds good,
sounds good.

REBECCA CAREL: --Robert wants to
get home. Okay, number one eliminating these
funding, not just adult day, but intergenerational
elder abuse, eliminating it is unconscionable,

reducing it would be bad, eliminating it totally is unconscionable. Especially for the adult day programs giving agencies six weeks to find other services for these people when there are no other services is also unconscionable. These many agencies, many of these agencies will have to close their doors December 31st. If they had been given a sufficient time to find alternative funding they might have been able to stay open, but nobody can find alternative funding in six weeks. The alternatives to adult day care for the people who are in these programs now, the alternative is basically going on Medicaid. It may not be immediate, they may not be eligible, but they will spend their money for home care and they will go on Medicaid and as a taxpayer I think that is a very poor choice for how I want my taxpayer dollars going. Thank you.

[Off mic]

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Clap like this, but they won't listen to me.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. I think Linda Baron from the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce submitted testimony, if she's not here,

thank you very much, you get extra credit, Linda.

Alan Flax--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Here we go.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: --community
activist.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Oh yes, oh
yes.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Marya Gilborn,
The Family Center.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I got to go
[crosstalk]--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Josephine
Torasano and Elsie--forgive me if I mispronounce
the name--Demaglia [phonetic], Marino Oliso.
James Vogel.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yea.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Laura Scharf,
Bruce Appary, Scattered Site budget issue Queens
branch 100th street, Virginia Musow?

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know, I
know, I know.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: From
Riverstone.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I get to

find out, let me see.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Jamil

[phonetic] Hatcher from ACQC, forgive me if I
butchered names. [Crosstalk]

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Go ahead.

ALAN FLAX: David Weprin.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes.

ALAN FLAX: Alan Flax [phonetic], I
just would like to speak about poor allocation of
resources of one of these supplicants that came
much earlier, the \$800,000 a year Paul LeClerc. I
see how he glad-handed everyone and you all
greeted him warmly, but what about that \$800,000
that received much criticism two Januarys ago?
Anyway, I want to speak about the New York Public
Library and Brooklyn Public, but specifically New
York Public. Their thrust [pause] Pardon me?
[Pause] He's overpaid, I can see 350 to 450,000
for the job he has. Anyway, their thrust was
mainly they want to keep their hours and if they
don't have their hours, they're going to have to
let people go, but I'd like to just mention to
you, David Weprin, about their--how they failed to

really allocate resources properly. The New York Public Library, Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island has Internet access for the patrons and the use of that is burgeoning. Approximately half of their Internet computers in their system are allocated for children 12--under 12 years of age and the other half for over 12 years of age. It doesn't seem proper. It's a bit disparate allocation, however, what is even all the more outrageous is that many hours go by in the public library branches, not the main research libraries, where the children's computers are fallow because there are no children or there a few children, if there's six computers, there may be one or two people on them. Look at this time is up. They have--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Alan, I'll give you extra time.

ALAN FLAX: All right. They have the administration of New York Public Library has an elephantine adamantism about letting adults use children's computers when the children aren't even there. Council Member Gentile and I met--ran into each other earlier this year at county lawyers and

he said he's well aware of it and he's gotten many complaints from his own constituency about the Brooklyn Public Library. There's something just wrong about that, that half the computers are for under 12, the other half are over 12, and the under 12--the computers for the children, I estimate having visited about a third of the branches in the Bronx and Manhattan. I would say that any one time, 35% of the computers are not used and in addition 10% are out of order because they don't have enough technical staff to repair them. I just would like to put in a footnote that the librarian of the Harlem branch told me that she locks them down till 2 p.m. Why? The children should be in school. Well there could be a lot of reasons why the child is in the library, might even be more interesting than the school or maybe home educated or the school is out that day for a teachers conference or they may be visiting, but there's something just wrong and they may need more money for hours, but they certainly don't need any more money for computers unless, David, and until, they reallocate the unused computers, Los Angeles does that by the way. [Pause] Pardon

me Gale?

[Off mic]

ALAN FLAX: Not for me. For anyone.

MARYA GILBORN: Good afternoon, my name is Marya Gilborn, I'm the Director of Social Services at the Family Center and I'm here today to speak to you about the impact of the proposed DFTA budget cuts on a very special group of senior citizens--grandparents raising their grandchildren. The 2000 census found that there are almost 84,000 households in New York City in which grandparents are the primary caregivers to minor children. For almost five years, my organization, The Family Center, has provided a range of services to seniors raising grandchildren with federal 3-E caregiver funds from the Department for the Aging. Since the 3-E money is primarily for programs to support caregivers to the elderly, The Family Center has been the sole citywide 3-E contractor focusing on meeting the needs of elderly New Yorkers who are raising minor children. DFTA was able to supplement the federal award for the 3-E programs with tax levy money totaling \$880,000, which was spread across

the different--for the 15 3-E programs. Now that this money is being cut, our program is facing a 38% cut in funds to support grandparents in the middle of our contractor year. This cut significantly reduces our ability to serve these vulnerable families, causing them to be more likely to become involved in the child welfare, juvenile justice, homeless, and adult protective systems. Yet in recent weeks we have received an increased number of calls from grandparent caregivers. Here are brief descriptions of some of the grandparents who called us requesting services in October. Millie is an 82-year-old with multiple health problems living on the lower East Side, she's asking for help in developing a plan for the future care of her grandsons, ages 8 and 10, whom she has raised since infancy. Rena, a 64-year-old Staten Island woman, is a legal immigrant from the West Indies, she's raising her 7-year-old grandson who's parents are both drug addicted. Until four months ago, Rena shared her apartment with another relative who abruptly moved out, leaving her responsible for the entire rent bill. Rena cannot afford to pay her entire rent

on her retirement income and is asking for help addressing this situation. Inez is a 79-year-old grandmother in the Bronx raising her 14-year-old granddaughter, whose parents both passed away from AIDS several years ago. Inez is feeling increasingly depressed and anxious and is having difficulty balancing her own needs with those of her granddaughter, she's requesting counseling. Deborah in Brooklyn is 61, her daughter who suffers from a mental illness, abandoned her children with her only six weeks ago and has not been heard from since. Deborah works part-time and is anxious about holding on to her job while she raises her grandchildren, she wants help assessing her legal and financial options, given that she doesn't know how long shall be caring for them. The Family Center has developed the expertise and staff capacity to provide these seniors with the services that they're requesting, but with a massive 38% cut to our budget, we'll lose the capacity and will not be able to offer our support to stabilize these families. The caregivers I described are not likely to access traditional senior services and staff working in

1 traditional senior settings are not likely to have
2 the expertise that they need: expertise in school
3 advocacy, family counseling, TANAFRA [phonetic]
4 regulations and family law. On behalf of the
5 84,000 grandparent caregivers in New York City, I
6 ask that the Committee on Aging and the Council
7 give special consideration to the impact of the
8 proposed cuts to these families and find ways to
9 sustain the supplemental funding to support the
10 caregiver programs. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

13 Heloise Grunberg, could you join the group? Come
14 on down. Only because your constituent of Tish
15 James.

16 [Pause]

17 [Off mic]

18 JOSEPHINE TORASANO: Hello, my name
19 is Josephine Torasano, I'm here to oppose the
20 elimination of funding for social adult day
21 programs. My mother worked all her life providing
22 for her family--sorry if I get a little bit--I'm a
23 caregiver. [Pause] I was good up to now. When
24 my mother was first diagnosed with Alzheimer's, I
25 tried every avenue I could to find assistance. I

have no intention of putting her in an institution or a nursing home, she's a part of me. [Pause] I can't--I come from a middle class family, I found that all public institutions for the aging only accept you if it's for a permanent, a long-term or they'll reject you because you don't have Medicaid. I was searching all over, but all I could find were programs that were open like a few hours a day. I work full-time, I'm home--I'm away from home from 8 in the morning to 5. I need a program that's open at least eight hours, the same as a full-day day care center for a child of a working parent. It's agonizing unless you are very rich or very poor, there's no hope for us. The middle class has very little choices, I either have to stop working and care for my mother at home [pause] tell you my age, I know that's why I'm crying. I'm 50 years old, I need to continue to work to make the supreme sacrifice of staying home resulting in my own depression and resentment. [Pause] My only other choice would be to get a home aide, but because we don't qualify for any state aid, I'd have to pay all out of my pocket and I do not have that kind of money.

1 [Pause] Finally, after searching, I found the
2 Ridgewood Bushwick Respite Center. There I found
3 loving, warm individuals who were willing to open
4 their door to me. I was able to drop my mother
5 off every morning at 8:30, pick her up at 5. It's
6 a small fee that's collected, but it's only one-
7 third of what I would have to pay for a home
8 attendant. My mother's well taken care of, she's
9 fed, surrounded by beautiful people that keep her
10 busy and, most importantly, keep her alert. Every
11 time she leaves there, she always gives them a
12 kiss, it's like an extended family. She feels
13 comfortable there. Thank you so much. I'm able
14 to go to work and I know she's in good hands, I
15 can enjoy piece of mind. Thanks for all they've
16 done, I feel I have the needed relief and piece of
17 mind that I need, not only 'cause it's affordable,
18 but it's an alternative to a nursing home where it
19 keeps my family together. Please don't close the
20 centers.
21

22 [Off mic]

23 SANDRA CHRISTIAN: My name is Sandra
24 Christian and I am actually going to briefly read
25 Elsie Demagaddo's statement. She is also a

caregiver from the Ridgewood Bushwick Respite Center and she and her sister took the day off today to come and, unfortunately, they had to get home because they had to take care of their mother, who has dementia and had to come home from the program. I just want to say what Josephine [off mic] is that she is a teacher, she's an educator, so she's taking care of not only her mother, but the youth of the city, so... Ms. Demagaddo wanted you to know that her mother is 72 years old and she has early stage Alzheimer's. She also lives alone with her husband who is in his 80s and also is physically frail and homebound. Both daughters work and one of them lives in the same building with their parents, but she can't be home, they live in a minority community in Bushwick and prior to finding the respite center, their mother would wander around the neighborhood to the corner store where the young men in the store knew that their mother, who had dementia and when she would give them money, they would give her Monopoly money and send her back home with the Monopoly money as change. She also--they said decent people would bring her back

home because she lost her way many times. One day, her sister found her giving her money to a man, my sister found the center and she goes every day and my sister and I have a piece of mind, we know that she is safe and away from harms way. In many communities, people aren't connected, they don't know about the Alzheimer's Association, they don't know about bracelets that identify people with wandering and this family didn't know what to do until they came to the center and these services are essential. I would just like to say, when you're looking at finding money to create \$1 million hubs in communities, this program could cost--the cut this year is \$880,000, that's pretty minimal to have all those clients now, within six weeks, having to get into a Medicaid program, which is going to cost the city and the state much, much more. Thank you.

[Off mic]

JAMIL HATCHER: Hi, my name is Jamil Hatcher [phonetic] and I'm representing ACQC, which is a Scattered Site II housing program. I did about 15 months inside the shelter system from Ward Allen to Atlantic Men's Shelter and I could

1 tell you those shelters is no Taj Mahal. They're
2 very nasty, dirty, and there's a lot of drug abuse
3 that's in these shelters, SRO programs, SRO rooms
4 also, there's a lot of drug abuse that's in there.
5 I've seen guys come into these programs--not the
6 program--the shelter system with--that didn't have
7 a drug problem and they left with one. So by
8 shutting down these--let me get back to what I was
9 saying--I was in the shelter system for 15 months.
10 I went to ACQC about a months ago and they got me
11 a one-bedroom apartment and I've been in there for
12 a couple of weeks now [Applause] Thank you. And
13 I'm happy, you know, I'm very happy, it took a
14 difference to my life and I now have a outlook,
15 I've got something to go forward on now. So, you
16 know, by shutting down a program like ACQC or any
17 of these programs anyway that that's basically a
18 housing programs, you're taking people off the
19 street and you're putting them someplace to live,
20 other than another shelter where peer pressure can
21 definitely get to you. So, you know, just try to
22 do anything you can to try to save these housing
23 programs. Thank you.

24
25 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Let me say

1
2 to that young man, congratulations. As you know,
3 Bedford and Atlantic, they want to add 600 more
4 men to Bedford and Atlantic, I oppose it and
5 because of your story, I believe we should do more
6 permanent housing. Thank you.

7 LES DAVIS: Thank you, I'm happy to
8 hear that. My name is not Bruce Appary as he just
9 left, he asked me to speak on his behalf. My name
10 is Les Davis and I'm the program coordinator for
11 the [clears throat] Excuse me--ACQC's Scatter Site
12 II housing program. I've been there for over--for
13 approximately six years and within those six
14 years, more than 70% of my people renew their
15 leases year after year after year, so they're
16 permanently housed. Some obviously fail and go
17 back to the system, but 70% stay. But Bruce's
18 story, Bruce came to me from HASA, he was deemed
19 unhousable. Bruce came to me with a drug history,
20 extraordinary 25-year drug history and he came to
21 me with a prison record, and he came to me with
22 financial difficulty and a myriad of medical
23 issues to which is why he had to leave because of
24 the pain and suffering. So anyway, these are the
25 people that we serve and the Scatter Site II

programs, it's a very, very small budget, my budget is \$670,000 a year, which is very, very small. And I think to take away the Scatter Site II programs which help people like Jamil and Bruce and provide the necessary supports, the case management, we have people calling us five years later asking for assistance. We have a lot of people just keep calling and just--and we support, even though they're not on our case load, you know, anymore, they--we close their cases, we graduate them as they say, but they come back and they know there's always someplace for them to go and my feeling is they would be lost in the system and I don't think that HASA--nothing against HASA--is the case managers are qualified to do the level of care that we give, you know, I just don't think they're capable and not because of any reasons, just their work load. So I think, you know, there's not that many Scatter Site II that I know from other agencies, most of the clients do stay in the hub apartments, they don't go back into the system and they have supports from us. So that's, it, thank you for listening and I didn't plan to speak.

[Off mic]

[Pause]

VIRGINIA MUSON: My name is Virginia Muson [phonetic], I'm a senior citizen, I won't tell you my age, but I'm proud of it. I've been a caregiver with my brother who has full blown Alzheimer's and I must--I owe my credit to the fact that when I was really stressed out in caregiving to the point of really wanting to commit suicide, I called the Alzheimer's Association and at that time I was referred to which is now Riverstone. At the time when I went there, I didn't disclose all my pains and the issues that I was going through psychologically, but it is through going to this center deterred me and pulled me in another direction of dealing with my problem, but I still have some of it, but believe me if they close these programs, it is not only going to affect the client or the patient, it's going to affect family members all around--a complete umbrella. So to close any program regarding elder or senior citizens, it is genocide. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

ELOISE GREENEBERG: Going to change

the subject just a little tiny bit, I'm bringing you an idea about how to save some money. My name is Eloise Greeneberg [phonetic], I'm a resident of Boerum Hill in downtown Brooklyn for 40 years and I'm speaking on the issue of the house of detention's--the Department of Corrections' budget item for \$440 million, plus 30 plus million for design fees. The Brooklyn House of Detention and I, we've had an interesting history going back to my arrival in the neighborhood in 1969, 39 years old, making 11,000 a year, single, to take on single-handedly the rehab of an old house. In those days, I wouldn't walk in Atlantic Avenue after dark--very scary place. Every storefront with a metal gate and I'm not a scaredy cat, I'm not a scared kind of person. Too busy during those days to pay too much attention to this overwhelming building on Atlantic, but it was my landmark to advise anyone visiting me to turn left at the big building, didn't find out it was a detention center until a little later and I wondered even then what's a jail doing in a residential section. I could tell you about the riot at the HOD in 1970 that closed the subway

until it was finally handled, walked over the bridge to get home. Could tell you about the crack vials and the various weapons that are hidden in the bushes by visitors. Could you tell parking horror stories, all with permits in the front windows, catcalls out of vans and windows, mothers concerned about allowing their children to view handcuffed prisoners being transported and the list goes on. But this evening concerns good housekeeping issues more than these issues and the voters are looking to the City Council to exercise judgment and integrity in choosing priorities which affect this budget that makes some fiscal sense. Would any homemaker handle a budget in this manner? Would that family's budget call for luxury cars at the expense of a food budget? The city is proposing to cut back on all the essentials, fire, police, education, day care, infrastructure, libraries, transportation, on and on and spares the DOC--the Department of Correction--to spend a top layer of the budget on jails. The DOC's budget is not reduced at all. Agencies are asked to cut back, but the DOC is looking at \$440 million to reopen and expand a

1 penal institution in the midst of a lively
2 neighborhood where families are raising children.
3 Doesn't make sense. The HOD has not been a good
4 neighbor for the years its been there and spending
5 this enormous sum to expand is a question that
6 taxpayers and voters will be looking to the City
7 Council for judgment and wisdom to solve. We look
8 to this body for good sense and fiscal
9 responsibility and elimination of this \$440
10 million plus budget item is a great place to
11 start. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

13 JIM VOGEL: Hi, I'm Jim Vogel and I
14 am here on my own, not on a group, and I'm going
15 to continue what Eloise is talking about. It's
16 440 million in Brooklyn, it's another half billion
17 dollars that they're talking about in the Bronx.
18 So let's find a billion dollars to give to these
19 people. Last month, the city council told this
20 people of New York City that they and Mayor
21 Bloomberg were required in order to navigate us
22 out of these difficult financial straits, which we
23 all hope are temporary, but it sounds wrong that
24 the Department of Corrections is getting more
25 money when everything else is getting less and

here's how wrong it sounds. Less money for hospitals, less money for schools, less money for fire trucks, but more money for jails; less money for libraries, less money for parks, less money for all that day care, but more money for jails. Are you betting that we won't remember, silly voters, come next November, we will because we've got a song. Less money for policemen, less money for transportation, less money for everything, but more money for jails. Now it's not too catchy, but if I was on council, I would sure do whatever I could to make sure that nobody was singing that next November. Please do the obvious thing and cut the funding for the expansion of the Brooklyn House of Detention. Thank you.

FEMALE VOICE: Amen.

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You have great constituents, Council Member.

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Do you do bar mitzvahs and weddings? The next witnesses are Verona Row and if Anna Humanis-Beltista is here, let her come up also. Beatrice from Check Peds,

Kevin Barbazzon, I think it's Brabazon, Barbazon,
 from New York State International Network. Some
 of these people may have left, but just, if I call
 your name, come up. Darryl Ng, from the Community
 Healthcare Association. [Pause] Jose Davila,
 Davia, from Coalition of HIV/AIDS Legal Advocates,
 Sheila Robinson, did I call her before? From the
 Hudson Guild Fulton Senior Center. Girard Petit
 from JPec, Elizabeth Adam from JPec. [Pause]
 Lindel Orbono from Gay Men's Health Crisis.
 Beatrice Maloney from BIMC, Beth Israel Medical
 Center. [Pause] I'll keep calling as long as
 they're not coming up. Nancy Miller from Vision
 Services for the Blind. Sean Barry from New York
 City AIDS Housing Network. I'll keep calling
 until we run out of seats. Carolyn Zablatty,
 Zablottney from Elders Share, the Arts and Elders,
 right? [Pause] And Mara Schecter from JASA.
 [Pause] And Donna Dougherty from JASA. That's
 all right.

[Off mic]

FEMALE VOICE: I'll put this away,
 you need those copies earlier.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Just pull

1 chairs up, but stay in the front row until people
2 finish testifying. [Pause] Okay. Somebody go.

3 NANCY MILLER: Thank you. I'm Nancy
4 Miller, I'm the Executive Director of Vision
5 Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired and
6 earlier this afternoon, you heard from David
7 Deport, one of our blind seniors who receives
8 intergenerational services.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I was very
10 impressed with his companion, who was very quiet
11 and very well-behaved.

12 NANCY MILLER: Well, dog guides know
13 how to act in City Council hearings, they're very
14 patient.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I wish some of
16 the Council Members were that patient.

17 NANCY MILLER: And I'm not going to
18 read my testimony, it's very late and we've all
19 had a long day. But I do want to reinforce the
20 detrimental effect that eliminating
21 intergenerational programs would have and I was
22 particularly taken by the written testimony of
23 Commissioner Edwin Mendez-Santiago, who talked
24 about the fact that he was preserving core
25

services and yet he does not believe intergenerational is a core service. He also specifically stated that these programs could exist through the Department of Education and the Department of Youth and Community Development. I can assure you, having been involved with Visions for 37 years, there is not a single program under DOE or DYCD that sends youth into the homes of blind seniors in every neighborhood of New York City, so the Commissioner needs to look at his statistics because these programs cannot be replicated under city agencies. A hundred blind seniors receive weekly visits to help with shopping, reading mail, escorting, going to appointments and other critical services. The Commissioner did not say what it would mean to '100 blind seniors to eliminate the program in the middle of winter. The Commissioner did not say what it would be like to have a blind senior fall and have nobody know and have them wait there for somebody to come for help. The Commissioner did not talk about what happens when a senior is released from the hospital and has no food at home and that volunteer goes and does their shopping

for them. What would he do if it was his mom? I would ask him, would he eliminate the program if it was the only way that blind seniors could get assistance. And, as David said, he's contributed to this city his whole life. He has been a part of the community, he has given his blood for what he believes are the most important services and now, when he needs us, Commissioner Edwin Mendez-Santiago is turning his back on the seniors of New York City. I believe that the 14 intergenerational programs are core services, I can tell you Visions has an excellent Vendex. Those of you who are familiar with Vendexes, you don't get excellent, nobody gives excellence and we have an excellent. It's a 21-year-old program that brings youth from the high schools into the homes of blind seniors and we know that a million dollars is a drop in the bucket in New York City's budget. To eliminate us mid-year in winter for the vulnerable youth and seniors makes absolutely no sense. Restore the funding at least through the fiscal year, give us 'til June 30 to find alternative ways of serving these most vulnerable seniors. Thanks.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

3 I have good afternoon, so good
4 evening.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'm looking
6 forward to good night.

7 ELIZABETH ADAM: Yes, and thank you
8 for allowing me to testify. My name is Elizabeth
9 Adam, I'm an activist for seniors and the truly
10 invisible family caregivers. I might add that
11 family caregivers save this country billions of
12 dollars every year by caring for their family
13 member at home. We are all know that the city is
14 going through hard times and you are faced with a
15 monumental task of keeping our city running. We
16 are aware that funding must be curtailed and
17 programs cut, but why start by cutting services
18 for our elders? These people who have given us so
19 much in their lifetime should be the last to
20 suffer from the budget cuts. I have three
21 possible ways you might consider to find the funds
22 in order to continue the desperately needed
23 services for our aging population and their
24 caregivers. First, cut the Parks Department
25 budget. Parks all over the city are being made

over, they are starting to look the same. Do we really need this expenditure? A perfect example is Washington Square Park, it is being redesigned against the wishes of the residents of Greenwich Village at a cost of \$40 million. They are about to complete the first quarter of the park in the next month. It would be sensible to stop the work then, reallocate the remaining money and delay the completion until the city is solvent again. This way, you could save at least \$25 million. Second, bicycle licenses. We are encouraging the use of bicycles in the city, but far too many are disobeying the law. We should start charging a fee to license them and ticket those riders or the business owners who are flaunting the law. With so many cell phones in use, it should be easy to send a picture of the violator to the traffic department so they can issue a summons and collect a fine. Third, tax the private universities. Private institutions of higher learning do not pay property taxes and they have become the city's largest and greediest developers. Universities such as Columbia, the new school, and let us not forget the infamous NYU, have been participating

in the biggest land grab this city has seen in years. They are driving out small businesses and low and middle income tenants, especially our seniors. They should be forced to pay their fair share. We all know that times ahead are going to be difficult and we must all pull together. I'm certain my fellow New Yorkers will be able to provide you with other creative ideas of where and how to tighten our collective belts, or even cuts-where cuts could and should be made. Just ask us and we will be glad to help you. Please don't attempt to balance the budget on the back of our seniors. Look for other places to cut, don't make them be the first to pay the price. Thank you.

SHEILA ROBINSON: I'm Sheila Robinson from Hudson Guild Fulton Senior Center and I want to tell about for starters, our social workers provide information on entitlements and our social worker interns help run groups of various sorts on health issues and other sorts of things that help seniors stay in their homes in a healthy fashion. A diabetes support group run by a savvy diabetic social worker intern helped me personally. Annual flu shots and regular blood

pressure taking by health care professionals on a voluntary basis helps keep our members healthy. Our Chelsea Housing Group helps prevent homelessness. [Pause] The Center's computer room with its older computers and internet access is extremely valuable for our low income and fixed income membership whose--who usually don't have these services at home. [Pause] Sorry, I had to--we did everything. The theater ticket bulletin board and volunteer office provides an opportunity for a fixed income members for--and our low income population to get \$2 tickets for otherwise quite gray lives. [Pause] We give courses, for example, a few of them have been in finance, photography, and other things, such as Spanish and we ask members to contribute for some of them, so it's not just city money. And we also have bingo--you know, I don't make--to make it sound trivial, but some members like bingo and they like being able to communicate and play Bingo and have an activity and they have trips to cultural centers within the city and trips outside the city for which the members pay for both of them for the transportation and or, you know, the trip itself,

1
2 whatever the costs are. [Pause] We have support
3 groups for health issues to keep our members
4 living independently and keep current on their
5 current level of health. And I would ask that you
6 please don't cut these services and allow these
7 seniors to go on with their lives and also that
8 some of them are contributing members to the
9 community, aside from just availing themselves of
10 the senior service and it helps them to connect
11 and to be part of the city and part of the senior
12 service. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

14 [Pause] [Off mic]

15 MARA SCHECTER: I know at least I'm
16 relieved that I don't have to say good morning.
17 It was a thought. My name is Mara Schecter, I am
18 the Queens District Director and the Director of
19 Elder Abuse Services for JASA that are slated, not
20 for cutbacks, but for elimination. [Pause] Allow
21 me to share these--these are not stories, stories
22 to me is something that you sit and tell and a lot
23 of them are made up, but these--this is what we
24 see day in and day out. A 63-year-old woman who
25 was verbally and psychologically abused by her son

to the point where she was defecating in a bucket in her bedroom because she was afraid to leave her room to use the bathroom. With the help of JASA and we have a very unique model of both social workers and lawyers working with elder abuse victims, she was able to receive an 8-year order of protection, individual counseling, and money for a hotel stay while we were relocating her to another apartment. An 80-year-old woman, an 81-year-old woman who was being financially and verbally abused by her grandson and therefore she was also facing eviction because he was living with her in senior housing. [Pause] She would become homeless if she was to be evicted. JASA was able to work with her and get a 2-year order of protection against the grandson, transportation to and from court, the locks changed so the grandson would not be able to enter the apartment, and we were able to stop the eviction proceedings. Ms. P, she's my favorite, she just came in Friday afternoon, that's when all emergencies happen, right? She walked in the door, she's 94 years old and speaks Polish. Since no one else in her area--of course, she's--her husband died years ago and

1 she has no children, her neighbor, her new best
2 friend was taking care of her, she understood that
3 she was signing something, but she didn't think it
4 was anything crucial, she ended up giving--being--
5 having her house taken away from her. Her
6 caregiver while caring for her was able to take
7 her bank card and her other bank information and
8 liquidated her account of about \$300,000, she's
9 down to \$6,000 as of today. JASA--so the JASA
10 attorney is able to work on recovering her asset.
11 We are able to put in home care to sever that
12 relationship with the caregiver. [Pause] There
13 are existing programs as people mentioned here
14 from Friday's hearings. There is the FJC,
15 however, that it is a partnership that was
16 predicated upon the notion that elder abuse was a
17 key component. If elder abuse is taken out of
18 that, then the FJC does not exist. The elderly
19 crime victims resource center or the crime victims
20 board do not provide ongoing services to this
21 complex issue. The NYPD, most people, since elder
22 abuse has to do with relatives or people that they
23 have a trusting relationship with will not go to
24 the police. The police actually we've been told

1
2 rely on us to work through the ambivalence, work
3 through the legal issues until people are ready to
4 work with the police. Adult Protective Services,
5 it's not only as Ken mentioned full overburdened,
6 we are all overburdened, but also so many of our
7 clients are not eligible for Adult Protective
8 Services, they would not be allowed even in the
9 door. Think of all the services that I listed.
10 Think about how much of taxpayer's dollars we have
11 saved. Now stop to think how much taxpayer money
12 we will need to pay DHS, Department of Homeless
13 Services, when Ms. P is evicted or when somebody
14 else is evicted because their grandson has taken
15 over their apartment. Think about how much money
16 we'll need to pay the court system, Medicaid.
17 This woman had all her money taken and now she has
18 to rely on Medicaid. How much extra is that?
19 People that have to be institutionalized and I
20 will not go on because so many other people before
21 me have listed the monetary value of what this
22 increase is. This is a barebones budget to begin
23 with. [Pause] This program does not enhance
24 people's lives, this program saves people's lives.

25 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

[Pause] You got to--it's got to be up, the
button's got to be up.

KEVIN BRABAZON: That's better?

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes.

MALE VOICE: Yeah.

KEVIN BRABAZON: My name is Kevin
Brabazon from the New York State Intergenerational
Network and thank for the opportunity to testify.
I'm speaking on behalf of the 14 intergenerational
programs currently funded by New York City
Department for the Aging and with several points
to make, it's in the testimony so I won't read all
of it, but the main points are first of all, these
services do address the needs of some very
vulnerable New Yorkers, not just elders, there are
many homebound, visually impaired elders, but also
young people, autistic children who provide
services at Senior League of Flatbush whose
socialization skills improve under the care and
guidance of older adults, at risk high school kids
who are at risk of dropping out. Over 80% of them
go on to graduate high school and many go on to
college. There are people in the senior centers
where they provide services and the institutions

where they provide services who collect money for them for scholarships. Second, these services do not cost a great deal. These budgets all together 14 of them are a million dollars. Five thousand older adults and 1,800 young people, that's middle school students, elementary school students, high school students, and some after school programs receive services. The average cost per year is under \$150 per person in the program. Why?

Because two populations get services at the same time, so while young people are providing services to the elders at Visions, they're also learning job skills. Those job skills in fact take many of them on to careers in health services and aging services. This is the third point I want to make is that a lot of young people in these programs are in fact building careers for the future and one of the programs in fact is doing a very extensive study, Jewish Home and Hospital in the Bronx, that has a lot of students in their program, it's being expanded to the Manhattan Campus, too. Their initial findings are, and there's a small body of evidence that young people who engage in intergenerational programs in middle

and high school are more likely to engage in careers in health and aging. Why is it important? The American Hospital Association tells us we're going to be very short of workers in those fields in '10 or 15 years from now, so when these people are entering the workforce. [Pause] The fourth point, these programs are also part of the wave of the future. Even in DFTA's plan for reorganizing senior services in the city, intergenerational plays an important role. If these programs are eliminated, this is where the skills are, these are the programs that know how to do these services and several of them are award winning programs. I've taken groups of Japanese visitors, people from Europe to come and look at these programs to replicate them in their countries. People from other states come and look at them. They are actually in the intergenerational community very significant programs that are widely recognized for what they do. [Pause] Last, but not least, these programs help to keep elders in communities. The Old Americans Act is very clear about a preference for people being able to continue living in a supported way in

1
2 their community. It's much more cost effective,
3 but it's so much more meaningful for the people
4 themselves. Young people who provide these
5 services, whether it's the Meals on Heels
6 [phonetic] program, it doesn't have the vans or
7 the other things, but these are real community
8 services from senior centers that deliver meals
9 out to people who are shut-in and the young people
10 take the time to stop and visit and do things for
11 the old adults as well, shopping assistance, chore
12 services, light cleaning, all sorts of things that
13 are very important to maintaining a positive way
14 of life. [Pause] Just wanted to finish with one
15 point, part of--amongst other things, I do teach
16 at NYU so I apologize to the previous speaker who
17 was concerned about us being a bad neighbor and I
18 acknowledge that much of that's true. I teach
19 System Development and Implementation. [Pause]
20 New York City Department for Aging is attempting
21 to implement a new system of service provision
22 that in fact will address new clients. A lot of
23 the existing clients will not walk further than
24 their own communities to get services, they will
25 be left out of the package. But one of the

1
2 fundamental lessons about service implementation
3 is they always cost more than you expect, the
4 unexpected costs in there [pause], very seldom do
5 they ever really know the client base well enough
6 to be able to provide a full package of services
7 to clients right away, so it takes sometimes
8 several years before the services reach the people
9 that you expect or hope for. [Pause] Thirdly,
10 the services are often less efficient, so there is
11 a drop in efficiency because people don't know
12 quite what they're doing to start with, there's a
13 changeover of job skills, different people doing
14 things, different locations, the production costs
15 are different, we've already heard about the
16 waiting list for home care, home delivered meals
17 and so on. The very same things will happen in
18 these newly planned services. The point is, this
19 is not the time in a critical financial period to
20 be attempting to change services on that type of
21 scale. My proposition is that it should be
22 deferred--

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]

24 Can you sum up a little bit?

25 KEVIN BRABASONE: Yeah.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Thanks.

3 KEVIN BRABASONE: Just a last point
4 is that I think these services should be deferred
5 and tackled maybe a few years down the road.

6 [Pause] The economist Nuriel Rabini from NYU
7 again who is the--one of the few people to
8 correctly predict what was going to happen in this
9 fiscal downturn says that the fiscal downturn is
10 not going to be one year, it's going to be more
11 like the order of three years to five years when
12 the housing industry recovers. [Pause] So that's
13 my last point, is Department of the Aging should
14 be thinking about holding firm on what it has at
15 the moment and then planning for the future when
16 the opportunity arises again to look at services
17 in a different way. Thank you very much.

18 [Off mic]

19 CAROLYN ZABLOTNEY: Hello, my name
20 is Carolyn Zablotney. Thank you for staying. I'm
21 the Executive Director of Elders Share the Arts
22 and my colleague, Patricia Manzione, the Executive
23 Director of Elder Craftsman and I prepared this
24 joint testimony. Unfortunately, Pat is home with
25 the flu and I will our entire testimony.

Testimony that starts out in her voice. Our organizations provide DFTA-funded congregate services to seniors throughout New York City. Elder Craftsman and Elder's Share the Arts oppose the cuts being made to the Congregate Services Initiative. Carolyn and I believe that creative activities for seniors are cost efficient, contribute to their health and well-being, and should be considered an essential core service. Recent groundbreaking studies have proven that group creative activities provided by professional arts organizations actually improve the physical, mental, and emotional health of seniors. Elder Craftsman has served New York City seniors for 53 years. Our more than 90 craft classes and visual arts workshops are adoptable for individuals with visual, physical, and mental disabilities. Senior who participate when a new skill with peers, they sew, crochet, paint, draw, quilt, embellish, and much more to create finely made craft items and works of art. Last year, seniors who participated in Elder Craftsman's programs experienced improvements in self-esteem, mood, learning abilities, cooperation, social skills, hand-eye

coordination, and much more. They told us how much they enjoyed our classes and wanted to know when Elder Craftsman was coming back to their centers. Approximately 1,100 diverse, low-income seniors throughout New York City were served by Elder Craftsman last year. Cutting our funding on December 31st means that half of them will be left without these kinds of creative outlets. My name is Carolyn Zablotney, I'm the Executive Director of Elders Share the Arts and I appreciate this opportunity to corroborate and expand upon the testimony of my colleague, Pat Manzione. At Elder's Share the Arts, we develop and conduct program that honor and actively draw on the life experience of older adults and encourage their creative expression. The program cut with the loss of the CSI funding is the story circle project. The project engaged older adults in a reminiscence-based storytelling program conducted in '10 branches of the Brooklyn Public Library, each partnered with a neighboring senior center. Elders met once a week an hour and a half per meeting for 12 weeks. Facilitated by our trained teaching artists, each program culminated with the

making of a booklet of stories that in turn became the basis for public readings for the community at large. There is a saying that when a person, it's like a library goes up in flames. Well we recognize the severity of the financial crisis and that we all need to make sacrifices, we question whether the cuts, the quality, cultural programs like Elder Craftsman's and Elder's Share the Arts are cuts we can afford to make. Older adults cannot be reduced to so many mouths to be fed or so many problems to be solved. They have much to give and a need to contribute. They have the capacity to be creative and a need to exercise it, to learn, to grow, to do new things. Moreover, the recently completed research study entitled, The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs and Older Adults, often referred to informally as The Creativity and Aging Study, conducted by Dr. Gene Cohen, the Director of the Center on Aging, Health, and Humanities at George Washington University--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]

Can you sum up on behalf of your colleague?

CAROLYN ZABLOTNEY: Absolutely, this

is the end. Indicates a direct correlation between creative engagement and health and well-being. So spending for cultural programs now may result in the savings of health dollars later.

[Pause] So we ask as a result that cultural programs like ours be recognized as being essential at the core of services to be provided to older New Yorkers and that the funding to the Congregate Service Initiative be restored.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

CAROLYN ZABLOTNEY: Thank you.

SEAN BARRY: Good evening, Chairman Weprin, Council Member Jackson, our dear friend Council Member James, thank you for--

COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON:

[Interposing] How come she's a dear friend and not us?

SEAN BARRY: Well she's our neighbor, she's been--I'm--I consider all of you friends, especially for sticking it out this late, so thank you for that. My name is Sean Barry, I'm the Co-Director the New York City AIDS Housing Network. We're a membership organization of low-income people living with HIV and AIDS and the

housing providers that serve them. I'm here today to add my voice to the strong chorus of organizations--thank you--who oppose the elimination of the Scatter Site II program, which is a HASA-funded housing assistance and case management program for homeless people living with AIDS. Three key points and then I'm gone. First, homeless people living HIV and AIDS already face too many barriers to permanent housing. Couple examples, HASA's rent payment guidelines are nearly 20% lower than Section 8, so it's already difficult to find housing in the first place. Despite the City Council's leadership in passing the source of income discrimination bill, there's persistent discrimination against HASA clients by landlords and brokers in finding housing. Once a HASA client obtains private market housing, they have an extraordinarily high rent share burden, most HASA clients in private market apartments pay on average 50% of their income towards their rent, up to 70 to 80%, so there's a lot of turnover. And, as you heard earlier, eviction prevention, legal assistance funding has already been eliminated this year. So all of this is adding to

a growing number of homeless people living with HIV and AIDS in the HASA system. The idea that we could eliminate Scatter Site II on top of that is unimaginable in terms of the consequences. Second key point is that HASA case management is no substitution for the Scatter Site II program and that's what Mayor Bloomberg has proposed in his November financial plan. In reality, the HASA case managers rely a lot on the Scatter Site II program to assist homeless clients in finding and transitioning to permanent housing. HASA case management is mostly about entitlements assisted. Third and last point is that Mayor Bloomberg's proposal to eliminate Scatter Site II will really cost this city more in the long run. This is one of the most effective cost effective forms of housing assistance and case management for homeless people with AIDS, eliminating is likely cost the city more because clients are going to spend more time in emergency and transitional housing, which costs more than the permanent housing they help transition homeless people with AIDS to. So just in summary, we strongly urge the Council to oppose the elimination of this program.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. All right. What we're going to do now is call up everybody that hasn't testified yet who would like to testify, just come right up. Come on up 'cause I think there are less people in the audience than I have cards for, so just come on up. [Pause] Yeah, there's still cards, but I don't want to-- but there are more names on the cards than there are people in the audience, so--

FEMALE VOICE: Oh, okay.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: --so let's just everybody come up, you're going to get your one shot here and if you're not coming up, that means you're not going to testify. So you can still come up.

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Come up now if you want to testify.

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You can sit in the first row if you're going to testify. After there's no room in the side.

[Pause]

FEMALE VOICE: Good evening
everybody.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I was hoping
that that was going to happen.

SANDY DANIELS: Thank you for
staying. I'm always the last one to testify. I'm
here--I'm Sandy Daniels, I'm a social worker from
the Stein Senior Center and I'm really here to
really beg Commissioner Mendez to rescind this RFP
for senior centers because it will really mean
that a lot of senior centers will close and
already I have seen the damage that it's done to
the homebound, just being transferred to case
management agencies, there's no way that you can
give a person the same quality of care when you
have a thousand people and there are 25 case
managers and they're running around and they're
calling you for all kind of--these seniors are
becoming so isolated and now I've--I am scared to
think of what's going to happen in March when we
lose the contract and we do not deliver the meals
because at least there's always a voice that comes
and says so and so doesn't look right, call them,
whatever. In the last few months with the economy

that's been spiraling out of control, the amount of seniors that have come in for case assistance has just grown in leaps and bounds. It is the middle class who are coming in because they cannot pay all their bills every month. With pensions, IRAs, and 401(k)s dropping in value, seniors are terrified of what lies ahead. Many have outlived their friends and family. They are being encouraged to eat at the center because the price is right. We have seen our lunch numbers increasing by '10 to 20 daily and before there was certain centers that had lower numbers, but that might not have been a indication that the center was a bad center, it just might have meant that people had more choice, maybe they didn't want to eat, but they wanted to come to an event. Now people really don't have the money. DFTA has set up 3-1-1, which is supposed to assist seniors, but my clients are so frustrated because they have to give so much information on the phone and then are told that somebody will contact them within 14 days and I experienced this firsthand when I called with a SCRIE question because I could not reach my contact and wanted closure for my client.

In restructuring and modernizing, let us not lose sight that for older people, it is much more comfortable for them to get help in a place that feels like home. A senior, Rene Stern, wrote, I am 89 years old and up until last June I was an independent woman caring for myself and taking care of my needs. After I fell and broke my hip, things fell apart because it was just too difficult to navigate the system. It's only through Stein Senior Center's help that I was able to return mentally and physically to some semblance of my normal self. At this point of my life, I'm still dependent on help with shopping and housekeeping, which Stein has provided. I have been a member of Stein for eight years participating in all culturally events. Because of limitation in sight and mobility, Stein is close enough for me to walk to and has therefore helped me [pause] in my independence. This center is home to so many and they are not looking for a new home. In closing, I would like to request that DFTA rescind the RFP at this time due to the economic situation, the recent changes in case management, and the upcoming change in meal

delivery. Our thin resources cannot manage all these changes coming so close together. Our mission is to help seniors remain independent in the community and our resources are being stretched too far. Thank you.

[Pause]

MICHELLE COOMBS: Good evening, I'm Michelle Coombs, Program Director of C.V. Starr Adult Day Services. C.V. Starr is a social model adult day program located on the upper East side servicing seniors living in Manhattan diagnosed with early to moderate stages of Alzheimer's and other dementias. For the past 15 years, I have worked with seniors suffering from all stages of Alzheimer's and dementia. [Pause] Dedicating my professional career to working with this vulnerable population, I strongly believe that social model adult day programs enhance the lives of our participants. The program helps to get them outside of their illnesses providing them with a safe, non-threatening environment where they are given the opportunity to socialize with other, share memories and accomplish a task at their level in a small intimate environment. On a

personal note, in April 2004 I enrolled my father in a senior center. My father was never one to socialize much, his life was his family and work. After long discussions explaining all the different activities and trips that he would be able to partake in, he agreed to visit the center and enrolled, however, he was not able to survive in a senior center. He kept finding himself in a small enclosed program within the senior center, a social model adult day care program. The staff was very supportive and welcoming to him and he became a participant shortly after that. My father looked forward to getting up each morning, waiting for the bus to pick him up, friends to socialize with, not just his peers, but also the staff members. My father spent the next two years of his life at the center until he had a stroke that landed him in a hospital and then to a nursing facility for rehab. While in rehab, his main concern was when would he be able to return to the center. The center became a major part of his life, just as it is for the participants at C.V. Starr and other social model adult day programs. For my mother and many other

caregivers, the program was and is a lifesaver.

She would no longer have to worry where my father was, did he turn on the stove and fall asleep?

Did he fall down as he often did? He was in a

safe environment and was well cared for. Had it

not been for the grant from the Department for the

Aging, my mother, like many other family members

and caregivers, would not have been able to afford

to send him to adult day care. He was not

Medicaid eligible, nor did he need a medical model

program. Each evening as I look the behind me, I

can honestly say that each participant has been

treated with the utmost respect and has been safe

throughout the day. I urge you to rethink the

elimination of social model adult day programs.

Think about the impact it will have, not only on

our participants, but family members, caregivers,

dedicated workers from employees, van drivers,

consultants, volunteers, occupational therapy

intern students, social work intern students, and

the list goes on. Thank you.

[Off mic]

[Pause]

MICHELLE COOMBS: He passed away a

year ago.

[Pause]

PAULA RICE: I can't believe this.

Good evening, my name is Paula Rice and I am a former full-time family caregiver and I'm here to oppose the closing of the adult day care centers. For eight years I was a full-time caregiver for my mother who suffered from Alzheimer's disease. It all started in 1999 when I noticed signs of disorientation and repetition of speech in my mother. I convinced her to come to New York for a complete neurological examination and, to our dismay, she was diagnosed with very, very early stage dementia. We made plans to relocate her to New York City to live with me since I was her only child and the only person to care for her. At the time, I was self-employed, running my design business from my home and teaching in an after school program for homeless children in the evenings. To my bewilderment, after about two months, I found the responsibility of caring for her overwhelming, even though she was still lucid and conversant, she needed constant attention, attention that I couldn't provide while trying to

run my business during the day. She was forgetful and needed to be monitored. She would turn on the stove to cook, but then forget what she had started. She would burn pots and once she burned a hole in my countertop. Needless to say, it was dangerous leaving her alone. Out of desperation, I contacted the Alzheimer's Association and attended a workshop on care alternatives for Alzheimer's patients. I was given a list of adult day care centers to investigate and I found one on the East Side for early stage Alzheimer's disease--C.V. Starr. They charge \$50 a day and offered a pick up and drop off service, they serve breakfast, lunch, and provided a variety of activities designed to engage the mind of a dementia patient. The staff was well-trained and they even gave me tips on how to handle my mom's confused behavior without becoming frustrated and angry. My mom thrived there, she looked forward to going every day and that made life easier for both of us. It gave me a respite so that I could resume my work without the worry and stress associated with her care and it gave my mom structure and a purpose in her life again. Since

there is no cure for Alzheimer's disease, caregivers like myself rely on day care centers to provide a level of therapeutic care that offers our love ones a quality of life that would otherwise be non-existent. To end these programs will be a terrible mistake, it would set back the progress that's been made on Alzheimer's care. As a former caregiver, I ask you to reconsider. Thank you.

[Pause]

WENDY HANSCOM-BOLTON: Hi, my name is Wendy Hanscom-Bolton and I'm the Director of the Social Adult Day Program at Riverdale Senior Center. I'd like to say that I think that the fact that people who care for people with Alzheimer's have a lot of patience, it takes a lot of patience and the reason that we stayed here from 2:30 'til 7:30 shows that we have the patience and that's what's needed to take care of somebody with this disease. I'm just going to hit a couple highlights, it's very late and I understand and I have a 3-year-old that I'd like to see. [Pause] Adult day care costs \$65 a day, medical model day care costs 160 to \$200 a day.

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2 Nursing homes cost \$365 a day. I know that these
3 are federal and state funds and we're talking
4 about city funds, but as a taxpayer and a person
5 who cares about taking care of people in the best
6 environment possible, I'd hope that we all want to
7 do that. That's what I see as my priority, I know
8 that I've kept people out of nursing homes, I know
9 I've kept them in their homes and I know I've made
10 a difference in their lives. As Jed Levine said,
11 we're all going to be caregivers if we're not
12 unfortunate enough to have Alzheimer's disease.
13 So that's it. Thank you.

14 MARTHA KAUSEK: Good evening, my
15 name is Martha Kausek [phonetic] and the decision
16 to remove funding for the senior services social
17 adult program, ADAPT, which Wendy runs, in
18 Riverdale, the Bronx, is beyond the realm of
19 economics, it is a humanitarian choice.
20 Abandoning this program designed to improve the
21 quality of life for seniors with cognitive
22 impairment is a quality of life issue. Senator
23 Schumer expressed in his speech at West Point two
24 weeks ago that it is our duty as a civilized
25 society to take care--excuse me--of our service

men and women and our elderly population. To do otherwise is a sad statement of our character as a nation. My daughter and I have come here today to represent my 91-year-old mother and all others who benefit from this extremely successful program.

My mother tells me that it gives her energy and a reason to get up in the morning and if it closes, she would probably be spending more time in

doctor's offices. I question the decision-making priorities involved in the proposed citywide

budget cuts. By discontinuing ADAPT, you are not eliminating costs, but in fact redistributing them at an even higher cost to the taxpayers because

many seniors will be forced into nursing homes at approximately \$350 a day and others will require more expensive health care at home. Are you also

aware of the burden you are placing upon families?

I attend the support group at the senior center where my mother goes for children of parents with Alzheimer's and this will be discontinued also.

ADAPT is in the forefront of what is vital to this helpless segment of the population and by removing its funding, you are sentencing those who

contributed to society all of their lives to

isolation and deterioration. I beseech you to allow my mother and other participants to continue with their last connection into society and would like to remind you that we are all potential candidates for ADAPT, as well as other senior programs. Thank you for your consideration.

ALICE HAMPTON: My name is Alice Hampton, I have been taking care of my mother, who's 85 and my aunt who's 88, who has dementia. I was about to read this paper, but I'm not going to. [Pause] For the last eight years and if it wasn't for C.V. Starr Adult Center, I don't know what I would do. We don't get welfare, I came from a hard working family [pause] we educated five young black men in New York, they all have PhDs and Masters. [Pause] I dedicate my whole life for eight years, I have no [off mic] of recreation, I am extremely tired [pause] and if it wasn't for that little day care program for my aunt who has dementia, I don't know what I would do. She did 15 years of free work, she worked up until she was 82, I don't think I, Alice Hampton, or the Hampton family owe society anything, we work very, very hard and we produce very nice

people on this earth and if I lose that day care program, I don't know what I would do. I am really, really tired. I work 24 hours, when I get home now, I got to bathe, clean, and do everything and this has been going on in my life for the last eight years. [Pause] ...What I'd do without that program. [Pause] That's all I have to say and I cannot [off mic] what I want.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

[Pause]

MARIAN MARAFCHIC: My name is Marian Marafchic [phonetic] and I was a caregiver, I lost my husband whom I was caring for and--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'm sorry.

MARIAN MARAFCHIC: --I work, I was a caregiver in my middle 80s to my late 80s and-- thank you. I'm not going to burden you with reading you another story. I just heard that the caregiver's support had been eliminated and I was so hurt by it, not for myself, but for all the people that I could identify with and for the enormous help that I got in just maybe small ways from the program that I just will be glad to give you my story and let you go home. I've been here

for five hours and hoping just to let you know how deeply I feel and how much help it was just to get a little support in difficult times.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you for coming, we appreciate it.

MARIAN MARAFCHIC: Thank you.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And last, but not least.

SHIRLEY JOSEPH: Yeah, my name is Shirley Joseph and I actually I attend two senior centers and one of the senior centers asked us to go down to speak up. I don't have a script and it's not necessary to say how necessary the centers are for people, especially for those who don't have anyone to talk to or hang out with or have a eat, you know, to share their food with and that they must remain--I worked all my life, it's time for them to give back to me now, okay? So it's my time as far as being taken care of and looked after, I did my share and all of us have put in our fair share. So it's simply that it's due us and we're hoping that they will recognize that part and we have senior citizens working at

80 years old or that the case may be, but I think that when you're ready to retire at 70, 75, we should have a little something to go to like a little club or something like that or do you know what I'm saying? To eat--to break bread with someone and simply we need them there, it's a necessary thing for us as we get older. Thank you very much.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Anybody else would like to testify? Last chance.

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Going once, going twice. Thank you all for coming and I want to particularly thank Letitia James, Council Member who was just--just left, but she was here almost the whole time and, of course, my long standing compatriot who stays with me 'til the end every time at a budget hearing and, of course, I'm referring to Council Member Robert Jackson. And, of course, my trusted counsel to the Finance Committee on my immediate right, Tanisha Turnbull--

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FEMALE VOICE: Edward.

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS\$47

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: --who was--

3 Tanisha Turnbull-Edwards, who was here the entire
4 time as well. With that, we're adjourning. Thank
5 you, keep track of the time so they know I put in
6 a full day today.

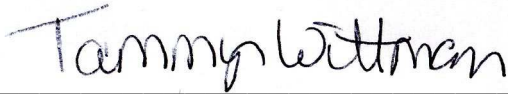
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Tammy Wittman, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Wittman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T".Date December 10, 2008