

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

JOINT COMMITTEES ON FINANCE, AGING AND
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SENIOR CENTERS

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May 18, 2009
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HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:

DAVID I. WEPRIN
Chairperson

MARIA del CARMEN ARROYO
Co-Chairperson

MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO
Co-Chairperson

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Gale A. Brewer
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A P P E A R A N C E S

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

Piper Hoffman
Partnership for the Homeless

George Geller
Teamsters Local 237

2 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: If I can
3 have-- please settle down so we can get this party
4 started.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Good
6 afternoon. The Finance Committee is now back in
7 session. And, we are now joined with the
8 Committee on Aging, Chaired by Council Member
9 Maria del Carmen Arroyo and also with the
10 Subcommittee on Senior Centers, Chaired by Council
11 Member Melissa Mark-Viverito. And, we are going
12 to be hearing from the Commissioner of Aging.
13 But, before that, I'm going to call upon Chair
14 Arroyo for a statement.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you,
16 Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm
17 Maria del Carmen Arroyo. I Chair the Committee on
18 Aging in the Council. Welcome to the fiscal 2010
19 Executive Budget hearing held jointly with the
20 Committee on Finance and the Subcommittee on
21 Senior Centers, Chaired by Councilwoman Mark-
22 Viverito.

23 Today, we hear testimony from DFTA
24 regarding the Executive Budget and the general
25 agency operations within the proposed \$240 million

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1 budget. We look forward to hearing from the
2 Department on several critical issues including
3 the proposed cuts to senior services, totaling 7.1
4 million in the Executive Budget that basically
5 represents funding that we have traditionally
6 provided for the Borough Presidents to allocate.
7 This funding supports a vast array of senior
8 programs and service providers Citywide and
9 include not just Senior Centers, but home case
10 management programs, home care, transportation and
11 many other services. And, we hope to hear more
12 about DFTA's plan to address the impact that this
13 particular PEG will have on all these service
14 areas, and, as well as further details on the
15 implementation of the proposed cuts for fiscal
16 year 2010.

18 Most concerning for me is the
19 removal of the home-delivered meal funding from
20 the budgets of many Senior Centers, which
21 previously operated with blended budgets, and, the
22 turmoil that the home-delivered meals RFP and
23 subsequent contracts have created in the Senior
24 Center network. We hope to hear more from DFTA as
25 the current number and the status of these Centers

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and the plan to keep these Centers afloat.

My general position, as Chair of this Committee, is that on a good year, in a good year, seniors are having to make some very tough choices whether they pay their rent, buy food, pay for medication. And, given the impact of the overall DFTA budget on the City's budget, is that this agency, given all of the changes that it has had to deal with over the last year, gets a pass in this fiscal year. And, we provide for DFTA an opportunity to right side all of the services that have been impacted by the aggressive nature this agency has pursued with regards to the home-delivered meal contracts, the case management contracts and the impact that those have had on the Senior Centers and their budgets.

So, my hope is that we can talk about how we can help DFTA transition its operation and ensure that we can preserve senior services for those who can least afford to make another tough decision in a difficult year. So, I look forward to working with the agency, my colleagues, as we have a conversation to ensure that we can shore up this agency and preserve

Senior Centers and services across the City.

And now, I would like to turn it over to my Co-Chair, Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito.

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

Thank you, Madam Chair. And, good afternoon. I'm Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito, Chair of the Subcommittee on Senior Centers. And, I also share Council Member Arroyo's concerns, not only regarding the \$7.1 million cut to senior services proposed in the fiscal year 2010 Executive Budget for DFTA, I also share the concern and the thinking that, in light of all the turmoil that DFTA has gone through during the past two years, that we should consider giving it a pass with regards to any future cuts.

I'd like to remind everyone that this cut is in addition to the PEG, the 7.1 million is in addition to the PEG proposed in the fiscal 2010 Preliminary Budget, which would reduce funding to all Senior Centers by 5%. At a time when so many of the City's resources for seniors are being eliminated, it is alarming to hear of DFTA's plans to cut funding for the very places

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that have become a second home for many of our seniors.

Additionally, Senior Centers, which have been adversely impacted by the implementation of the home-delivered meals RFP, continue to struggle to maintain programming. It is our hope that the extraction of home-delivered meals funds from the budgets of these Centers will not lead to additional closures, or to closures. We're gravely concerned, however, that this may, in fact, be a reality. Although we understand that DFTA's faced with the same challenges as other City agencies struggling to save resources in this bleak economic climate, cutting from Senior Centers has proven to be extremely detrimental.

The Committee hopes to hear details on the full impact of proposed cuts within the fiscal 2010 Executive Budget and DFTA's plans to maintain and support its current Senior Center network. And, with that, I guess we would welcome our Commissioner.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. Good afternoon, Chairs Arroyo and Weprin and Subcommittee Chair Mark-Viverito and members of

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the Aging and Finance Committee. I am Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, the Commissioner of the New York City Department for the Aging. Here with me today is Angeles Pai, Deputy Commissioner for Planning and Fiscal Operations. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the Department of the Aging's fiscal year 2010 Executive Budget.

The fiscal year 2010 Executive Budget is projected at \$240,634,912 in baseline funding and includes allocations of the \$91 million to support Senior Centers; \$28.9 million for home-delivered meals; \$22.7 million for case management services and \$27 million for home care for non-Medicaid eligible homebound seniors. In addition, the fiscal year 2010 preliminary budget allocates \$4 million for caregiver support services.

As you know, this is a very difficult year for all government services, including the Department for the Aging. DFTA, like all City agencies, has had to reduce its budget in response to declining City revenues. During these challenging times, DFTA staff has

continued to work creatively and efficiently to minimize the impact on New York City seniors as much as possible. Certainly, there are consequences to all reductions, as each of our programs touches the lives of older adults throughout the City.

That being said, DFTA has worked to make strategic decisions in its budget to ensure that the agency is able to continue to meet the needs of a wide range of older New Yorkers through programs and services that have the most far-reaching impact on their lives. I would like to use this opportunity to provide a briefing on DFTA's proposed budget reductions for fiscal 2010.

Preliminary Plan. DFTA was required to further trim its budget by 7% of City funding, or \$9.6 million as part of the Preliminary Budget Plan. To accomplish this, DFTA recommended reductions to administration and core services. During past PEGs, DFTA did everything possible to avoid reductions to our core services. However, in the January PEG, this proved impossible. Each of our core services received a majority of funding through City tax levy.

Therefore, when tax levy savings are required, it is very difficult to avoid cuts to these services. In DFTA's Preliminary Budget Plan, we recommended the following reductions; \$1.8 million in administrative spending; \$1.4 million in savings by scaling back a planned expansion to the home-delivered meals program; \$1.1 million to the case management programs; and \$5.3 million to Senior Center programs.

In order to help meet the reduction target outlined in the Preliminary Plan for the Senior Center budget, DFTA has made the decision to eliminate \$1 million in funding for the Congregate Weekend Meals program, which provided additional funding to seniors so that they may offer a take-home meal to their members on Friday, which can be consumed over the weekend. While this program is well utilized by some Senior Centers, overall, it is underutilized across the Senior Center network. In short, the elimination of the Congregate Weekend Meal program is regrettable but will create less of an impact on Senior Center consumers than reductions to congregate weekday meals and other core functions

of the Senior Centers. DFTA was also obligated to examine additional options for reductions in the Senior Center budget and has decided to implement a 5% cut across the board to all Senior Centers.

The Executive Plan. Upon further examination and consultation with our community partners, the Department made some central changes in regard to the planned reductions in the Executive budget. For one, due to the recent transition of case management contractors, it became clear that this program could not sustain a reduction during this critical juncture. For home-delivered meals, \$870,000 was restored in the Executive budget, which, when coupled with funding from the stimulus package, returns the home-delivered meals budget to more than previous levels.

As part of its Executive Budget plan, DFTA recommended eliminating the over \$7 million in baseline funds from its budget which had been historically allocated by the Borough Presidents to senior programs. While the Borough President's allocation supports valuable programs and services throughout the aging network, DFTA

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will no longer be able to allocate that baseline funding in this manner as such funding must be distributed through a competitive process according to the City's procurement rules.

Moving forward in Senior Center Services. Despite our challenges, DFTA is committed to moving forward in a planning process for the future of the City's network of Senior Centers. Though funding is limited at this time, I am confident that together with all the stakeholders, we can craft a Request for Proposals for congregate programs, which will serve as a vehicle to strengthen the network while supporting a diversity of programs.

DFTA is now in the process of developing a formalized consultative process with the goal of achieving consensus on the Senior Center RFP. For the first phase of the consultative process, I have asked the five primary umbrella organizations that represent senior services providers to meet with their membership to discuss their goals for a model Senior Center. Recommendations born out of this process will be submitted to the New York Academy

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of Medicine, NYAM, which will convene a Citywide task force of stakeholders to review all feedback and develop consensus around the concepts for the Senior Center RFP. I invite and encourage the members of the Committee to be a part of the larger task force.

Additionally, I have asked NYAM to administer focus groups with older adults to ensure that services are designed to meet the needs and preferences of New Yorkers, age 60 and older. I expect the concept paper for the RFP to be released in the fall of 2009 and the RFP to be released in early 2010.

There are a few concepts that I have already identified thorough the conversations with providers that I would like to explore during this process. For one, I think everyone would agree that nutrition is key to a successful Senior Center program but that there is room for flexibility in how meals are provided. Some Centers may prefer to have a traditional kitchen and cook their meals, while others would rather use catering or serve dinner as opposed to lunch. We also need to do some thinking around

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identifying the basic components of a Senior Center, so that we can have a base by which to measure Senior Centers outside simply counting meals.

I would also like to explore the possibility of utilizing outside contractors to provide specialty services such as technology, fitness, arts and culture or services to special populations. This could be accomplished through a separate RFP for services or by allowing each Center a finite amount of funding to purchase specialty services from an appropriate list of providers. This type of service provision would allow Centers to enrich their programming without having to become experts in fitness, technology and the like.

I welcome your input and an ongoing dialogue as we move forward, both in the budget process and in our planning process for the Senior Center RFP. Despite our challenges, I am confident that by working together we can preserve our mission to support older New Yorkers through quality programs and services. I am now available to take your questions.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
3 Commissioner. What's the status of all of the
4 Senior Centers and potential closings, if any, at
5 this point? And, I know we've had a long
6 discussion. I think it might have even predated
7 your tenure on the, I'll call it an aborted RFP,
8 'cause there were a lot of issues with the RFP,
9 where, you know, there was some mergers or
10 consolidations that were anticipated. And, there
11 was strong objection here at the Council. And, I
12 know the RFP was withdrawn. So, one, is there any
13 anticipation in future RFPs? And, if you could
14 just kind of give us an overall status update as
15 to the Senior Center situation in light of
16 potential budget cuts.

17 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: You know,
18 while the Senior Centers have received sizable
19 budget cuts, there's no anticipated closings at
20 this point in time. Part of what we're trying to
21 do is sort of figure out how we can help them and
22 support them through this transition.

23 As, the Chairwoman mentioned,
24 Chairwoman Arroyo mentioned, the biggest concern
25 we have are for the Senior Centers that used to

have home-delivered meals as part of their blended funding. Once those budget cuts were taken out, they have sustained a sizable cut in their budgets. So, that is our biggest concern. And, we're trying to work with them in ameliorating that situation. Some Centers had cuts that were of the magnitude of, you know, 30, 40%. And, those are the ones that are most concerned.

We're working with them. I do not anticipate any of them closing. They will have to rethink the scope of their services I believe.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. And, what's the status of any, you mentioned meals, homebound meals, what's the status of any frozen or potential frozen meals versus, you know, fresh meals, 'cause I know the Council's been back and forth on that issue, as well? Can you give us what you anticipate--

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI:
[Interposing] Frozen, yes--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: -- doing on that?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Frozen meals are voluntary. So, seniors that want frozen

meals can access frozen meals. In the Bronx, I believe there's 30% of seniors receiving frozen meals, while in Queens and Brooklyn, it doesn't even reach 10%. I think that the discussion that we've been engaging with has to do more, not so much with frozen and fresh, but on the quality of the meals, because having a smaller number of providers has decreased the variety of meals. And so, I think that that's still is of concern. And, we're trying to address it. You know, one of the I think unintended consequences of streamlining the number of providers is that the accessibility to a variety of culturally sensitive foods has also diminished. And so, we're working trying to fix that. And, you know, I hope that in the next year, we can bring back some of the varieties and sensitivities around food that the seniors were used to.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. So, it's safe to say that if any senior entitled to a home meal says they do not want a frozen meal, that it's strictly voluntary. No one will be forced to have a frozen meal.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

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2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

3 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: No, we can
4 do that.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. We've
6 been joined by some new members here. We have
7 Council Member Jimmy Vacca, former head of the
8 Senior Center Subcommittee, Commissioner Gale
9 Brewer from Manhattan, Council Member Diana Reyna
10 from Brooklyn and Queens, Council Member Julissa
11 Ferreras from Queens, Council Member Kendall
12 Stewart from Brooklyn, Council Member Mathieu
13 Eugene from Brooklyn, Council Member Lew Fidler
14 from Brooklyn and, of course, the two Co-Chairs.
15 I'm going to turn it back to Co-Chair Arroyo.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you,
17 Mr. Chairman. And, as usual, I always forget to
18 say thank you to the Committee staff for the work
19 that they do. We have Pakhi Sengupta, who is the
20 Finance Committee Analyst and Aging Committee
21 Analyst. I mean, we have Kris Sartori, who's our
22 legal counsel and I know that Shauneequa Owusu is
23 somewhere. Thank you guys for the work that you
24 do. You're wonderful.

25 Commissioner, thank you for your

2 testimony. I've had an opportunity to spend quite
3 a bit of time with you over the last ten days I
4 think. We met three times in one day, historical
5 in my tenure as Chair of this Committee. So, I
6 want to thank you for all your time and your
7 willingness to talk to us and to hear what our
8 concerns are. And, I think the term that has been
9 floated around is a breath of fresh air for all of
10 us. So, I want to thank you for that.

11 But now, the, you know, the
12 honeymoon is almost over. Since we're here having
13 a conversation about something that is of very,
14 very serious concern to me, as Chair of this
15 Committee. The transitioning of the services in
16 the Department for the Aging have created such
17 unrest and such concern in our City, not only
18 among the senior service providers and their
19 believerability to continue to keep pace with what
20 appears to be a maddening effort to transition
21 services in the agency, but, seniors in our City.
22 And, I am still trying to figure out why, given
23 the time of the year we find ourselves in, we are
24 going to upset this population. I'm still trying
25 to figure that out.

2 Of the transitions in the home-
3 delivered meal services, how many home-delivered
4 meal contracts did we have? How many do we have
5 now?

6 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: We went
7 from close 100 providers to 20-- contract, to 22,
8 23?

9 ANGELES PAI: Twenty contracts.

10 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: To 20
11 contracts, I'm sorry. So, yes, I mean, the one
12 that I remember the clearest is Queens, because it
13 was implemented the day I arrived. And, there we
14 went from 32 providers to two providers with some
15 subcontracts. And, that's-- I mean, three
16 providers with some subcontracts. And, what that
17 does, I think, is while it may improve some degree
18 of efficiencies, which, you know, we need to
19 really focus and see if it's worth it, I think
20 what it does do is that it make for very long
21 routes. So, seniors, some seniors are getting
22 meals very early. Some seniors are getting them
23 late. You know, and since it's a lunch meal, it's
24 problematic. And, also, the variety of the meals
25 is also problematic. So, I think those are of

2 great concern to me. And, I think those are the
3 kinds of things that I'm hoping to address in the
4 next year to provide more variety and shorter
5 routes and include more providers in the mix.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: So, in this
7 moment of brilliance that we had as a City, how
8 much money have we saved?

9 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I don't
10 believe we have saved any money.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay. I
12 was hoping you would say at least some so that we
13 can explain to our constituents why we're forcing
14 them to change their lives in the way that we
15 have. How many of the Centers that had a home-
16 delivered meal budget embedded in their overall
17 contract, were also Senior Center providers?

18 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah, it's
19 about 80.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Eighty
21 providers.

22 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. The
23 impact depends on the number of meals. So, some
24 Centers only delivered, you know, 20 meals. So,
25 the impact is not great. Some Centers delivered

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hundreds of meals. And, those are the ones that really suffer the greatest budget cuts.

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: And, the only reason I briefly reviewed a list of some Centers affected, assuming that we, in the Council, have the right list, a significant number of Brooklyn Centers affected followed by Queens and Manhattan, close by and the Bronx, because the Bronx has always had that different pilot program.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah, I think the most affected were Brooklyn and Queens. I think that Manhattan, what happened in Manhattan was that the contractors that received the meals contract proceeded to subcontract with many of the people who had been the traditional providers. So, in Manhattan, most people were not deeply affected. I think it's a borough that had the most stability. I think in Queens and Brooklyn is where you felt the most dramatic impact. And, I think probably Queens was the most dramatically impacted.

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: So, if you can give us by borough. We went from 30 providers in Queens to three.

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2 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: To three,
3 yes.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: In
5 Manhattan, what was the change? And, what was the
6 change in Brooklyn? Can you identify yourself for
7 the record?

8 ANGELES PAI: Yes. Angel Pai,
9 Deputy Commissioner for Planning and Fiscal. I'll
10 see if we have that information. If we don't, we
11 can get it--

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay.

13 ANGELES PAI: -- for you after the
14 hearing.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you.
16 Commissioner, you mentioned in your testimony that
17 the impact, fiscal impact, on Senior Center
18 providers who are losing or lost their home-
19 delivered meal contracts, what's the range of the
20 budget impact--

21 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Anywhere--

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: -- in terms
23 of, you know, the least, the most?

24 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Right.
25 Anywhere from 2% to 48%.

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2 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay. And,
3 the total of that change is what, when we look at
4 those percentages?

5 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: You mean
6 the total amount of money that--

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Um, hm.

8 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: -- came out
9 of the budget? It was actually about \$12 million.
10 Yes, it's about \$12 million that came out.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay. So,
12 we have 80 Centers affected. How are we going to
13 keep these Centers open--

14 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Well, I
15 think--

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: -- if
17 they're losing 46%? I've heard a number as high
18 as 76% of their budget.

19 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I don't
20 think anyone-- there was some providers, and I
21 think it's only two or three, that had the ratio
22 of home-delivered meals and congregate meals was
23 much higher for home-delivered meals than
24 congregate meals. And, they lost a much larger
25 portion of their budget. But, I think when we

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first looked at how to do the allocations, we were just taking the cost center out. And, that would have been really, really difficult for many. So, we went back and just took out of the cost center the things that had been traditionally charged 100% to home-delivered meals. So, if a contractor had a cook that was 75% charged to home-delivered meals, we left the cook intact. We just took the 100%. And, that's how it could have been 70-some percent, and we reduced the maximum to 48%. And, I think it was just in an attempt to see if we could stabilize them in some way, shape or form.

What I'm trying to do, and I'm working closely with different providers, is try to see if we can do further subcontracting of the meals so that the Centers that are the most impacted can get a subcontract and therefore, ameliorate the budget hit that they're getting-- they're taking. We've made some good progress. I'm hoping that that would be done in the next few weeks.

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: I would imagine you will not be able to do that with all. How much funding do we need to provide for DFTA to

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stabilize the Senior Center providers affected by this home-delivered meal loss of funding?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: We would need about \$8 million to provide stability to those Centers and bring them to a level that we all agree would be the logical operating level that they should be at.

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: That's in addition to the \$7.1 million PEG?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: That is correct. That is correct. I think that that the only thing I can add is that all these things were done in tandem expecting that when the RFP for Senior Centers came out, everything would sort of be-- would reach a balance. When the RFP was withdrawn, the, you know, the hole was there and there was nothing to take its place. And, I think that that, if you looked at the numbers, the amount of money that was placed in that RFP, it was greater than the amount of money that is now in the Senior Centers' budget.

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO:
Commissioner, I have some more questions. But, I'm going to defer to my Co-Chair and my

colleagues, 'cause I know that this is an area of
real serious concern for them. Council Member.

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

Thank you, Madam Chair. And, good afternoon,
Commissioner. You know, I want to just I guess
emphasize about the fact that, you know, this
major switch with regards to the home-delivered
meals and the fact that has produced absolutely no
savings is pretty, you know, I think people really
should be listening to this. This is really
serious I guess. And, obviously, as we continue
down this road of a collaborative relationship,
you know, maybe one of the thoughts is to take the
elements that were very successful in the past and
maybe bring them back to a certain extent. And, I
hope that there's, you know, an opening towards
that, because the number of contracts that we had
going down to as few as they are, you know, you've
indicated, and we've seen, a lot of us have been
getting the calls in our district offices about
the fact the meals are coming in late, you know,
about the fact that there is no diversity in terms
of the food and what is being provided. So, those
are our concerns that need to be addressed.

2 I do welcome, you know, your
3 approach. I know we've talked about it with
4 trying to bring some of this money back into the
5 network and trying to get some of those
6 contractors to kind of look at building
7 relationships with the very Senior Centers that
8 had these contracts before. I think that that's a
9 really good approach. And, obviously, your
10 approach with regards to the RFP and how
11 collaborative, you know, you're making that
12 process, I think is very welcome. So, we thank
13 you for that.

14 And, clearly, the issue, going back
15 to the home-delivered meals and how it's impacting
16 Senior Centers potentially, now, you know, going
17 down the road that you've indicated, how many
18 Senior Centers do we see projected to close if
19 this is implemented?

20 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I don't
21 expect any Senior Center to close at this time. I
22 think that that's why we're working with those
23 that have been the most impacted to see what we
24 need to do to help them--

25 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

2 [Interposing] Stabilize them.

3 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: -- overcome
4 this. And, especially, 'cause some of the most
5 impacted ones are fairly large Senior Centers that
6 were very vital and very important to the
7 community. You know, the smaller ones are not as
8 impacted. The larger ones, that really had
9 hundreds of meals, that were the most impacted.
10 And, we're working with them to see how we can
11 help them, you know, sort of survive until there
12 is another RFP.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Now,
14 is any of the stimulus money that is projected to
15 come to your agency going to be applied towards
16 any of these issues or to this issue, in
17 particular, the home-delivered meals issue?

18 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Well, you
19 know, the problem we had is that we could use the
20 stimulus money towards this or we could use it
21 toward ameliorating the January PEG. So, it's,
22 you know, in either case, it's a cut to the
23 Center. So, that's the kind of dilemma that we
24 were faced, 'cause we had to do another cut to the
25 Senior Centers plus this sort of like, I would

2 say, structural problem that we're facing in terms
3 of the actual budget cut that they suffered.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Well
5 then, you say you were going to apply the stimulus
6 money towards the January PEGs.

7 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Right. I
8 mean, the stimulus money that we had received was
9 we got about \$3 million for congregate meals and a
10 million dollars for home-delivered meals. Two
11 million dollars for congregate meals and a million
12 dollar for home-delivered meals. We're basically
13 using it to plug whatever holes we had in the
14 budget. Some of it makes PEGs better. Some of it
15 makes some budget cuts better. But, it's actually,
16 in essence, going to ameliorate whatever cuts were
17 coming.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So,
19 were those figures factored in your testimony--

20 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: --
22 how that was offset and in fact what we are seeing
23 projected to be cuts in the Executive Budget if
24 you're applying the stimulus money?

25 ANGELES PAI: The figures in the

2 testimony are baseline figures. So, the stimulus
3 money was not counted.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

5 Okay.

6 ANGELES PAI: But, in the text
7 portion, when we were talking about the stimulus
8 funds against the home-delivered meal budget, the
9 stimulus money helps us bring us to more than what
10 we were at, essentially.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

12 Okay.

13 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: What we
14 tried to do, and the reason for it was because, as
15 the Chair pointed out, both case management and
16 home-delivered meals were in the middle of big
17 transitions and not stable. So, we tried not to
18 cut them at all so that they could sort of
19 stabilize themselves. And, actually, that's where
20 a lot of the money came, you know, went to. And
21 then, we were faced in the Senior Centers not only
22 with the cuts through the PEGs, but the problem
23 that we had by separating home-delivered meals and
24 the congregate meals.

25 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: My

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last question and then, I know colleagues have questions. And, I hear what you're saying with regards to trying to really help those Centers that would most-- were seriously going to be impacted with this change. But, of the 80 Senior Center contracts that you've indicated that have this blended, you know, formula, how many are projected to not have any HDM funds beginning in the next fiscal year? Or, you don't foresee that?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: No, we have about 285 fully functioning Senior Centers. Of those, 80 are the ones that are faced with this problem in the worst magnitude.

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

Right.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: The rest are either they did not have home-delivered meals or, received a contract or subcontract if they had had home-delivered meals and they were withdrawn. So, they should be in reasonable shape. Their budget cuts are not any more than, you know, some of the PEGs that we had given them. It's these 80 Centers--

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

2 Right.

3 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: -- that are
4 getting the double whammy, if you will.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:
6 Right. But, I guess the question is of those 80--

7 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Oh.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: --
9 are there any that are projected to not zero?

10 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: About half?

11 ANGELES PAI: Yes.

12 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

14 About?

15 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: About half
16 of them received either a contract or subcontract.

17 ANGELES PAI: Yes.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So,
19 40.

20 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah,
21 there's 40 that are really the most impacted of
22 them all.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:
24 Eight million dollars that you talked about would
25 help those 40?

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2 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. Well,
3 actually, it would help all 80, but it would help
4 those 40 the most.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: But,
6 you're still saying that, you know, with regards
7 to those 40, that you are really trying to help
8 and support, as of July 1st, you don't foresee any
9 of them closing.

10 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: To the best
11 of my knowledge, in all the conversations that I
12 have had with them, nobody has said that they were
13 closing.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:
15 Okay. I'll leave it there, Madam Chair. I know
16 we have--

17 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI:
18 [Interposing] I mean, I would--

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:
20 Sure.

21 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: If I hear
22 anything, I will tell you immediately. But, I
23 have not heard from any of them that they were
24 planning to close.

25 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

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Well, maybe we'll hear some information in the public testimony. We'll see. But, all right. So, thank you very much. I will move on to our colleagues. First Council Member to ask questions is Fidler, followed by Stewart and then, Brewer.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Thank you, Madam Chair and, good afternoon, Commissioner. It's a pleasure to see you here having worked with you in a couple of other capacities. I hope that this is as productive as those were. So, welcome.

I do want to follow up on this last line of questioning. I would love to see a list of all the Centers, you know, the DFTA-funded Centers in the City, their current funding; what you expect them to be, cobbling together all their sources other than Council discretionary money, so that we can see what Centers are impacted and what their percentage cut would be. It's hard for me to picture a Center that's taking a 50% cut being able to sustain itself in anything like its present form. And, while they may have not yet indicated to you that they're going to close, I would suspect that those Centers have their fingers crossed and they're waiting for the

Council to come over the hill, like the Calvary,
to save the day.

So, I think it's essential that you
share that information with us so we know. And
then, if we restore money that we can look at, if
we're not able to restore every penny of it, which
would be nice, that at least we look at where the
impact is being felt most severely. So, can you
share that data with us?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Sure. We
will send that list, as soon as we can compile it,
to the staff, I believe. Would that be
productive?

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: That would
be very productive. Thank you. And, I want to
take up one other topic that you mentioned in your
testimony, but you haven't been asked about yet.
And, that's the Borough President discretionary
funds. And, I see in your testimony that the
Executive Plan eliminates the \$7 million that the
Borough Presidents had allocated. Now, you didn't
shift that someplace else, right? You just
eliminated it.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. And,

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let me try to explain, because it's sort of-- it's a catch 22 situation. I value the Borough Presidents' money tremendously. They funded, you know, they're called discretionary monies, but they're an integral part of my budget and they fund some really important programs. They were funds that the Borough Presidents allocated to programs in their boroughs according to their priorities. Those funds had been baselined in my budget. And, I was told, by the procurement system, basically, the Law Department, the procurement system and the Comptroller that I could not allocate those funds discretionary any more than I could allocate the rest of my baseline funds that I had to RFP it like everything else. By doing that, I would then-- it would lose its discretionary nature for the Borough Presidents. They could no longer choose whom they would be funding, something that's really important to them.

So, when I was faced with another PEG at the Executive Budget, I took the cut there and my hope is that if those funds were to be restored, they be restored in some way, shape or

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form so that the Borough Presidents can have that discretion.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Well, I'm just kind of curious whether something's happened in the last year because the Borough Presidents have given this money out in a discretionary fashion for as long I've been on the Council. Your predecessor sat here probably six years ago and indicated the exact same thing; that the procurement people told them that it was against the law and they couldn't do it. And then, lo and behold, they had an epiphany and decided that it could be done. And so, it's been done for the last seven years in seven budgets that we've all been sitting here. So, I just want to know has something changed.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I am operating with the information that I was given through a number of conversations with members of the Law Department, the procurement system and my own legal staff.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: But, they haven't indicated that there was a new case, a change in the law because, you know, if they're

2 just changing their position, it would mean that
3 we've been functioning illegally in this area for
4 decades.

5 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I don't
6 know the answer to that, Councilman. I understand
7 what you're saying.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I'm not
9 trying to play gotcha with you. But--

10 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah, no,
11 no, no. I--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: -- you
13 know, your predecessor--

14 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: --
15 understand.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: -- sat here
17 and said the exact same thing I think six years
18 ago. And--

19 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI:
20 [Interposing] Yeah, I understand what you're
21 saying. And, I honestly have absolutely no
22 quarrel with the fact that that Borough Presidents
23 have discretionary money. And, nothing would give
24 me greater joy than to be able to work legally
25 with them and fund the things that they have

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priorities for. I was faced with that limitation that I was told that I couldn't.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Were you told in writing that you couldn't?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: No, I was told verbally.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Well, could you-- well, I don't even know if I want them to reduce it to writing. But, I was going to say if they should do that, I would appreciate it if you would share that with use, as well, because, quite frankly, you know, I hesitate to admit this in public, but I'm an attorney. And, you know, I know that sometimes you come to a legal opinion that you get asked a question, you could answer it either way and then, you write something to justify the position that you've taken. And, since the Law Department has flexed on this issue twice before, I suggest that it's time for them to flex again.

And, I would just, you know, a final comment, just note that you did indicate that you think that the Borough Presidents have allocated this money in a very significant and for

very important, purposes in the last year or two,
at least as far back as you've looked. I don't
have, you know, some of my best friends are
Borough Presidents. So, I think they do a very
good job of this. And, I would love to see this
money restored. And, I would love to see their
discretion restored because I certainly believe
that they have a sense of where the money can be
best spent. And, obviously, you feel they've done
a good job of doing that.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I agree
with you. And, I'd be happy to work with you in
any way to help make that happen.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Thank you
very much, Commissioner.

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Council
Member Stewart.

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Thank you.
Commissioner, I have a personal problem in my
district. And, this is something that's been
going on for two years now. I'm trying to see if
we can get some resolution. I'm talking about
Hazel Brooks.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: We're
3 talking about a landlord who denies electricity so
4 there's no fans, no air condition, very dim
5 lights, if there is. And, one cannot see to
6 properly eat their food, much less to even read in
7 the Senior Center. You know, complaints of
8 lockout that came to my office several times.
9 And, I reach out to your office, maybe someone was
10 there before you that knows about this case. What
11 I'm saying basically is that I am frustrated,
12 cannot get a positive resolution to this case.

13 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI:

14 [Interposing] Yes, I've been personally--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: And so, I
16 hope--

17 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: --
18 involved.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: -- you
20 will, at least take this case specific and then,
21 pay some specific attention to it because it's up
22 to Friday, the landlord told me that they closing
23 the doors. Nobody can come in there today. And,
24 to me, that is frustrating because when all the
25 residents they are calling you, 100 and something

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residents are calling your office to complain or try to get some resolution and you can't get anything from DFTA, it's frustrating.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Well, it's a complex problem. And, I'm personally involved with it. It's a private landlord, who, indeed, as you said, is harassing the seniors, the tenants of the Senior Center. We've been trying to work with the landlord. We've tried to be as stern as we could with the landlord. The problem that they're facing now is that they have a number of Code violations with the Fire Department. They don't have a second means of egress. And, they have to rectify that. We are planning, at this point in time, to move the Senior Center out in the next ten days to a temporary facility and then, hopefully, to a permanent facility.

I think the relationship with this landlord is untenable. I don't know that she will change. And, I don't have any ways of making her change. I'm concerned, I'm concerned about the issue around the second means of egress because if, God forbid, there's a fire, the seniors could be in jeopardy. I am working with my staff and

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we're all working really hard to try to relocate the Senior Center in the next ten days. I have been personally involved in this problem for the last week. I've had my own personal staff, as well as the staff of the Senior Centers. I have e-mails on Friday and Saturday about it. And, as far as I know, we have an agreement from the Center Director that they will find-- I mean, they've identified a number of spaces and they will relocate in the next ten days. And, I will stay with it, believe me.

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: I hope so, because it's two years I've been working, giving them sites that they should look at to relocate the Center. And, apparently, they will meet with the folks for the new sites and then, leave it at that, because when I speak to the new places, they said well, they spoke to me, but they didn't come back.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: No, they've run out of options. They know they have to relocate in ten days.

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: All right.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: And, that's

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the deadline.

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Thank you very much.

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Council Member Brewer.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. All the seniors in the Sixth Council district, all the people in the Sixth Council district, all the families in the Sixth Council district are delighted that you're Commissioner.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: One of the questions I have is just the cost per meal, 'cause has that changed? And, I think I should probably know that. But, my wonderful vendors who are trying to provide meals are concerned because it's a very low per meal cost. And, they're trying to meet it and, of course, if you have ethnically sensitive foods, sometimes it can cost more. How are we dealing with these issues?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: There is one price that we've allocated per meal to every contract and that's \$7 per meal. There's some people who spend much less and there's some people

who spend much more. And, I think we are trying to work with the different providers to see what's the variance. It's not necessarily the ethnic piece or the kosher piece. Some kosher meals are less expensive than that. Some of it has to do more with transportation than the meal preparation. And, I think that's why my concern about the longer routes is the issue. I think that the longer the routes get, the more expensive they get. So, in Manhattan, it's simpler because you can do a lot of meals just by walking. In Queens and Staten Island and the Bronx and Brooklyn, you can't. So, the length of the route complicates things very, very much.

And, I think that that's the piece, that transportation piece, is the most expensive thing. And, it's very susceptible to the fluctuation of gas prices and insurance and, you know, driver's salaries. So, the smaller the routes, I think the more likely that we can control the price. But, we're looking at it very actively because it's of great concern.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.
Second issue, where does the nutritionist fit in?

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Is it per contract? Is it per Center? How does one ensure with this limited budget that there's a nutritionist part of this process for the meals?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah, DFTA has a group of nutritionists that have not been as active in the role as I would have liked them to be. They now have become much more active. There's about ten nutritionists and a senior nutritionist. I brought in people to do trainings with them. There's some very good providers, actually, out of United Way, because they do all the FEMA food contracts for the Federal government. And, they're working with them and trying to train them and get them more updated in all their knowledge and we send them out for training, as well. So, hopefully, they'll become a much more integral part of what we do.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. And then, in terms of just training, I know we have many providers who work with visually challenged or other kinds of individuals who have special needs. How does their, obviously, we're thinking about cost issues here, but, the case management for those who are training some who are visually

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challenged or other kinds of challenges work into the budget? All we're trying to do is, you're trying to do, is to keep people in their homes and not end up in assisted living, nursing home, etcetera.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah, I think that that's, you know, providers like Visions or the Lighthouse would be instrumental in helping both, you know, mostly case management agencies deal with issues around the visually impaired. I think also in Senior Centers because many times seniors do not realize how impaired they are in terms of their vision.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Hearing, vision, the list is endless.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah, so, I, you know, I think that that contractors, such as the Lighthouse and Visions, have to play bigger role and provide services themselves, but, much more of a technical assistance role throughout the system. I think that that's true of Wise and - - Green in terms of exercise. And, you know, there's a richness in the system. But, they only are limited to one Center. And, I think we have

to sort of help them or make them providers of technical assistance throughout the system. I think that's a much better role for them than to run one program.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: So, that's when you're thinking about working with Dr. Ruth Finkelstein, who is my hero--

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: -- to think of ways that you can do all of this on the technology front, the hearing front, the vision front--

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: -- and so on.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. And, that's why I thought that NYAM would be a very good place to sort of have the bringing together discussions of what the Senior Center should be, 'cause they are an honest broker. They've done a lot of work on this kind of paradigm. And, I think we will end up with a model that we all not only can live with, but embrace and really get working on.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And,
3 obviously, every year the NORCs are baselined to a
4 certain extent. We put in a million dollars,
5 hopefully in the City Council for those that
6 didn't make a certain threshold. Is there any way
7 of baselining that million dollars at DFTA?

8 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: You know,
9 baselining is a two-edge sword. If you baseline
10 it, then I have to RFP it. And, I don't know who
11 else is out there waiting. And, it may
12 destabilize the present system. So, I get a
13 little leery of that.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

15 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I think we
16 should look at it as a partnership. I met with
17 the NORC Coalition today.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know.

19 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: And, they
20 are, you know, they're a vital part of DFTA and
21 very much, you know, a great part of what the
22 future should look like. I mean, we're all going
23 to be living in NORCs--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:
25 [Interposing] They told me everything, yeah.

2 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Oh, there
3 you go. But, you know, I think, I mean to me,
4 it's a service that really, really, it should
5 become a much more important part of what we do.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Is there
7 any federal funding for NORCs? Or, is it not
8 something--

9 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI:
10 [Interposing] My understanding is that President
11 Obama put \$5 million in his budget for NORCs.
12 And, it's modeled on the New York City model. So,
13 it should stand to reason we should have a good
14 chance of getting that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Anita must
16 have gotten to him.

17 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

19 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: It was
20 Anita. It was Anita.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Of course.
22 Good for her. Okay. In terms of the SCREE
23 [phonetic], I know that eventually it moves to
24 Finance. Can you give us an update there?

25 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. I

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1 think we are about to finally get that done. What
2 the agreement we have arrived at, and I am meeting
3 with the Department of Labor Relations, the
4 biggest problem was that if we did a functional
5 transfer, the entire staffing of SCREE, as it
6 presently is in DFTA, had to move to the
7 Department of Finance. Because Finance was going
8 to do the business differently, they were going to
9 computerize it and do it differently, they didn't
10 have a legitimate role for those 30 staff. So,
11 their jobs were very much in jeopardy. And so, we
12 could never get off the impasse.

14 So, what I've done is I have-- we
15 are trying to redeploy all of those staff into
16 vacancies at DFTA so that they don't have to be
17 displaced. And, we will make a functional-- the
18 function will transfer to Finance for them to do
19 the function, 'cause that's in the best interests
20 of the seniors 'cause they could do it much
21 quicker, less painful because they don't have to
22 submit so much verification. And, it's much more
23 automated. But, I will keep the staff and try to
24 redeploy them to vacancies in DFTA so that we can
25 just get it done.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. And,
3 I suppose, as time goes on, we will try to
4 increase the ceiling at the State level, because I
5 think it goes up to 29. But, still, that's just
6 not enough for people who are trying to survive in
7 this economy.

8 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Well, I
9 agree. And, also, in New York City with life
10 being very expensive, it's a low threshold.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you,
13 Council Member Brewer. Council Member Gerson.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: Thank you
15 very much, Madam Chair. Commissioner, it was a
16 pleasure meeting you a little while ago. If my
17 colleague and friend, Council Member Brewer,
18 speaks wonders of you, it must all be true. And,
19 I look forward to following up on the range of
20 issues we had discussed.

21 So, I just want to, though for now,
22 pursue one critical issue, additionally. That is
23 the issue of homebound seniors and, in particular,
24 homebound seniors who don't have the benefit of
25 living in a NORC environment. And, specifically,

2 and generally, specifically, your Department has
3 for a long while funded a wonderful program, I'm
4 sure Deputy Commissioner Resnick [phonetic] is
5 familiar with this, the Village Visiting
6 Neighbors. You know where I'm going. And, you
7 know, it's not limited to the Village, as you
8 know. And, there is a proposed significant
9 cutback or, last year, they sustained, if you
10 will, a significant cutback that nearly crippled
11 their vital service. And, I'm wondering, even in
12 these difficult times, it's still a relatively
13 small part of the overall budget, certainly
14 overall City budget, and it provides literally a
15 lifeline to the individuals it serves. Is there
16 anything we can do together to restore this
17 program so it could, I think last year, it was
18 just able to cobble together a reduced level of
19 service. It's not going, without our collective
20 support, you may know better than me, it's not
21 going to be able to survive. Can we do something
22 this year?

23 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: You know,
24 in the November PEG--

25 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO:

Commissioner, if I may. Council Member Gerson was not here when I said that my expectation is that DFTA gets a pass this year. It doesn't have to contribute to the overall City cuts. So, you can help us make sure that our colleagues get that message loud and clear.

COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: Seeing my Chair is always leading the charge and ahead of the game and that's why we're fortunate, as a City, to have our Chair, as the Chair. But so, I appreciate that. I certainly will work with our Chair and with you on that. I want to make sure, then, this is not caught up in a catch 22 'cause, in this case, we're talking about a little bit more than a pass. We're talking about restoring something that had been cut.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: The whole cut came in the November PEG.

COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: Right.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: And, in that PEG, the attempt was not to cut the core services, as they were defined as case management, home-delivered meals and Senior Centers. And, we lost a number of programs that may not have been

1
2 labeled as core, but that were crucial nonetheless
3 for a number of seniors, Visiting, you know, the
4 Visiting Friends is one of them. We lost our
5 adult day care programs. And, we also lost our
6 elder abuse programs. All of which are really
7 important and crucial to, you know, to any number
8 of seniors. And, I think at a time of, you know,
9 when the economy is the way it is, abuse, elder
10 abuse unfortunately tends to increase. And, the
11 same thing with people needing, you know,
12 reassurance and visiting and monitoring, if you
13 will, from other people. So, those are programs
14 that are very near and dear to my heart and,
15 painful that we had to give them up.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: I can't
17 tell you how much I, and more importantly, the
18 seniors, appreciate your vision. And, I will look
19 forward to working with you and our Chair in
20 fulfilling that. I mean, what, between now and
21 the time we adopt the budget, you know, you have
22 any proposals or thoughts as to where we can, you
23 know, find the funding to reverse that November
24 PEG cut?

25 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I think,

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Chairwoman Arroyo and Mark-Viverito are working really strongly and trying to be as supportive as possible. And, whatever information they want or need, definitely my agency's there to supply.

COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: Okay. We will certainly continue to follow up and, of course, this is a segue to the broader discussion, which we began. But, we will continue in that as the need for affordable senior housing within assisted living component because a disproportionate number of the homebound seniors are people who live in walk-ups, but can no longer walk up and down. And, we need to work together with HPD and with all of us to have an interagency approach to that problem. And, I'll look forward to working with you on that.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

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

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you. I forgot to say, in addition to a pass, we work on restoring. And, along those lines, I want to focus a little bit on-- and I want to acknowledge we've been joined by Council Member Koppell from

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the Bronx. Between the November, January and the Preliminary Budget or the Exec, we're looking at \$20 million in budget reduction. In November, January, a lot of supportive services that are not defined as core services, I'm still trying to find the person who defines core, because of the services lost in November and January, elder abuse that the Council was able to get restored, but we have the intergenerational programming, the adult daycare programming and I believe we can agree that keeping a senior at home longer is cheaper long term than institutional care. And, adult daycare programs certainly provide for that.

So, we're looking at a restoration of \$20 million to DFTA. In addition to the eight million that we would need-- help me, if I'm wrong with the numbers, help me. We need eight million to transition Senior Centers impacted by the home-delivered meal contracts.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Right.

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: And, 20 million to restore November, January PEGs and the PEGs identified in the Exec.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. The

total would be [pause] yes. It's \$28 million,
yes.

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Twenty-
eight million, okay. So, that we're all working
with the same number, 'cause I don't want to make
a mistake when having the collaborative
discussions we have here in the Council and with
anyone who will listen about DFTA getting a pass
and making sure that we're able to restore.

I want you to give me a sense of,
in this last year, we went through the case
management RFP implementation or the contract
implementation. There were a lot of issues raised
by advocates and providers; in particular, the
underestimation of the cases that were
transitioned from one provider to the other. Can
you tell us where we're at with the issues that
may still be out there? What are the things we
need to be concerned about when we went from 32
contracts to 23?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. I
think the issue continues to be the integrity of
the database. Part of the issue was that we not
only had the cases that were reported by the

1
2 outgoing providers to the new providers, but there
3 were cases that somehow had been unaccounted for
4 in the system. Now, our data system is very
5 antiquated. It's not web-based. It's not real
6 time. So, we're always, you know, weeks delayed
7 in terms of the integrity of the information.
8 We're working trying to (a) try to see if we can
9 find a system that can give us what we need in
10 short order; but also trying to clean up the
11 present data system. I think we're much closer to
12 that. I think the biggest glitch we have right
13 now is that when the decision was made that case
14 management would be the authorizing or that the
15 point of entry for the home-delivered meals, we've
16 somehow created a glut, if you will, a gridlock.
17 And, I think we need to separate the eligibility,
18 just the eligibility piece, to home-delivered
19 meals from actually the case management intensive
20 work with the seniors. We're working with the
21 providers to figure out how to separate both
22 things and streamline it so that people who need
23 meals can get them right way.

24 Right now, we have an emergency
25 system in place so people that need meals should

be getting meals immediately. But then, they're put aside for further evaluation. And, that's taking a long time. And, I think that that we need to change the way we're doing that.

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: So, do you anticipate going back to Senior Centers to be helpful in that process?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. I think that we have to sort of figure out if Centers can be helpful to us in that process. And, I also think that, you know, there is some case management going on in Centers that we have to take into account and validate and, you know, make sure that it's happening well. We also need to talk and find out whether there's another way of authorizing meals that can be done by different providers.

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay. And, one more question and then, I'll turn it over to my Co-Chair. In all of the modernization efforts, one of the key components or constituencies, not really approached on how we can best provide senior services are seniors themselves. So, how will you do this in the conversation of making

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sure that people are, or the ones receiving the services, are weighing in and their opinion, or views, on how we can do this better taken into account?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I'm hoping to have a series of focus groups by borough and, hopefully, in many, many Centers about how seniors view the services. I agree with you. I think that they have not been consulted the way they should have been. And, you know, and I think that being that there's so many age groups within the seniors and there's so many different cultural groups among the seniors, as well, that we need to sort of figure out what is it that they really expect of the Center and how can we be helpful. I mean, I think there's some things that we all sort of think it's the way that the Centers have to go. That may or may not necessarily be what seniors think. And, I think it's important, if they're going to vote with their feet and come or not come, it's important to meet their needs and meet their expectations, as well.

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you, Commissioner. Council Member.

2 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Yes,
3 thank you, Madam Chair. So, just following up on
4 that kind of consultative process that you're
5 establishing moving forward, are you foreseeing
6 using that same consultative process as a way of
7 informing people of the impact of these cuts and
8 potentially what's at stake? I mean, 'cause I
9 think the other thing is, you know, we have our
10 hearings here, sometimes in terms of getting the
11 service providers to really understand or people
12 on the ground to really understand the impact
13 potentially. Are you establishing mechanisms to
14 really be more proactive with organizations as to
15 what the budget cuts are going to mean when it
16 comes to services, once it's implemented?

17 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI:

18 Interesting. We had been approaching them one at
19 a time. But, maybe we should-- I mean, we've been
20 working with the Council and Senior Centers and
21 UNH and the different federations. But, you know,
22 it may be that I do need to reach out to the
23 providers, not just individually, but as a group
24 to sort of think through how we're going to face
25 this whole thing going forward.

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2 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

3 Okay.

4 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Thank you.

5 Thank you for suggesting that.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

7 Sure, no problem. I wanted to just talk a little

8 bit about the Council Initiative Funding. And,

9 the fiscal year 2009 budget included about \$24

10 million in initiatives that we funded. So, first

11 question is with regards to all of those

12 contracts, has all that funding already been

13 dispersed to providers? Have all those contracts

14 been processed? Is that money pretty much out the

15 door?

16 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I mean, as

17 you know, it has been a very slow process--

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Yes.

19 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: -- this

20 year. We are having a really-- I'm trying to

21 figure how many are pending. [Pause] Okay.

22 According to my staff, 92% of all discretionary

23 allocations have cleared by Council and oversight

24 agencies and approximately 5% are waiting for

25 paper back from providers. So, the bulk of it has

2 gone out.

3 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

4 Okay.

5 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: But, you
6 know, they've gone out in the last month or two.
7 So, it's, you know, it came very late in the
8 process, which did cause cash flow problems for
9 many providers.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

11 Right.

12 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: And,
13 hopefully, this will not be repeated again,
14 because it was really problematic.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Now,
16 do you believe that this 24 million in Council
17 Initiatives is critical to the, you know,
18 providing of core services by the agency?

19 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Absolutely.
20 I mean, I think, you know, more than most agencies
21 that I'm familiar with, DFTA is totally dependent
22 on the Council money, Borough President monies and
23 any other kinds of money because our funding has
24 been eroded through the years. So, I think that
25 that any one of those pots of money not being

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there would cause tremendous hardship on the providers.

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So then, moving forward in 2010, 'cause we do go through this budget dance every year, obviously that money has not been baselined. And so, how do you see the impact? How do you foresee the impact of that money on not being there on providing core services?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: It'd be a tremendous problem. I mean, again, depends on how much and for whom. But, there's Centers, for example, that are 100% funded by the City Council or the Borough President that have no DFTA money whatsoever and are very important in those communities. So, and there's Centers that there are entire parts of their service that are provided by the Council money.

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Now, so, that goes back a little bit to what Fidler was talking about earlier when we were talking about the Borough President allocation. Would you be able to provide us with an analysis of those Centers or those programs that are completely

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reliant on those two sources of funding and that if we don't do something, basically, we're going to see a serious impact in those areas?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. I mean, I-- yes, we will provide the ones that are 100% funded by sources other than DFTA.

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Yes.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I mean, either City Council or Borough President. I could also try-- I don't know that it'd be 100%, but I can try to give you a sense of what the proportion of funding is in the programs between DFTA, Borough--

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

[Interposing] That'd be great.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: -- President and City Council.

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

That'd be very helpful. Now, with regards to the way that we, the Council Initiative process and the way we've allocate, would you make any recommendations as to how we could do it differently? Or, do you think that...

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: You know,

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I'm hoping that going forward we can keep a real strong partnership. And, when you're thinking of funding certain things, we can be helpful to you and give you the information that will help you make those decisions. I think ultimately you and your staff probably know your district better than we can hope to because we have a more macro view. But, this information we can give you that may be about to help you going forward. I think a lot of it has been historical funding that has become an intrinsic part of that budget for the, you know, for any number of years. So, I'd be delighted to sit down, you know, with your staff and figure out what information they need to make it more productive.

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

Well, let me just say this that I think, in you recognizing that we know our districts well and that we can really identify critical aspects for program services, is something that hasn't been acknowledged in the past. And, I think it's very welcome. I think our ongoing battle a lot of times, not only with DFTA, but with any, you know, City agency and the Administration is that they

2 need to be much more closely aligned in
3 discussions with us because we do, you know, have
4 that kind of first feel in our communities because
5 of the relationships that we've established with
6 our agencies and providers. And, we really do
7 know what is needed. So, I think that that
8 acknowledgement is great. And, a follow-up
9 question?

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: A follow-up
11 question because I, for me as Chair and I know
12 that Council Member Mark-Viverito shares this, we
13 have to make sure that what dollars we have we're
14 using in the most efficient and appropriate way
15 possible. So, one of the conversations that I
16 would like to have over the next couple of days,
17 we have \$24 million that's earmarked for space and
18 space costs, additional food, I think it's \$0.35
19 per meal, transportation and NORCs and a few
20 others. Are we using our dollars in the best way
21 possible?

22 And, that's a conversation,
23 because, as we enter the real nitty-gritty of the
24 budget discussion, how can these \$24 million play
25 a part in right sizing or right-- helping DFTA

address the holes that we have seen come out of the November, January and the Executive Budget PEGs? So, with that, I'm saying, we're open to discussion in a real partnership, collaborative way to make sure that senior services across the City are preserved. So, I just want to put that out there.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah. We will try to do an analysis for you that tells you the more impacted seniors by district. And then, how your money plays into that so that you have a sense of if there's anything you want to continue or change or whatever it is that you think you'll want to do.

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Commissioner, in the Preliminary Budget hearings, we brought up the issue of Peter's Place.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: And, obviously, we all know, you know, it's known that as of June, it's closing. And, we have brought up the issue of the discussions between DFTA and DHS on that issue. So, where are those conversations at? You know, what impact do you see this closure

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having on Senior Centers or on other services that are provided by DFTA? What's the conversations been? Where are you at with that?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Well, two things. I went to Peter's Place with Commissioner Hess just to reach out to the population. I think it's a particularly difficult population that I don't think would necessarily fit in seamlessly into our Senior Centers. I think some of them may go to the Coffee House and other drop-in centers that are run from the DFTA by DFTA contractors. But, you know, we offered many of these seniors possible places to be. Many of them have been placed multiply in home, you know, in apartment situations and they have wandered out again because the structure was too much for them.

I've had two conversations with the Partnership of the Homeless around trying to look at prevention for homelessness. I think many of these seniors once they're homeless, it's very difficult for them to stay in one place. I think that that the issue is to try to figure out, you know, who are the seniors that we can try to stabilize in their home so that they don't end up

homeless.

So, I'm interested in pursuing a conversation with them around prevention of homelessness among seniors. Many of them get hospitalized and by the time they come out, their apartment is gone and they begin a series of placements that are not constructive. And, you know, their mental state, their mental health state deteriorates and then, it just becomes sort of a downward spiral for them.

Of the people that were there, Peter's Place seems to feel that they had plans for all of them. We're staying available and close to them. But, you know, it is a concern because it was a very specialized group of people with a mixture of mental health and homelessness and a number of them were very elderly. There were a couple of 92, 93-year-old, you know, women.

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

Right.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, it was of a lot of concern.

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: I mean, this is a concern in general because the DHS

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RFP for these drop-in centers is excluding specialized populations, moving forward. And, that's a real concern. I really have not heard the argument as to why that is a good way to go, because, like, as you're indicating, this particular population is very-- the needs are very specific, probably not ones that can seriously be addressed in the general population and, much less within Senior Centers. So, in terms of why DHS is leaning in that direction, we still have not heard. I haven't heard a cogent argument. And, I have to look at the hearings that I've had, that the General Welfare Committee has had. But, it's a real concern because do you foresee any potential impact of this on the Senior Centers? But, probably not because you're not foreseeing that they will be going to Senior Centers for services.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I think some of them will go to Project Find--

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

Okay.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: -- or the New York Foundation, because they work with

homeless seniors. And, they have sort of drop-in centers that are maybe a little more to their liking. You know, I think with homeless-- as far as I've worked with homeless people, I think the thing is that they get used to a particular--

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Um, hm.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: -- place and it's hard to move them even if it's just a block.

CO-CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Right.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: And so, that has to be a lot of outreach and a lot of work with them. I think the Partnership will attempt a lot of that and I think we'll try, as well.

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Well, thank you, Council Member. I want to acknowledge we've been joined by Council Member Gioia. Welcome. Thank you for being here. Commissioner, I want to thank you for all of the time and effort that you and your staff have dedicated to conversations about the issues and concerns that will potentially impact our City's, one of the City's

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most vulnerable populations and your willingness to sit with us and enter into the conversations that I think will get us to a place where we can truly work in a partnership so that we don't talk at you. You don't talk at us. And, in the middle of the road, we meet to ensure services are preserved. You're so forthright and so clear. I cannot begin to tell you how much I appreciate the time that you have put into this conversation thus far. I look forward to working with you as we deal with this issue of the budget and the concern that, as Chair of this Committee, I have.

And, again, I will reiterate, in a good fiscal year, seniors are having to make some very tough choices. In the time where we find ourselves with such fiscal constraints, we should not be putting an additional burden on our City's older New Yorkers. And, hope that we can restore the funding lost in the November and January PEGs and bring in a budget for DFTA that can enable you, as Commissioner and your staff, to transition this agency's movement towards better services to seniors in a successful, efficient, effective way. So, I thank you for your testimony. Thank you for

your time. And, we will continue the dialogue.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Council
Member? Thank you very much.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Thank you.

[Pause]

CO-CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay. For
the benefit of those who are here for the public
testimony part of the hearing today, please stand
by. The Finance Chair will be up shortly.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. We're
now going to hear from the public. We're going to
have three panels. The first panel will consist
of Joel Copperman. Didn't we just hear from Joel
the other day? Elizabeth Gaines, from Osborne
Associates, Josafiera Bastides [phonetic], Tracy
Gardner, Glen Martin and somebody from ATI,
unnamed. Okay. Joining that panel, I'm going to
add some more, Jai Nanda from Urban Dove, Kim
Williams from Geriatric Mental Health Alliance,
Antoinette Emers [phonetic] from Vision Services
for the Visually Impaired. You know what, let's
have everybody else, Janet Torres, I saw her

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earlier, from the Wildlife Conservation Society and Chris Wisnewski [phonetic] from Museum of Moving Image. Everybody come up. We're going to use three minutes. I'll use it with discretion. So, just try to, you know, wrap up if the three minutes goes off. Go ahead. [Pause]

JOSEPHINA LAS DIAZ: Good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Good afternoon.

JOSEPHINE LAS DIAZ: First, let me thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the Council on behalf of the City's Alternatives to Incarceration community. My name is Josephina las Diaz [phonetic] and I am the Deputy Director for the Center for Community Alternatives, also known as CCA.

CCA is an organization that provides alternative to incarceration services to people in New York's juvenile and criminal justice systems. I am testifying today, not only on behalf of CCA, but also on behalf of the ATI Coalition that is comprised, in addition to CCA, by six other organizations, the Center for

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Employment Opportunities, CEO, CASES, The Legal Action Center, The Osborne Association, the Fortune Society and the Women Prisoners Association.

The City stands as a national model in terms of the quality and the rate of its ATI programming. And, the Council has played a pretty much essential role in fulfilling this - - . I would like to thank the Council for its ongoing support of ATI programs and particularly programs that serve youth in the juvenile justice system.

Because of your support, CCA has been able to provide alternative to detention and placement services to youth charged as juvenile delinquents through our Family Court - - Specific Planning Program. We want to thank you for sustaining the support of juvenile justice programs even in these very, very difficult times.

New York City's alternative programs have made an enormous difference for the juvenile justice system as a whole and, most importantly, for the children who we serve. Data from the Office of Children and Family Services shows that since 2000, the year 2000, the number

2 of admissions to OCFS custody has decreased 33.3%.
3 We believe that the New York City ATI program have
4 been a significant contributor to this decrease.

5 Through the Council's valiant
6 support, the ATI programs for young people have
7 provided enhanced community supervision and
8 support and have helped young people address key
9 areas in their lives; school, family and peer
10 relationships. We know that graduating from high
11 school is a key predictor of future earnings,
12 improved health and a significant factor in
13 reducing incarceration. - - research shows that
14 young black men who drop from high school, from
15 school, have about 65% chance of winding up in the
16 criminal justice system, in prison. ATI programs
17 help to prevent this from happening.

18 The need for these ATI services
19 cannot be overstated. Last year, CCA's youth
20 program exceeded its intake goal for roughly 40%.
21 Seventy percent of youth successfully graduating
22 from the programs. A one-year post-program follow
23 up that we were able to do show that a year after
24 graduating the program, only 13% of youth had been
25 rearrested and only 5% of those youth that were

rearrested were convicted. So, that is a significant show of that effectiveness of community-based programming.

Other important outcomes are school related. Although 60% of the youth in our program are truant at time of intake, by the time they complete the program, they are enrolled and attending school. We also see improvement in their academic achievements. Eighty-five percent of youth in our programs increase their academic capabilities.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Please try to sum up.

JOSEPHINE las DIAZ: Huh?

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Please try to sum up.

JOSEPHINE las DIAZ: I will be summing up very shortly, Council Member.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

JOSEPHINE las DIAZ: Finally, all of the youth in our program were promoted to the next grade level. So, the cost saving-- what we're trying to say here is that the cost saving is really very, very big. ATI programs save

detention cost estimated over 200,000 a year per youth, a placement cost-- that's what it cost a placement in OCFS for - - . Services for our programming - - say it cost only between 7,000 and 10,000 programs. Last year, our ATI programs from CCA and the other ATI Coalition members saw for a significant reduction in our City Council, 38% cut.

We understand that this is a difficult time. And, we are here pretty much-- I'm representing the Coalition to ask the Council to reinstate the funding of the year 2008 or 6.4 million. New York City has made enormous progress in reducing incarceration. New York City needs to continue to be the vanguard of the alternative to incarceration programming across the nation. We are the - - in reducing incarceration. And so, on behalf of the ATI community, I want to thank you all for listening to us. And, we hope that we will be able to continue to provide the support and the work that we do on behalf of the City's children and adults. Thank you.

ANTOINETTE EMERS: Thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is

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Antoinette Emers. And, I am the Assistant Director of Community Outreach of Vision Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, a nonprofit agency promoting the independence each year of over 3,500 people who are blind and visually impaired. More than half of the blind people we help each year are over the age of 60. All services are provided free of charge. No health insurance is required or billed.

Visions is an 83-year Citywide vision rehabilitation and social service agency, specializing in serving seniors who are blind or visually impaired, who are of low or limited income, who speak a language other than English, primary Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin and Russian, have multiple disabilities and are African-American or Latino with the higher risk for vision loss. Visions unique combination of experience and knowledge of the senior population throughout the City enables our agency to reach those persons most at risk for visions loss, but who are often difficult to reach.

The total population of elderly in New York City is 1.3 million people, 65 and over.

An estimated 21% have a reported vision loss. This translates into 260,000 seniors, a number which is expected to double by 2030. The incidents of vision loss increases with age due to age-related eye disease, such as glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration and cataracts.

Today, we would like to make comments on the previous FY '09 DFTA cuts and now the proposed Executive cuts of the FY 2010 City budget, which greatly impacts on the population we serve Citywide. Last year, Visions experienced firsthand devastating cuts to our program operations. DFTA implemented a 3% budget cut in July 2008, while requesting us to maintain services at the same level. Then, in December 2008, DFTA canceled our intergenerational contract with only six weeks' notice, which was a loss of \$99,760 annually.

This funding had allowed Visions to have 16 to 20 sighted youth provide 95 seniors, who are blind and visually impaired, in home visits, which consisted of escorting, shopping and reading services. Many of the seniors are

isolated and live alone. So, they're very dependent on the valuable services provided by the youth. In turn, the seniors become mentors and provide guidance to the youth in decision-making skills, job opportunities and college to attend.

This exchange of support between seniors and young people is immeasurable. At the same time, Visions lost DFTA outreach funding of 32,525 annually. This funding enabled Visions to provide training on vision loss to 110 out of the 329 DFTA Senior Centers. This training increased awareness of the Center staff and seniors of vision loss and free vision rehabilitation so they can remain independent in their respective community. Visions trained 205 social workers at the 23 DFTA case management agency on vision loss, which had resulted in more seniors being referred for services.

In order to maintain these services, Visions Board made the decision to absorb the cost until 2009, while we seek private funding to main services, a difficult task in this economy. As of July 1st, 2009, the proposed cut to eliminate the Borough President and City Council

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discretionary funding would mean an additional funding loss of 100,000 for Visions.

We must implore you to restore the 28.5 million proposed cuts for FY '10, which would be on top of the 16.1 million cuts to the DFTA budget. The cuts will be catastrophic to an ever-increasing senior population. Shifting the burden from the City to nonprofit is an unwise decision. The senior service system that is already overburdened and underfunded for crucial services provided to a very vulnerable and poverty-stricken population, while we understand we are in a financial crisis, we, too, need a financial bailout package like Wall Street. New York City's seniors deserve better. And, the nonprofit organizations like Visions need the opportunity to continue to maintain critical services in these very challenging times.

In closing, we say, restore, restore and restore to ensure that seniors who are blind and visually impaired can obtain the necessary services to remain independent in their City. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

2 KIM WILLIAMS: Good afternoon.

3 Thank you, Chairs Weprin, Arroyo, Mark-Viverito
4 and distinguished members of the Council for the
5 opportunity to testify today. My name is Kim
6 Williams. I'm the Director of the Geriatric
7 Mental Health Alliance of New York. We are a
8 Statewide advocacy and education organization that
9 was formed in January 2004 to meet the mental
10 health needs of older adults, both now, as well as
11 in anticipation of the growth of the population.

12 During this challenging economic
13 time, government at all levels has got to make
14 difficult choices about how to deal with loss of
15 revenue. But, cutting services to older adults, a
16 population that's increasing by 50% from one to
17 1.5 million over the next 24, excuse me, 20 years
18 in New York City is a terrible, terrible choice.
19 If anything, we should increase funding for
20 services that support older adults to age in the
21 community.

22 We're greatly concerned about the
23 Mayor's failure to recognize this growing need.
24 Where is the preparation for the elder boom?
25 Where is the recognition that there are going to

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be increased needs in care? Where's the effort to address the needs of family caregivers? Where's the effort to engage older adults to be part of the helping workforce?

It is during a fiscal crisis that older adults, who are poor and most in need, are relying on a community safety net of support services to carry them through. Yet, the Mayor proposes to cut vital services for older adults, including Senior Centers, home-delivered meals, elder abuse services and more. These proposed cuts would have a devastating impact on the aging infrastructure and its ability to provide critical supports to help older adults maintain a life of dignity in the community.

Senior Centers provide a variety of central supports that help to prevent mental illness and promote mental wellbeing. Case management, a critical entry point into the long term care system and home-delivered meals reach isolated homebound seniors, many who have depression and anxiety disorders and are susceptible to losing their independence in the community. Elder abuse services provide supports

2 to an extremely vulnerable population, many of
3 whom also have co-morbid depression and/or
4 anxiety.

5 These proposed cuts are on top of
6 the previous funding reductions including cuts to
7 social adult day care, intergenerational
8 programming, caregiver support, non-core
9 services, and the congregate services initiative.
10 As a result there are already gaps in critical
11 supports for older adults and their caregivers.
12 The aging system cannot sustain additional cuts.

13 It is now, during an economic
14 crisis, that these services are most needed. With
15 drastic program cuts, older adults will be forced
16 to turn to more expensive settings for services.
17 We urge you to reject the proposed cuts and to
18 preserve essential programs for older adults in
19 New York City.

20 We also urge you to restore the 2.4
21 million in funding for the Geriatric Mental Health
22 Initiative. Because many older adults will not,
23 and cannot, go to a mental health treatment
24 setting for services, it's critical that services
25 be provided in settings where older adults are

2 located. This successful City Council Initiative
3 expands existing mental health services into
4 community-based settings where older adults have
5 trusting relationships and are comfortable seeking
6 help.

7 Thank you for the opportunity to
8 testify.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.
10 Miss Torres, you really do miss us.

11 JANET TORRES: Well, I'm glad to be
12 back. So, good afternoon. My name is Janet
13 Torres. And, I'm Director of Government and
14 Community Affairs for the Wildlife Conservation
15 Society. And, we're headquartered at the Bronx
16 Zoo. Thank you, again, for this opportunity to
17 speak before you.

18 And, I said this question last
19 Thursday. Why is the Wildlife Conservation
20 Society at this hearing or any other hearing, not
21 just the Cultural hearing? Well, we're here today
22 because I want to share with you how important New
23 York City's 34 cultural institutions impact the
24 senior's quality of life throughout our five
25 boroughs. I think that's the most important

message I want. It's more of a letting you know what do we do across the City, across the boroughs when it comes to our senior programs.

I know many of you know that the CAG's 34 New York City cultural institutions that include Botanical Gardens, museums, performance arts centers, zoos and aquariums. I'm here to talk about a couple of the Bronx cultural institutions in particular, because many of them couldn't make it here today. So, there are five Bronx cultural institutions; the Bronx Historical Society, Wave Hill, the New York Botanical Garden, the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Bronx Museum of the Arts.

All are important to seniors, who lives are enriched after retirement. They give meaningful volunteer opportunities and programs that often match their passions. So, while we do not feed or clothe, we offer an enhanced quality of life. And some of our most passionate supporters are the seniors who end up calling our institutions home.

I'm just going to give a quick overview of some of what these institutions do.

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For example, Wave Hill, they are working on a free-of-charge, in the summertime to provide seniors with the Sunset Wednesday program. So, I think that's a wonderful new program that they're adding in this time of crisis.

At the Bronx Zoo, we run, it's called the Friends of the Zoo. And, we're warmly regarded as the FOZ. And, out of 226 volunteers, 180 are seniors. And, they provide 30,000 hours of service, reaching over 400,000 people. In addition, we are happy and very proud to run the CAP program, the Community Access Program. And there, we provide free access to 87 community youth and senior citizen programs. And, we invite them to come for free to visit the Bronx Zoo.

In addition, in Chairperson Arroyo's district, we work with two senior groups, senior citizen organizations; the Mid-Bronx Senior Citizen Council and the Morrisania Air Rights Senior Center. And, in the Bronx, we have at least 16 Senior Centers the Bronx Zoo alone works with and providing free access to them all.

And then, of course, you have the New York Botanical Garden, who provides the most

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exceptional ADA accessibility and program for its seniors.

So, thank you for the opportunity for at least to talk to you about, and if you didn't know, educate you about what we provide the Senior Centers. And, in every hearing that I am at, I am respectfully requesting, as WCS is a member of the City's Cultural Institutions Group, the CIG, we are working with our fellow members to respectfully ask restoration of our funding for FY '20, as well as the supported Job Creation Retention Program to keep our communities economically strong. So, thank you, again.

CHRISTOPHER WISNEWSKI: Good afternoon. And, my name is Christopher Wisniewski. And, I'm the Director of Education at Museum of the Moving Image. Thank you, Chairpersons Arroyo, Weprin and Mark-Viverito, as well as the members of the Committee on Aging and Committee on Finance, for the opportunity to speak with you today.

Like many of the City's cultural institutions, the Museum is committed to educating a generationally diverse audience that includes

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school children, adults and senior citizens. Our programs for seniors are vital to our mission and among the most successful and rewarding of the Museum's activities. In my testimony today, I would like to focus on two specific programs.

In spring 2008, the Department for the Aging, the Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York City Council sponsored the Seniors Meet the Arts Initiative, which funded partnerships between cultural institutions and the City's Senior Centers. Through the program, the Museum presented multi-session cultural programs for senior citizens at two area Senior Centers, the Young Israel of Forest Hills Senior League and Senior Action in a Gay Environment, SAGE, Queens.

The programs were collaborations between the Senior Center directors and the Museum's Education Department. Over the course of several months, the seniors visited the Museum for gallery tours, participated in hands-on workshops, in which they made their own stop motion animations, enjoyed regular film screenings and discussion programs at the Senior Centers and had the chance to tour the Kaufman Astoria Studios.

2 The Museum educators, who
3 facilitated the programs, developed a strong
4 emotional connection with the participants at both
5 Centers. Educator Mel Ahern [phonetic] writes, "I
6 was struck by their friendliness, enthusiasm and
7 open-mindedness. It was inspirational to be
8 surrounded by such active minds. Clearly guests
9 at both programs were hungry for intellectually
10 engaging programs. I became very friendly with
11 all of the participants and looked forward to
12 seeing them every other week. I was very touched
13 that they felt the same about me." Ahern's
14 excitement about the programs was shared by the
15 directors of both Centers.

16 Susan Rabinowicz of Young Israel of
17 Forest Hills Senior League explains "The
18 partnership proved to be a most extraordinary
19 experience for our seniors. They were provided
20 with opportunities that they could never have on
21 their own. Building a close relationship with the
22 Museum, allowed us to select programs that were of
23 interest to our members and our members, each and
24 every time, came back from their excursions
25 exhilarated and energized."

2 John Nagel of SAGE Queens wrote
3 with equal enthusiasm "The SAGE Queens partnership
4 with Moving Image was a profound one for our
5 participants. The highlight for our members was
6 when they had the opportunity to make their own
7 animations. This taught our members new
8 technology they have never been exposed to. They
9 were so proud of their creations and thrilled to
10 have a copy of them. The program was special
11 because it made our members feel that they were
12 special. We are grateful for these moments of
13 education, fun and nostalgia."

14 Both Senior Centers expressed
15 strong interest in continuing the program.
16 Unfortunately, the Seniors Meets the Arts program
17 was discontinued in fiscal year 2009. Lacking
18 this vital support, the Museum has not been able
19 to resume these programs, but looks forward to
20 continuing these partnerships if, and when,
21 funding is restored.

22 RICHIE CERRUD: Good afternoon. My
23 name is Richie Cerrud. I'm the Program Director
24 for the Urban Dove. Urban Dove is a nonprofit
25 organization serving nearly a thousand at-risk

youth each year throughout the City. Urban Dove's mission is to use exciting innovative programs to help energize, educate and empower today's youth and provide them with the academic and life skills needed to become successful adults.

For the past ten years, Urban Dove has helped thousands of children, ages 8 to 18, build the skills they need to be successful. Our model has proven extremely effective, with 98% of our teenagers graduating from high school and 90% going on to college.

One of our most successful programs is High Risers, an out-of-school time program that combines sports and recreation with the academic and life skills building activities. Currently, in nine elementary and middle schools throughout the City, High Risers uses sports and recreation not only to energize the kids, but also as vehicles for teaching the life skills, such as communication, teamwork and leadership.

Since June, 2007, Urban Dove has been using the High Risers curriculum to engage youth at Crossroads, Horizons, Bridges and 15 non-secure facilities throughout the City. Each week,

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residents at each facility get one-hour workshop, an hour of sports instruction in basketball, soccer or volleyball and two hours of game time.

The workshops are run by Urban Dove staff and focus on life skills, such as communication, conflict resolution and teamwork. Workshops use interactive physical activities to teach skills and demonstrate how they can be used in the real world. We choose skills that will benefit the residents, both in the facilities and, more importantly, in their lives once they get out.

Workshops are specifically designed to break down barriers and to force kids to relate positively to each other. We develop critical social skills by challenging the residents to think and act in ways that are often out of their comfort zone, whether it's putting their arms around each other in a three-legged race or trusting the voice of their partner during a blindfolded obstacle course.

Facility staff repeatedly noted improvement in the behavior of the residents from both before and after Urban Dove sessions. Residents get along better. There is less

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1 conflict, better communication and genuine
2 enthusiasm for the activities. And, because good
3 behavior is a requirement of playing on their
4 team, residents are given more thoughtful in their
5 actions. Being on a team and working with others
6 toward a common goal also builds togetherness and
7 gives the residents a sense of pride and
8 accomplishment, two of the most important things
9 we can give these young people.
10

11 Social skills are important. But
12 only when they are combined with self-esteem and
13 leadership skills can they truly be put to use.
14 Playing team sports provides an opportunity to
15 make those connections. And, because we visit the
16 facilities several times each week, we are able to
17 consistently give the message to the residents
18 and, over time, have a longstanding impact.

19 Last summer, Urban Dove held an
20 open house for teenagers interested in being a
21 part of our summer program. One of the young men
22 came to sign up to the Urban Dove while detained
23 at Crossroads. Now that he was out, he wanted to
24 stay a part of the Urban Dove family because he
25 had such a positive experience with it.

2 This is what programs like ours can
3 do. They can engage kids who are most in need of
4 reconnecting with their communities and help them
5 find something positive, which they can belong.

6 It is our hope that we can continue
7 the program so that we can help even more
8 residents reconnect upon their release. As so
9 much evidence has shown, it is critical for
10 residents to engage in positive, productive
11 activities upon release so that they do not repeat
12 their mistakes and back up in the justice system.
13 If we are able to engage them while they were in
14 detention, allow them to be a part of something
15 that makes them feel good about themselves, then
16 we are confident that they will seek out when they
17 will be released.

18 But, to engage them in detention,
19 we must access them in a consistent basis and that
20 we can build real trust and make meaningful
21 connections. Urban Dove's program, and others
22 like it, can have a major impact on these young
23 people and time when they are at a crossroads. It
24 is critical that we make every effort to engage so
25 that they can take more productive and positive

2 path. Resources spent now will be paid back
3 tenfold if we keep them out of detention, out of
4 jail and out of trouble and, their direct energies
5 and attention toward building positive futures for
6 themselves.

7 I'd like to thank the members of
8 the Council and their support of New York City's
9 youth, both in and out of detention. I thank you
10 for your time today. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: The next panel
12 will consist of Lee Covino, from the Staten Island
13 Borough President's office, Piper Hoffman from the
14 Partnership for the Homeless, Carol Dunn from
15 Staten Island Interagency Council For the Aging,
16 George Geller [phonetic] from Teamsters Local 237,
17 Clarissa Smith from the Correctional Association
18 and Nicky Oblevack [phonetic], President, CEO of
19 Community Agency for Senior Citizens. [Pause] Is
20 there anybody else who would like to testify that
21 hasn't filled out a slip, 'cause this is going to
22 be the last panel? Speak now or come back
23 tomorrow. Go ahead.

24 LEE COVINO: Good afternoon. My
25 name is Lee Covino. And, I'm the Borough

President's Agency Chief Contracting Officer.

And, I worked for the Department for the Aging from 1985 to '90, so I've seen these Borough President funds from the agency side, at DFTA, and from the Borough President's side annually, both during the Board of Estimate era and the Procurement Policy Board era. I'd like to read the following statement.

Honorable Chairpersons,
distinguished Committee members, community advocates, service providers and senior citizens from the City, thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of maintaining Borough President-funded aging services and against any other reductions for our elderly population. On December 4th, 2008, I came before the Committee on Aging and the Subcommittee on Senior Centers to testify about the Department for the Aging's attempt to defund Borough President Aging funds and apply them to a now suspended modernization initiative. At the time, five of our Staten Island programs were defunded retroactively to July 1st, 2008 and the rest were scheduled to be defunded the following fiscal year. Fortunately,

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the modernization project was placed on hold, as the new DFTA Commissioner was appointed and the funds were restored.

Fiscal year 2010, however, DFTA has cut the entire BP allocation in each of the five boroughs, leaving the City Council with the option to restore the funding or eliminate core senior services throughout the City. Previously, the Executive Budget contained an annual BP DFTA cut of \$533,000, which was restored each year through the City Council. As a result, Council action has allowed these important services to remain constant in both good and bad times.

For FY 2010, however, the BP DFTA cut exceeds 7.5 million. It's actually 7.633 million, because it's the 7.1 that you've seen from DFTA, plus the 533,000. This level of funding has remained intact over several Administrations going back over two decades. For Staten Island, these funds represent long term service enhancements to address underserved needs for our seniors, ranging from homecare, home-delivered meals, congregate meals, transportation, adult daycare for Alzheimer's and dementia

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patients, minor home repairs and a host of other services.

Borough President discretionary funds in different amounts for all five boroughs, when negotiated by the five Borough Presidents during the Board of Estimate era and have remained constant to date. When the new City Charter took effect in 1990, these discretionary funds were grandfathered into the annual budget process as tax levy funds and contracted annually through DFTA under Procurement Policy Board Rule, Section 1-02(e).

At some point, the City baselined these funds to DFTA, as a matter of convenience, in the annual budget process. Over time, these funds, although still allocated on an annual basis by the five Borough Presidents, were subsumed and intermingled into DFTA's overall non-discretionary budget. Over the years, the majority of these allocations have undergone review and sign-off by the Mayor's Office of Contract Services, the Law Department, the Comptroller's Office, by the registration process. In addition, DFTA conducted annual program performance reviews, fiscal

assessments and ongoing monitoring.

To date, the programs have continued to effectively serve the needs of our older adults. It should be noted here that the senior service enhancements allocated yearly by the Borough President were done in close consultation with local advocates for seniors and have addressed very real Staten Island needs, such as the glaring shortfall of public transportation and the need to supplement existing services with additional meals, homecare and senior programs. Indeed, the enhancements have been transferred over the years by the Borough President to different providers when RFPs were awarded by DFTA for the services. Without these crucial funds, our seniors stand to lose, not only the services provided by 16 BP-funded programs, but also the commitment of an individual elected to local office in lieu of an unelected faceless panel located in downtown Manhattan.

In closing, now is the time for the City Council to decide whether to restore these important senior services and, if so, to what degree. Our parents and grandparents are counting

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on it. And, in the event that the recent loss of City revenue results in reduced budget line for the Borough President DFTA funds, I am urging the Council and DFTA to assist in transition of core services in an orderly manner instead of abruptly terminating programs. We attach a listing of the Staten Island programs currently funded by BP DFTA funds in fiscal year 2009 for the Committee's information. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes.

CAROL DUNN: My name is Carol Dunn. On behalf of the Staten Island Interagency Council for Aging, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony today.

The Staten Island Interagency Council for Aging is an advocacy group established to identify and address the needs of Staten Island seniors, comprised of over 70 organizations, who provide services to the older population. The mission of the IIC is to facilitate and promote programs and services for our aging population; advocating for their healthcare, housing, education, social, financial and transportation needs and is committed to their wellbeing.

2 Our Borough President and
3 Councilmen have, for over 20 years, continually
4 supported the efforts of the many senior services
5 through their discretionary funding. For the year
6 end 2009, DFTA had decided that the Borough
7 President should no longer have the ability to
8 make the determination as to what services should
9 be funded. They suspended funding immediately for
10 five agencies and indicated the others, who were
11 formerly known as BP-funded services, would be
12 safe only for 2009 and, in actuality, planned to
13 use that funding, which would have been taken from
14 senior transportation to kosher meals, for the new
15 concept of a Senior Center, which was a third
16 phase of the Mayor's Modernization of senior
17 services. The only reason the funding was
18 restored to the five was that the Senior Center
19 RFP was defeated. Sadly, the modernization of
20 services have proven, in many instances, not to
21 have worked because there it was not based on
22 reality. And, the Senior Center RFP was but one
23 example. Modernization has only increased the
24 cost and increased the bureaucracy.

25 Obviously, because of the very

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difficult economic times, cuts have to be made to services. Yet, these services have never received the funding that truly met the demand. And so, theoretically, have been cut already and already have received actual reductions. Staffing has never been sufficient. Is this a way of actually just phasing out all services? Are they, in fact, being set up for failure? Why, then, would another Senior Center RFP be in the works for next year, rather than working with these programs that are effective, - - to those that require assistance and close those that are truly not functioning?

The discretionary funding must be restored to the Borough Presidents as only they really know the services that are needed in their respective boroughs. Sorry. Because we would lose the only senior transportation available that is lifesaver to so many seniors as our existing transportation system is so lacking.

I am not concerned about the IIC, as we are not direct services, but the network that gives the services and the seniors a connection to each other and enhances the ability

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of the provider to serve. But, if it means our funding goes to a direct service provider, then that's fine. My concern is the senior and the services they need to remain independent and have a quality of life that is reasonable and offers them dignity, safety and comfort.

And, just, I added a P.S. I know there are so many areas of service that are vital from the absurdity of even having to consider closing a fire house to cutting programs in schools. And, I know you'll do the best you can. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

NICKY OBLEVACK: Hi. I'm Nicky Oblevack, President and CEO of CASC. I have no written testimony. But, I am from Staten Island and I have to specifically talk about those services that will be lost due to the Borough President's money.

You have already heard testimony that our transportation program, as you well know, and you do not have to live on Staten Island, that is not what the other four boroughs have. Our transportation services, funded by DFTA, as well

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as the Borough President, provide 76,000 one-way trips a year. We use 15 vehicles. And, we provide services for the entire Staten Island, all of the community districts. We service over 1,200 seniors a year. This transportation program consist of two main types of transportation; to Senior Centers, as well as what we call our Shopping Bus Transportation Program. We run a mini MTA program on Staten Island.

If the services are not there and the Borough President's funding funds 98%, \$325,000, of this Shopping Bus Transportation Program. If it is not funded, you will literally be taking the food out of seniors' mouths. We provide shopping routes from homes to two large grocery stores on Staten Island. They also pick up prescriptions at the pharmacy in those grocery stores, as well as do local banking. So, you're cutting a tremendous service that will not be met by MTA or by Access-A-Ride.

I can't stress this enough. The other large amount of money that is going to be lost by, in particular, CASC, the agency I work for, is New Lane Senior Center. You've heard the

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testimony of the Commissioner and the problems that the Meals on Wheels home-delivered meals budget cuts and change modernization program is going to be impacting Senior Centers. Well, for this one particular Senior Center, New Lane, 40% of its budget is from Borough President's money. We will not be able to run that Center, which is located in a NYCHA housing center, seniors only. We will not be able to continue to run that Center without that money. That's over \$90,000. And, that's 40% of their budget.

I cannot stress, again, how many people are really and truly impacted on this. It may seem like a luxury to you, door-to-door service to grocery stores, but if seniors cannot get to grocery stores and they cannot walk to the bus stop or this train system that we call a train system, it's one-way down one coast, I don't know where they're going to get their money. And, we're very, very concerned about that. And, I hope that the Council will restore all of that Borough President's money.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

PIPER HOFFMAN: Thank you for the

opportunity to testify. My name is Piper Hoffman. And, I'm here on behalf of the Partnership for the Homeless. I hope that you'll have a look at my written testimony. I think you'll find it both persuasive and concise.

I'm here to talk about homelessness among seniors. And, the Committee on the Aging may be wondering why I'm bringing up homelessness here, rather than before the General Welfare Committee and with the Department of Homeless Services. The reason is that the Department of Homeless Services is not preventing the problem. And, the result is going to be catastrophic for all of us.

At the moment, we can see a disaster coming down the pike. There are two trends converging; one is the senior boom. The other is the recession. The result is inevitably going to be a large increase in the number of homeless seniors in New York City. We already see that right now one-quarter of all senior-headed households in New York City earn less than \$10,000 a year. Eighty percent of New York seniors live solely on Social Security. Given the cost of

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living in this City, it is very easy to see why it is that these people find themselves homeless.

It's often the result of a catastrophic illness.

They land in the hospital for months at a time and when they come out, they no longer have housing.

It can be the loss of a spouse or a caretaker. It can happen to people who have worked their entire lives.

And, these are the clients that we served at Peter's Place. DHS withdrew the funding for Peter's Place. Seniors who become homeless now no longer even have that refuge of last resort.

What we need to do is prevent more seniors from becoming homeless. And, I'm asking the Committee on Aging and I'm asking the Department for the Aging and I'm asking the entire City to step up and prevent this from happening before we wind up living in a City with homeless seniors on our streets, in our parks, after years of raising families and working. People who deserve to have homes and healthcare and three meals a day will be on our streets. Thank you.

GEORGE GELLER: Good afternoon.

1
2 Thank you, Chairman Weprin. My name's George
3 Geller. I will speak without benefit of a written
4 statement and hopefully be brief. This testimony
5 is usefully seen, I supposed, as supplementing the
6 earlier agency testimony of the Commissioner of
7 DJJ.

8 As he described in his testimony
9 earlier this afternoon, a consequence of the
10 Mayor's budget cuts for DJJ will be that
11 approximately 34 vacant positions in the special
12 officer title in the Department of Juvenile
13 Justice will go unfilled. These are long term
14 vacancies. These jobs will vanish. The problem
15 is this. As you may know, the DJJ special
16 officers are the uniformed personnel who provide
17 security at the three secure centers. Those are
18 where the hardest cases are. That's where the
19 rubber meets the road, if you will.

20 They are involved in crucial
21 initiatives that DJJ has currently implemented to
22 raise the level of safety in those centers. DJJ
23 has begun a strong proactive program of
24 eliminating contraband through searches. There
25 are now two searches of all these secure

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1 facilities per day, enhanced and extra searches of
2 all visitors. There are new camera systems, which
3 our people are operating. And, they are terribly
4 understaffed, the special officers in the DJJ
5 facilities. They're only 34 of them for the
6 round-the-clock service that they offer to these
7 three secure centers. And, it's simply not enough
8 to guarantee the safety, the paramount objective
9 of physical safety, of the young people in these
10 facilities.
11

12 So, we urge the Council, in
13 cooperation with the Commissioner of DJJ, to see
14 to whatever restoration of budget cuts are
15 necessary to at least fill some of these
16 vacancies, which now exceed the number of actual
17 filled job slots in the special officer title.
18 It's a safety function. These young people are
19 easily neglected, even in good times. In bad
20 times, it would be a terrible misfortune if
21 budgetary concerns lessen the degree of physical
22 safety we're offering to these troubled young
23 people in these three secure centers.

24 And, that concludes the statement
25 of Local 237. We'll get you something in writing

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FINANCE, AGING AND SUBCOMMITTEE ON SENIOR
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to supplement what I've offered today. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Seeing no more
witnesses, I thank you all for coming and being
patient. We will reconvene the Finance hearing
tomorrow morning at ten o'clock with Police
Commissioner Raymond Kelly. Finance Committee is
now adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, DeeDee E. Tataseo 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 cursive script that reads "DeeDee E. Tataseo". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Date

June 12, 2009