

**Testimony by The Legal Aid Society, before the City Council on The New
York City Housing Authority's Section 8 Voucher Withdrawals
February 9, 2010**

INTEREST AND EXPERTISE OF THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

The Legal Aid Society is the oldest and largest provider of legal assistance to low income families and individual in the United States. The Society's Civil Practice operates a network of neighborhood offices and city-wide units serving residents of all five boroughs of New York City, providing comprehensive legal assistance in housing, public benefits, family law, immigration, consumer law, and other civil areas of primary concern to low income New Yorkers. The Society is counsel on numerous class action cases concerning the rights of public housing residents and is counsel to the New York City Public Housing Resident Alliance. The New York City Public Housing Resident Alliance seeks to inform and network with residents so that they can have a strong and effective voice and secure greater accountability in local, State and federal policy decisions that affect public housing in New York City. The Legal Aid Society is also class counsel in litigation requiring the provision of lawful shelter and services for homeless children and adults and is counsel to the Coalition for the Homeless.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Council on this important matter.

NYCHA'S MISMANAGEMENT OF THE SECTION 8 PROGRAM:

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) administers the largest Section 8 program in the country and currently provides rental subsidies to 101,000 families. Authorization and funding for the Section 8 program are determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) based upon annual Congressional appropriations. In May 2009, HUD reduced NYCHA's funding allocation for Section 8 vouchers by \$58 million. Further exacerbating this loss of funding was the drop in the attrition rate for vouchers from 8% in 2007

to 3.8% in 2009. Even though NYCHA was well aware in May 2009 that its ability to fund Section 8 vouchers would be reduced drastically by this cut in funding, the Housing Authority continued to issue new Section 8 vouchers. In August 2009, NYCHA's requests to HUD for more funding for Section 8 vouchers were denied, making it clear that the Housing Authority would be unable to fund its rapidly expanding Section 8 program. Despite knowing full well the stark reality of their financial situation, NYCHA did not notify the public of the precarious state of the Section 8 program and simply continued to issue more vouchers. Despite the fact that in July 2009 HUD urged NYCHA to stop issuing new Section 8 vouchers because there was no money to fund them, NYCHA ignored this advice and continued to issue vouchers to New Yorkers without warning them of the likelihood that the Housing Authority could not support any further additions to the Section 8 voucher program.

THE SECTION 8 VOUCHER TERMINATIONS:

A week before Christmas – without any warning – the New York City Housing Authority announced at a press conference that NYCHA would not honor the Section 8 vouchers of 3,018 low income New Yorkers. The affected group includes 1,505 formerly homeless families with barriers to employment, 168 youth aging out of the foster care system, 52 intimidated witnesses, and 492 survivors of domestic violence.

In the thirty-five-year history of NYCHA's administration of the Section 8 program, there has never been such a mass termination of Section 8 vouchers. The Section 8 voucher holders whom NYCHA refuses to recognize have been left without any recourse against NYCHA and they are receiving no assistance from NYCHA to find alternative housing. These families rightfully assumed that their vouchers would be honored by NYCHA and acted to their detriment based on this reliance. Due to NYCHA's unprecedented action in terminating these

vouchers, families and individuals will be forced to enter the shelter system, children who are aging out of the foster care system will be unable to find affordable housing, and witnesses who worked with the District Attorneys' offices may be forced to stay in an unsafe environment with the very person(s) against whom they testified.

Lack of funding – not lack of planning – is the justification NYCHA has given for its unprecedented cancellation of thousands of Section 8 vouchers. This justification provides little comfort for the families affected by this action who now face imminent homelessness. While this crisis may well have been avoided had NYCHA revealed its dire funding circumstances earlier and sought assistance from HUD, at this point New York City and New York State will have to take action to prevent literally hundreds of affected families and individuals from becoming homeless. In a City like New York, with a tight, high-cost rental market, the loss of thousands of Section 8 vouchers is devastating for families and individuals who so desperately need safe, affordable housing. On average NYCHA pays \$800 per month for each Section 8 voucher. In contrast, it costs the City \$3,000 per month to keep a family in a homeless shelter.

EXAMPLES OF THE HARM CAUSED BY THE SECTION 8 VOUCHER CRISIS:

Ms. Z. is a 104-year-old resident of Brooklyn. She has been waiting for a Section 8 voucher for 16 years. Her current income is \$761 per month, and her rent is \$535. Without the assistance of a voucher this 104-year-old woman is forced to pay over 70% of her income in rent. Ms. Z thought her prayers had been answered when in 2009 she received a Section 8 voucher. Initially, her landlord refused to accept the voucher. The Legal Aid Society advised the landlord that it would sue the landlord on Ms. Z.'s behalf pursuant to Local Law 10 which prohibits source of income discrimination, and finally Ms. Z.'s landlord agreed to accept the voucher. As soon as the paperwork was completed, Ms. Z.'s granddaughter called NYCHA to ensure that

everything was okay, but she was told that the Section 8 program was "on hold" so the voucher was rescinded. According to NYCHA, this 104-year-old woman's case does not qualify as an emergency.

Ms. L. is a single mother with two children whose only source of income is public assistance. She lives in the Bronx. She had a NYCHA Section 8 voucher and was in the process of moving into a new apartment. She reports that, upon bringing her "final inspection package" to NYCHA, she was told that she no longer had a voucher. Meanwhile, because she had thought she could move into her new apartment with her voucher, she consented by stipulation in Housing Court to vacate her current apartment. She has no where else to go.

Mr. Y. is a single father of a six-year-old child. After a period of homelessness, he and his son moved into their current residence. Mr. Y. was certified as eligible for Section 8 in July 2009. He is disabled, and suffers from multiple medical conditions. Without Section 8 assistance, Mr. Y. cannot pay his current rent and he fears that his family will end up homeless again.

Ms. R. is disabled and lives alone in the Bronx. Her sole source of income is Social Security income of \$652 a month. Her monthly rent is \$747.67 per month. In May 2007, Ms. R. received a Section 8 voucher. In violation of Local Law 10, her landlord refused to accept her voucher. The Legal Aid Society sent correspondence to her landlord on her behalf but it was ignored. Later, the Legal Aid Society commenced a lawsuit on behalf of Ms. R. against this landlord. This landlord continued to refuse to accept Ms. R.'s voucher and did not respond to the lawsuit. A judgment by default was entered against this landlord. The landlord's attorney said the landlord would complete the papers but the landlord has not yet done so. Instead, Ms. R. received a notice of petition and petition for non-payment of rent in January 2010. After years of

litigation, Ms. R is in dire straits as the Section 8 voucher which is her only means of affording her home has been rendered worthless by NYCHA.

Ms. P. is a homeless woman living in a shelter in Manhattan with her child. She has been in shelter paid for by the City for 5 years. She received Section 8 and found an apartment but she cannot move in because NYCHA is not accepting her Section 8 packet. She cannot move out of shelter without a Section 8 subsidy. She is in the "other" category because she was not referred by the Department of Homeless Services for Section 8 rental assistance but obtained it on her own.

Ms. C. is a nineteen-year-old college student and has been in foster care since she lost both of her parents by age thirteen. She was certified as eligible for Section 8 in August 2009, found a landlord willing to accept her voucher in November, and fully submitted her packet on November 20, 2009. But because NYCHA demanded documents not specifically requested in the Section 8 packet, her application was delayed. On December 14, 2009, when Ms. C. appeared at the NYCHA Leased Housing Department she was met by two security guards who informed her that "all appointments are cancelled" Ms. C – who will soon age out of foster care – has relied on the Section 8 program to find housing so that she can avoid ending up homeless because she can no longer remain in foster care.

Ms. R. is a single mother of two children. Her current rent is \$907.75 per month. Her income consists of \$600 a month from employment, \$50 per month in child support payments and \$550 in food stamp assistance. She was certified as eligible for Section 8 on September 7, 2007. Ms. R. was given extensions of time to use her Section 8 voucher because her landlord had refused to accept her voucher in violation of Local Law 10, the City's anti-discrimination law. After fighting in court for over a year, she won relief and her landlord agreed to complete

the Section 8 voucher paperwork. But upon submission of her packet on December 15, 2009, she too was rebuffed by NYCHA. Ms. R.'s rent exceeds her monthly income, and she is falling behind in her rent.

Ms. Y. is a mother of three who lives in Queens. She lives in an unregulated building. Her landlord took her to court in a "no defense" holdover. She has already received time to move. She found an apartment, and was ready to submit her Section 8 rental package. She has no where else to go. Her family is at immediate risk of homelessness.

Ms. G. resides with her husband in Manhattan. Their combined monthly income from work and Supplemental Security Income is \$1,310 per month. Based on disability, they receive a DRIE subsidy that sets their rent at \$746.45. Ms. G. received her Section 8 voucher in June 2007. She tried on her own to get her landlord to accept the voucher but the landlord refused to do so. She sought help from a community-based organization which contacted the landlord on her behalf in December 2007. The landlord continued to refuse to accept her Section 8 voucher. The Legal Aid Society contacted this landlord in February 2007 and did not receive any response. On behalf of Ms. G., the Legal Aid Society sued this landlord in February 2008. In early December 2009, the landlord finally agreed to process the rental package. However, when Ms. G. went to NYCHA with her Section 8 rental package, she was turned away. Her landlord recently sent her a rent demand and will likely sue her for non-payment of rent. Her rent exceeds 50% of her income.

URGENT ACTION IS NEEDED TO PREVENT FURTHER HARM:

These are just a few examples of how this Section 8 voucher crisis has devastated many New Yorkers. Immediate action by City and State officials must be taken to remedy this urgent

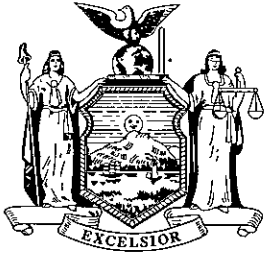
situation. The following measures are among those that are required to protect affected Section 8 voucher holders:

1. NYCHA should give affected voucher holders a priority for public housing apartments immediately and inform them about how to apply for this priority.
2. Until all the affected households receive Section 8 vouchers that NYCHA will permit them to use in the normal course, the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTADA) and the New York City Department of Homeless Services should expand the State - City Advantage rental assistance program to cover all affected households or, alternatively, the State agency should cover as many of the affected households as possible with Advantage rental assistance and DHS should use its homelessness prevention stimulus money for rental assistance to cover the rest of the affected households.
3. The City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) should allocate its current supply of 500 Section 8 vouchers to affected households and provide its turnover vouchers to affected households.
4. As soon as NYCHA has attrited the 2,000 vouchers that it is over-leased, it should start issuing vouchers to the affected households.
5. The City Administration for Children Services (ACS) should provide preventive or protective services in the form of rental assistance to cover the families the agency referred to NYCHA for reunification rental assistance.
6. The District Attorneys should fund rental assistance out of their forfeiture recoveries to cover the intimidated witnesses who they referred to NYCHA for protective rental assistance.
7. The Department of Homeless Services should refer all families in the shelter system to NYCHA for a top priority for public housing.

We look forward to working with you to achieve these urgently needed remedies. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify about this crisis and the need for corrective action.

Respectfully Submitted:

Steven Banks, Attorney in Chief
Adriene Holder, Attorney in Charge - Civil Practice
Scott Rosenberg, Attorney-in-Charge - Civil Law Reform
Judith Goldiner, Supervising Attorney
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News from...

Senator Thomas K. Duane

29th SENATORIAL DISTRICT - NEW YORK STATE SENATE

TESTIMONY BY NEW YORK STATE SENATOR THOMAS K. DUANE
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HOUSING AND GENERAL WELFARE COMMITTEE HEARING
ON THE SUSPENSION OF NYCHA SECTION 8 VOUCHERS

February 9, 2010

As a New York State Senator representing a district with one of the most cost-prohibitive housing markets in the nation, I am particularly concerned about the sudden and previously undisclosed cessation of new Housing Choice Voucher Program benefits (Section 8) administered by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and the rescission of assigned vouchers. I applaud the Public Housing and General Welfare Committees of the New York City Council for holding this hearing and seeking viable housing options for those affected by this catastrophe.

Like me, many New Yorkers were shocked in mid-December when NYCHA announced that it had stopped issuing Section 8 vouchers, and that the 3,018 vouchers that had already been issued to families but not yet used were effectively terminated. These vouchers serve as essential rental subsidies for low-income households so that they can afford to live in privately-owned rental housing. Those whose vouchers were rendered worthless include formerly homeless families, victims of domestic violence, intimidated witnesses and children aging out of foster care, who are especially at-risk of homelessness.

According to a December 18, 2009 report by NY1 News, "[NYCHA] officials waited more than six months to cancel the vouchers with the hope that funds would be restored and more apartments would become available." While I sincerely appreciate NYCHA's ongoing efforts to provide safe and decent affordable housing with dwindling public funding, it is hard to give credence to the claim that the authority sought to maintain its Section 8 program without mobilizing its immense public and political base. Had NYCHA promptly disclosed the program's impending suspension, it would have enabled voucher-holders and prospective voucher-holders, community-based organizations and local elected officials to organize a massive campaign in support of our congressional delegation's efforts to restore funding, and to preemptively craft solutions to support those who would be affected. Tragically, that did not happen.

Going forward, we must work together to ensure stable housing for for those families whose vouchers have been rendered worthless. I have been working with Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and elected officials and housing advocates across the five borough to ensure NYCHA works with all levels and branches of government to provide alternative rental assistance for these extremely vulnerable New Yorkers.

Earlier this year, I joined Borough President Stringer and 29 other elected officials in sending NYCHA and the Bloomberg Administration a letter outlining a six point plan of short- and long-term solutions to this crisis. Among other recommendations, we urged NYCHA to give priority for any and all vacant and habitable apartments available to those whose vouchers were terminated. We noted that the City must also work with local members of the New York State Legislature and the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to secure funding for an extension of Work Advantage, a program that provides rental assistance to the working poor—many of whom are Section 8 voucher-holders or are on the waiting list. And we urged the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development to give priority for its available vouchers to those families who were affected by this debacle.

Regrettably, more than seven weeks have passed since NYCHA officials announced the cancellation of these vouchers and we still have no clear sense of what NYCHA is doing to rectify the situation. When I met with NYCHA officials last week, I underscored the urgent need for the authority to resolve this crisis and was assured that NYCHA's public silence does not reflect the authority's significant investment of time and energy on this matter. I look forward to and am anxious for NYCHA's swift disclosure of and action upon its plan.

Certainly today's hearing can only help to focus NYCHA and all levels and branches of government on what must be done for those affected by the defunding of these vouchers as well as how we can prevent such a catastrophe in the future. I thank the Public Housing and General Welfare Committees of the New York City Council and I pledge to continue to work with you to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to stable housing.

TESTIMONY TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS
AND THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

By: **PAVEL DEREVYANCHENKO**

February 9, 2010

My name is Pavel Derevyanchenko. My wife Lyudmila Strunitskaya and I live at 850 West 176th Street, New York, New York 10033. We are both 71 years of age. We both are diabetic. My wife's diabetes affected her vision. My wife is physically disabled. My wife underwent surgery where the doctors required using veins from legs. As a result, she is not able to move around and could not be here today. I suffered from a heart attack four years ago approximately in 2006.

The cancellation of this program would not allow us to support our basic expenses. Our household income is only \$1,115 from social security. 44% of my income goes towards rent. After I pay rent, I do not have enough money to meet my basic expenses. Because we are diabetic, the reduced money will not allow us to maintain the quality of foods we need to maintain our health and quality of life. The loss of the Section 8 assistance will affect our health.

Last month, my wife and I celebrated our 50th anniversary. I could not even take her to a simple movie or buy any special treat because I need to pay the costs of the items, transportation to the event – all of which I do not have because I cannot afford because I have to pay an additional \$160 in rent.

When we received the voucher in May 2009, I was happy because I had hoped that the Section 8 funding would help me to meet basic expenses and I would have better quality of life. But when my landlord refused to accept the voucher, I felt like they were harassing us. With the help of my lawyers, I got a letter from NYCHA that the voucher was valid. Still, they rejected it. I was frustrated and disappointed.

My lawyers sued my landlord in October 2009. Now, the case is in court. The landlord has not agreed to settle and then I get the letter that NYCHA is cancelling the program. I felt frustrated and betrayed by the City. I felt like the landlord finally got its way that is illegal. I can't seem to get over this hurdle.

We had applied for the Section 8 voucher in 2008 which was granted in May 2009. Two years later, I am older and my health is worse. I am still waiting for help.

Respectfully submitted,

Pavel Derevyanchenko

If you would like to reach me, you may contact Chaumtoli Huq, Director of Litigation at Manhattan Legal Services, at 646-442-3150, or Tanya Bayeva, Associate Attorney, at Milbank Tweed Hadley & McCloy LLP, at (212) 530-5756. MLS and Milbank are the attorneys representing me in my case against Alco Realty.



MET COUNCIL

ACTS OF CHARITY • DEEDS OF KINDNESS צדקה וגמילות חסדים

New York City Council General Welfare Oversight Hearing on Section 8
February 9, 2010

Good afternoon members of the Committees on General Welfare, Housing and Buildings and Public Housing. My name is Nikki Martinez and I am a social worker with Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before your honorable committees to testify on behalf of the over 490 victims of domestic violence throughout New York City whose Section 8 vouchers were recently revoked. For over thirty years Met Council, a human service organization serving over 100,000 clients per year, has focused our work on New York's neediest individuals. In the last year alone we assisted 900 victims of domestic violence, and their children; advocated on their behalf in partnership with the New York City Family Justice Centers, providing crisis intervention services such as food, financial assistance, short-term counseling and referrals for legal counsel. Our designated family violence staff offers services in English, French, Hebrew, Russian and Spanish.

My testimony today will highlight the plight of those victims of domestic violence, largely women and children, who recently received a Section 8 termination notice. These individuals have a tremendously hard time managing their own physical safety, providing housing, food and education for their children, attending job training programs to achieve self-sufficiency and dealing with the emotional, and sometimes physical, scars of their experiences. With the loss of Section 8 they will now have to contend with the added burden of becoming homeless. Shelter life is not an easy option for anyone, particularly women and children who are already traumatized. A shelter stay ends what remains of a normal, stable family life. Brutality at the hands of a loved one is devastating in and of itself. The threat of homelessness further traumatizes our clients and delays their healing process.

For those who have no choice but to take on the challenge of entering the shelter system, they are doing so with little hope of a quick solution. The need for housing is overwhelming and options limited. A family could spend months in a shelter before they are able to secure permanent housing. Displacement can cause great emotional distress and can put victims of domestic violence in physical danger if placed in city shelters which do not protect their confidentiality.

The cycle of abuse so often leaves individuals sealed off from support systems, leaving many with nowhere to turn. A compassionate society must go the extra mile for these women and children by providing a basic housing subsidy that enables them to restart their lives on sound footing. The city does have resources in place to offer cost-effective alternatives for the 490 domestic violence victims who have lost their Section 8 vouchers. Today I implore the committees to objectively consider those options and identify solutions.

Here are two current cases which Met Council's Domestic Violence Unit have dealt with in the last two weeks alone, which I trust will illuminate the ramifications of withdrawing Section 8.

Nikki Martinez, MSW

Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty
80 Maiden Lane, 10th Floor
New York, NY. 10038
212.453.9672 (*phone*)
212.453.9627 (*fax*)

Family Justice Center
126-02 82nd Avenue
Queens, NY. 11415
718.575.4539 (*phone*)
718.575.3193 (*fax*)

Case Examples

(1)

Ms. R is from Far Rockaway, Queens. She has four children and had been living in her abusive marriage for 15 years. They separated in March, 2009 and she obtained an order of protection in Queens Family Court. Her husband repeatedly violated the order by harassing her and becoming physically violent. Although he has been arrested on more than one occasion, the abuser continues to violate the court order and my client refers to it as “merely a piece of paper.” The client resides in the home she shared with her husband, where years of abuse took place. In addition to the traumatic memories housed in the apartment, the dwelling has been deemed illegal by the City of New York and she has been ordered to vacate the premises. In retaliation for reporting his illegal apartment to the city, the landlord has begun to harass my client and report to her abuser her activities, even allowing him onto the property despite the court protection order. My client has nowhere else to go, and hopes to avoid shelter at all costs, knowing what her children have already experienced. Her husband refuses to pay child support and she is unable to find work. Upon receiving a Section 8 voucher she believed she could finally begin to rebuild her life, only to lose it before her dreams could be realized. She recently began to experience panic attacks and has been hospitalized 2 times in the last month.

(2)

Ms. J lives in Manhattan with her six-year-old son, not shared with her abuser. She has been diagnosed with bi-polar disorder and is awaiting disability benefits, but currently has no income besides her monthly food stamp allotment. After living in an abusive relationship for several years my client finally separated from her perpetrator on July 15, 2009, following a violent incident. Ms. J filed for an order of protection in Family Court, but her former partner has continued to harass her despite the order. Family and friends of the perpetrator have called my client’s home to make threats of violence and at one point a bag of feces was left on her doorstep. The abuser has also repeatedly followed my client’s son to school, forcing her to make special accommodations so that he can safely attend. The client was awarded a Section 8 voucher and was intending to move to Pennsylvania to be near her mother and to escape the constant harassment. She secured an apartment in Pennsylvania, and just before the transfer of the voucher was secure the program was ended abruptly, leaving my client with few options.

February 9, 2010

New York City Council
Committee on Housing and Buildings

Oversight- The recent loss of section 8 vouchers and the future of section 8 in New York City

Good Morning, My name is Alvin Johnson I am the Community Board 11 Housing Committee Chair. Community Board 11's foot print is in East Harlem/El Barrio where 84% of the housing stock is either subsidized housing or rent regulated housing, with many of these households receiving or on the Section 8 waiting list.

The second page of my testimony is a letter dated December 30, 2009 from The New York City Housing Authority notifying over 3000 families, many of them from East Harlem that applied for and received their Section 8 vouchers that those vouchers are worthless and would not be honored.

In the letter which NYCHA is taking no responsibility for issuing the 3000 Section 8 vouchers that they knew never existed because the HUD funds were never allocated for these vouchers.

I ask the Council to demand that NYCHA come before you immediately and explain to you
. Who was responsible for crushing the hopes and dreams of over 3000 families?
. When did NYCHA know that they had made this unconscionable era.
. What will be done so that this can never happen again.
. And NYCHA should immediately place all 3000 voucher holders in warehoused NYCHA apartments.
I think NYCHA certainly owe this to the devastated families.

In closing:

The future of Section 8 in New York City can only happen with the help of the City Council.

I urge the Council to call your Senate and Assembly counterparts and tell them they must pass Senate bill S3326 and Assembly bill A9230 (please see attached bill).

These bills would place all Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 buildings built after 1974 into rent stabilization and making it impossible for the landlord of my building to increase the rent roll from 1.8 million dollars to 2.9 million dollars which they have done.

If S3326 were passed the most my landlord would be allowed to increase the rents would be 3½ % per year or \$63,000 per year not the 2.1 million dollars he's currently going to get.

In my building alone where 90% of the apartments will receive Section 8 vouchers we would save Section 8 over 2 million dollars a year if S3326 is passed.

Now times that by the hundreds of Mitchell-Lamas and Section 8 buildings that would be placed into rent stabilization retroactively in New York City saving Section 8 hundreds of millions of dollars per year.
That savings would be more than enough to fund those 3000 NYCHA vouchers.

S3326 is an important bill that will help assure the future of Section 8 in New York City.
We must get this bill passed.

Thank you

Alvin Johnson
CB 11 Housing Committee Chair



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TEL: (212) 306-3000 • <http://nyc.gov/nycha>

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December 30, 2009

Dear Section 8 Voucher Holder:

During these challenging economic times demand for subsidized housing assistance in New York City is at an all time high, and more people have been turning to the Section 8 program as a means of providing them with affordable housing. The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) has worked vigorously to meet this demand. We are trying to secure additional federal funds to accommodate applicants and approved voucher holders in their pursuit of decent, safe and affordable housing through the Section 8 program.

Unfortunately, due to insufficient federal funds, NYCHA will not be able to accept your rental packages or provide Section 8 assistance at this time. We recognize the impact of this decision on your family. Please be assured that you will be given priority to have your voucher restored should Section 8 funding become available. At such time, NYCHA will contact you in the order of the date that your application was certified and you will receive a new voucher with a full term. At the present time, we cannot determine how long the current situation will last. Please let us know right away if there is a change in your address or contact information so that we can keep you informed.

The Department of Homeless Services offers advice and counseling on alternatives to shelter for those at risk of homelessness through Homebase offices located Citywide. Those in need of such assistance can call 311 to find a Homebase location closest to them.

NYCHA remains committed to doing our best to assist you and your family during these difficult times. We are working to obtain federal funding to make new vouchers possible and pursuing other means of making housing available to families that are most in need.

Sincerely,

Gregory Kern
Assistant Deputy General Manager
Leased Housing Department

A translation of this document is available online at www.nyc.gov/nycha/section8
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S3326A

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S3326A: Relates to limited profit housing companies

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Sponsor: STEWART-COUSINS

Other Versions: [S3326](#)

Same as: [A9230](#)

Committee: [HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT](#)

Law Section: Emergency Tenant Protection Act of 1974

S3326A Summary

Relates to limited profit housing companies.

Act: AN ACT to amend the emergency tenant protection act of nineteen seventy-four, in relation to limited-profit housing companies and other buildings or structures which received project-based rental assistance

S3326A Actions

Mar 16, 2009 REFERRED TO HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Jun 29, 2009 AMEND AND RECOMMIT TO HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Jun 29, 2009 PRINT NUMBER 3326A

"Same as" Actions for Bill [A9230](#)

S3326A Memo

BILL NUMBER: S3326A

TITLE OF BILL :

An act to amend the emergency tenant protection act of nineteen seventy-four, in relation to limited-profit housing companies and other buildings or structures which received project-based rental assistance

PURPOSE OR GENERAL IDEA OF BILL :

This bill protects those tenants who live in Mitchell-Lama and project-based Section 8 buildings whose owners have bought out of the Mitchell-Lama program or who no longer have Section 8 contracts with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC PROVISIONS :

This bill authorizes New York City or any city, town or village in the counties of Westchester, Nassau and Rockland to extend the Emergency Tenant Protection Act (the ETPA) to cover rental buildings which: (1) were owned by limited-profit housing companies which voluntarily dissolved or which dissolve in the future, or (2) were covered by rental assistance contracts between their owners and HUD and such contracts expired or terminated previously or do so in the future. The bill also prevents owners of such buildings from applying for higher initial rents under the ETPA or the New York City Rent Stabilization Law than were previously charged to their tenants.

JUSTIFICATION :

Many limited-profit housing companies are exercising their option to buy-out of the Mitchell-Lama program. Likewise, HUD contracts with the owners of rental buildings for Section 8 assistance are expiring, being terminated or not being renewed. Existing middle income tenants in Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 housing are faced with eviction if they cannot afford new market rents. Extending the ETPA to these buildings will ensure that existing tenants can continue to afford to live in their current apartments. ETPA coverage will also enable building owners to more readily be eligible for rent increases under annual ETPA guidelines.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY :

2008 - S.5284 - Died - Housing

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS :

Most costs of administration of ETPA and rent stabilization are covered by per unit fees charged to property owners.

EFFECTIVE DATE :

Immediately and shall apply to Mitchell-Lama buildings that bought out of the program in the past or do so in the future and buildings with Section 8 contracts that ended previously or that do so in the future.

S3326A Text

S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

3326--A

2009-2010 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

March 16, 2009

Introduced by Sens. STEWART-COUSINS, ADAMS, ADDABBO, DIAZ,

HASSELL-THOMPSON, HUNTLEY, KLEIN, KRUEGER, MONSERRATE, ONORATO, PERKINS, SAVINO, SCHNEIDERMAN, SERRANO, SQUADRON, STAVISKY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Housing, Construction and Community Development -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the emergency tenant protection act of nineteen seventy-four, in relation to limited-profit housing companies and other buildings or structures which received project-based rental assistance

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Legislative findings and declaration of emergency. The
2 legislature hereby finds and declares that the serious public emergency
3 which led to the enactment of the existing laws regulating residential
4 rents and evictions continues to exist; that such laws would better
5 serve the public interest if certain changes were made thereto, includ-
6 ing extending to certain cities, towns and villages the authority to
7 provide for the regulation of rents and evictions with regard to housing
8 accommodations that cease or have ceased to be regulated pursuant to
9 article 2 of the private housing finance law, known as the Mitchell-Lama
10 law, or pursuant to project-based section eight contracts entered into
11 with the federal government.

12 The legislature further recognizes that severe disruption of the
13 rental housing market has occurred and threatens to be exacerbated as a
14 result of the abrupt termination of rent and eviction regulation when
15 buildings completed or substantially renovated as family units on or
16 after January first, nineteen hundred seventy-four exit the Mitchell-
17 Lama program or when buildings cease to be subject to project-based
18 section eight contracts. The situation had permitted speculative and
19 profiteering practices and has brought about the loss of vital and irre-
20 placeable affordable housing for working persons and families.

21 The legislature therefore declares that in order to prevent uncertain-
22 ty, potential hardship and dislocation of tenants living in housing

EXPLANATION--Matter in *ITALICS* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[] is old law to be omitted.

LBD07971-12-9

S. 3326--A

2

1 accommodations subject to government regulations as to rentals and
2 continued occupancy as well as those not subject to such regulations,
3 the provisions of this act are necessary to protect the public health,
4 safety and general welfare. The necessity in the public interest for the
5 provisions hereinafter enacted is hereby declared as a matter of legis-
6 lative determination.

7 S 2. Section 5 of section 4 of chapter 576 of the laws of 1974 consti-
8 tuting the emergency tenant protection act of nineteen seventy-four is
9 amended by adding a new subdivision c to read as follows:

10 C. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF THIS SECTION, NOTHING SHALL
11 PREVENT THE DECLARATION OF AN EMERGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION THREE OF
12 THIS ACT FOR RENTAL HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS LOCATED IN BUILDINGS OR
13 STRUCTURES WHICH WERE OWNED BY A COMPANY ESTABLISHED UNDER ARTICLE TWO
14 OF THE PRIVATE HOUSING FINANCE LAW, OTHER THAN A MUTUAL COMPANY, WHICH
15 ARE NO LONGER OWNED BY SUCH COMPANY BY REASON OF A VOLUNTARY DISSOLUTION
16 PURSUANT TO SECTION THIRTY-FIVE OF SUCH LAW OR FOR RENTAL HOUSING ACCOM-
17 MODATIONS LOCATED IN BUILDINGS OR STRUCTURES DEFINED AS COVERED PROJECTS

18 PURSUANT TO SECTION 8 OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSING ACT OF NINETEEN THIR-
 19 TY-SEVEN, AS AMENDED, OR ANY SUCCESSOR STATUTE, AND ANY REGULATIONS
 20 PROMULGATED THEREUNDER IN WHICH RENTAL HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS RECEIVED
 21 PROJECT-BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
 22 HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT PURSUANT TO CONTRACTS WITH THE OWNERS OF
 23 SUCH BUILDINGS OR STRUCTURES WHICH EXPIRED OR WERE TERMINATED. THE
 24 INITIAL LEGAL REGULATED RENT FOR HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS LOCATED IN
 25 BUILDINGS OR STRUCTURES THAT WERE OWNED BY HOUSING COMPANIES OR THAT
 26 WERE COVERED PROJECTS PREVIOUSLY REGULATED UNDER THE PRIVATE HOUSING
 27 FINANCE LAW OR UNDER FEDERAL LAW, SHALL BE THE RENT CHARGED TO AND PAID
 28 BY THE TENANT IN OCCUPANCY ON JANUARY FIRST, TWO THOUSAND SEVEN OR, FOR
 29 ACCOMMODATIONS VACANT ON SUCH DATE, THE MOST RECENT RENT CHARGED TO AND
 30 PAID BY A TENANT PRIOR TO SUCH DATE, INCLUDING ANY INCOME-RELATED
 31 SURCHARGES, AS ADJUSTED BY ALL APPLICABLE GUIDELINES INCREASES AND OTHER
 32 INCREASES AUTHORIZED BY LAW. THE PROVISIONS OF SUBDIVISION A OF SECTION
 33 NINE OF THIS ACT OR OF SUBDIVISION A OF SECTION 26-513 OF THE ADMINIS-
 34 TRATIVE CODE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK SHALL NOT APPLY TO ANY HOUSING
 35 ACCOMMODATION WHICH BECAME SUBJECT TO THIS ACT PURSUANT TO THE
 36 PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBDIVISION.

37 S 3. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in a city
 38 having a population of one million or more, the New York city rent
 39 stabilization law of nineteen hundred sixty-nine may be amended by local
 40 law or ordinance to provide for the regulation of rents and evictions
 41 and the enforcement of such rent stabilization law with regard to hous-
 42 ing accommodations made subject to such law by a declaration of emergen-
 43 cy made pursuant to this act.

44 S 4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall apply to housing
 45 accommodations located in buildings or structures owned by housing
 46 companies that dissolved on, before or after such date and to housing
 47 accommodations in buildings or structures that were covered projects and
 48 had contracts for rental assistance that expired or were terminated on,
 49 before or after such date; provided that the amendments to section 5 of
 50 the emergency tenant protection act of nineteen seventy-four made by
 51 section two of this act shall expire on the same date as such act
 52 expires and shall not affect the expiration of such act as provided in
 53 section 17 of chapter 576 of the laws of 1974.

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Good morning. My name is Lorna Thomas. I lived through DOMESTIC VIOLENCE for 33 years. I could not go to school or work. I stayed home because my husband said I had to. I had nowhere to go, because I have all boys, four of them. At the time, there was no shelter out there that was willing to take boys over the age of seven years old. I had to stay in my abusive situation until my last boy was 13 years old, when a shelter by the name of My Sisters Place in Yonkers took me in. They applied for Section 8 for me twice but I did not get a voucher during my four month stay in that shelter.

Once discharged from My Sister' Place, I went to another shelter in Harlem. Again, a housing specialist for that shelter put in my application for Section 8, for the third time now, because they were told that I did not have an application on file. What I did not realize at the time was that my applications kept getting denied because I did not possess two police reports to fulfill the documentation requirements for domestic violence priority. I did file a police report the first day I entered the shelter. I did not report the abuse before that because my husband was threatening to kill me and there was no way I could have reported him and stayed in the same house with him.

I still hadn't gotten my Section 8, but I was blessed I was able to move into my own apartment and got a job in Safe Horizon on the crisis hotline, which I loved. I also got another job as a supervisor in a DV shelter in Queens. I was doing well trying to make it in the real world, but unfortunately, I fell on my back on one of my jobs and broke my right wrist. Making matters worse, the doctor put the cast on my hand wrong that caused my hand to be deformed. I also injured my spine and I now have three herniated disks in my neck and two in my lower back which gives me black out spells head ache, numbness, spasms, and sleepless nights of pain.

I have not been back to work in five years due to my injury. I am completely disabled and I was diagnosed by my five doctors who are treating me for my injuries at this present time. Due to my injuries, I was unable to pay my rent and I became at risk of eviction. The Center for Senior Citizens, which is the welfare office, sent me to apply for Section 8 again because they could not help me any more with the rent assistance.

The worse part of all this is after I left my home, my abusive ex-husband was very angry and he filed for divorce. We did get the divorce, but after all this time trying to stay safely away from my ex-husband, my worst nightmare came true. The court gave my ex-husband my address of where I am living at, putting me back in danger all over again. I remember when I got the message from my youngest son. Soon after, my husband did show up at my apartment. I am now trying to use my skills to manage this abuse all over again. This is very stressful and right now, because of my injuries, anything that is stressful is not good for me. It only triggers the blackout spells and spasms that I am experiencing.

Finally, my prayers were answered and in 2009, I was granted Section 8 after my fourth application. I started looking for an apartment, but with all of my health problems; headaches, back spasms, black outs, I found the housing search process very difficult. As I the end of the 6 months drew near, I requested an extension on the voucher. I complied with bringing in documents from my doctors on two separate occasions, but then I heard that Section 8 was frozen. I felt both devastated and determined the day I heard the news.

After living through domestic violence and injury for more than 10 years, I need that voucher of Section 8. My life might depend on it. I hope someone who has the power to help me, does the fair thing for me and other voucher holders and reinstates our Section 8. I have no way to pay for alternative housing without it, I am too disabled to work and I am in constant danger. PLEASE HELP US KEEP OUR SECTION 8 VOUCHERS! Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lorna Thomas

(347) 405-7080

aadilah360@yahoo.com

TESTIMONY TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS
AND THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

By: PAVEL DEREVYANCHENKO

February 9, 2010

My name is Pavel Derevyanchenko. My wife Lyudmila Strunitskaya and I live at 850 West 176th Street, New York, New York 10033. We are both 71 years of age. We both are diabetic. My wife's diabetes affected her vision. My wife is physically disabled. My wife underwent surgery where the doctors required using veins from legs. As a result, she is not able to move around and could not be here today. I suffered from a heart attack four years ago approximately in 2006.

The cancellation of this program would not allow us to support our basic expenses. Our household income is only \$1,115 from social security. 44% of my income goes towards rent. After I pay rent, I do not have enough money to meet my basic expenses. Because we are diabetic, the reduced money will not allow us to maintain the quality of foods we need to maintain our health and quality of life. The loss of the Section 8 assistance will affect our health.

Last month, my wife and I celebrated our 50th anniversary. I could not even take her to a simple movie or buy any special treat because I need to pay the costs of the items, transportation to the event – all of which I do not have because I cannot afford because I have to pay an additional \$160 in rent.

When we received the voucher in May 2009, I was happy because I had hoped that the Section 8 funding would help me to meet basic expenses and I would have better quality of life. But when my landlord refused to accept the voucher, I felt like they were harassing us. With the help of my lawyers, I got a letter from NYCHA that the voucher was valid. Still, they rejected it. I was frustrated and disappointed.

My lawyers sued my landlord in October 2009. Now, the case is in court. The landlord has not agreed to settle and then I get the letter that NYCHA is cancelling the program. I felt frustrated and betrayed by the City. I felt like the landlord finally got its way that is illegal. I can't seem to get over this hurdle.

We had applied for the Section 8 voucher in 2008 which was granted in May 2009. Two years later, I am older and my health is worse. I am still waiting for help.

Respectfully submitted,

Pavel Derevyanchenko

If you would like to reach me, you may contact Chaumtoli Huq, Director of Litigation at Manhattan Legal Services, at 646-442-3150, or Tanya Bayeva, Associate Attorney, at Milbank Tweed Hadley & McCloy LLP, at (212) 530-5756. MLS and Milbank are the attorneys representing me in my case against Alco Realty.



**LEGAL
SERVICES**

INCORPORATED

TESTIMONY

ON

**THE RECENT LOSS OF SECTION 8 VOUCHERS AND
THE FUTURE OF SECTION 8 IN NEW YORK CITY**

PRESENTED BEFORE:

**THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING, COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND
BUILDINGS AND THE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE**

PRESENTED BY:

MFY LEGAL SERVICES, INC.

FEBRUARY 9, 2010

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING, COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND
BUILDINGS AND THE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE**

“Oversight - The Recent Loss of Section 8 Vouchers and the Future of Section 8 in New
York City.”

February 9, 2010
CITY HALL CHAMBERS
New York, NY 10007

Good Morning. Thank you for inviting MFY Legal Services to this hearing and giving us this opportunity to testify. My name is Runa Rajagopal and I am a senior staff attorney at MFY Legal Services, Inc., a non-profit law firm that works towards equal access to justice for New York’s neediest and most marginalized communities. I work in the Mental Health Law Project, which has been funded by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene since 1983 to address the civil legal needs of New Yorkers who are severely and persistently mentally ill.

Although the Mental Health Law Project is a general practice project where we advise and represent individuals in various substantive issue areas, the greatest need for legal assistance and an issue of the highest priority for our project and organization continues to be access to and the preservation of affordable housing.

We are in a Housing Crisis

Our project is contacted regularly by mental health consumers who are on the brink of losing their housing. The reasons for their predicaments are varied, but often have to do with an individual having chronic mental health impairments that limit his/her level of functioning; being poor with access to limited and conditional benefits, if any; living in a city with high costs, impossible rents and shrinking housing options; or a combination of all of the above.

Where we can, we intervene, zealously advocate on behalf of our clients as tenants and mental health consumers, connect our clients with supportive services and city resources and fight to preserve their housing and prevent eviction.

But now, more than ever, we have received requests for assistance from individuals who simply cannot afford their rent. As an attorney, it is quite frustrating and disheartening to tell those who call for help that we cannot take a case because the issue is related to income and affordability rather than a defensible legal claim. I have had too many people in this situation call to ask questions like “where will I go if I am evicted from my home and have no place else to live?”, “doesn’t the city protect mentally disabled individuals from eviction?” and “aren’t there any programs that can help make my rent affordable when I’m on a limited income?”

Section 8 Must Be Preserved

My comments today are to reiterate what everybody already knows: we have to fight to preserve Section 8 because we have few other options. Our clients rely heavily on access to programs like Section 8 because for most poor, disabled people, it is one of the only ways to afford an apartment in New York City. It is with the promise of the possibility of getting this help that our clients fill out their applications, submit multiple documents, keep appointments and navigate the arduous bureaucratic process. This is often done while experiencing domestic abuse, through disability, while fighting eviction or while homeless. Applicants anxiously wait on lists for 5, 10, sometimes 15 years to become eligible.

For those who are lucky, they will finally receive the long awaited notice that says “We are pleased to inform you that the processing of your Section 8 Housing Assistance application has been completed and you appear to be eligible for this program.” But imagine the heartbreak and frustration for those families, after having persevered through this process, having met all the requirements and obligations of eligibility and having endured the wait to finally be deemed eligible, to then receive notice stating that they would not get help due to insufficient federal funds, with no further explanation.

Currently I have a client whose story serves as an illustration of this scenario. Ms. J, a mentally disabled, 50 year-old Bronx native, contacted MFY when she received notice that she could be evicted from her apartment due to nonpayment of rent. Ms. J has lived in her rent regulated apartment since 1977. When Ms. J first moved into her apartment, she could make ends meet by working-she raised her three children, put herself through school and met all her other obligations.

However, things in Ms. J’s life began to fall apart. Ms. J became the victim of an abusive and violent relationship. Additionally, although Ms. J had managed her Bipolar Disorder since she was in her twenties, the symptoms of her illness and the stresses of her circumstance made it difficult to continue working. In 2000, Ms. J was determined to be too disabled to work and began receiving Supplemental Security Income [“SSI”].

When Ms. J began receiving SSI, she also applied for the Section 8 program. Although she was fortunate to live in a rent regulated apartment, her income and rent were dangerously close to each and she knew would be in need of the assistance. Over the years, Ms. J struggled with paying her rent and meeting all the other costs of living but she continued to do so with the hope of getting section 8. Finally in April of 2009,

Ms. J received a notice that she was determined to be eligible for Section 8 and would be getting a voucher soon. Her eligibility came right in time, because Ms. J had almost drained her entire life savings and would be falling into arrears in the coming months.

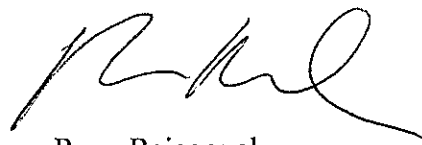
After waiting for months, Ms. J called Section 8 in December 2009 to inquire about her voucher. She was told that the program had been suspended and that she would not be getting any assistance. Ms. J has not received any other notices. Shortly thereafter Ms. J's landlord took her to court and now she is at risk of eviction and stands to lose the place she has called her home for over 33 years.

Ms. J's case is just one story of thousands of individuals who are disabled, on limited income, struggling to get by and in desperate need of help from Section 8. We must take action to protect our city's most vulnerable individuals and fight to preserve Section 8 and affordable housing.

I thank you for giving us this opportunity to testify at this hearing.

DATED: February 9, 2010

Submitted by,



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Section 8 Vouchers Lost: Charting A Better Course For The Future

**City Council Hearing
February 9, 2010**

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Testimony of Piper Hoffman, Director of Advocacy

The Partnership for the Homeless would like to thank the Committees on General Welfare, Housing and Buildings, and Public Housing for convening today's hearing about The Recent Loss of Section 8 Vouchers and the Future of Section 8 in New York City. My name is Piper Hoffman and I am the Director of Advocacy at the Partnership for the Homeless, which has provided a range of services to homeless New Yorkers and battled the causes of homelessness for over 25 years.

Voucher Revocation Leads to Homelessness

The recent revocation of thousands of Section 8 vouchers will leave many families not only feeling shocked and disempowered, but it will also leave them homeless. A majority of the over 3,000 families who lost vouchers were in emergency situations, including victims of domestic violence, youth aging out of the foster care system, and people who were recently homeless. (See *The New York Times*, "Thousands Lose Rent Vouchers in Cutback," 12/17/09.) People who faced emergencies that made them unable to afford housing had the promise of housing assistance taken away, leaving no doubt that a substantial number of them will become or remain homeless. This shocking reversal is tragic for those affected. More broadly, it is a symptom of the fundamental problems with New York City's system for helping homeless people pay for housing.

The City's Reliance on Short-Term Subsidies is Untenable

New York City sponsors short-term, one- to two-year housing subsidies that can allow people to live in a stable home while applying for Section 8, and ideally move seamlessly from the city's subsidy to the federal subsidy. There are several problems with this approach.

First, short-term subsidies are an ineffective remedy for homelessness: people who receive one or two years of rental assistance without getting job training, child care, and other supports that can help poor people become economically self-sufficient will likely not be able to pay their own rent at market rates after their subsidies end. This is a fatal flaw of the city's primary housing subsidy, the Advantage program.

Second, relying on a short-term subsidy to bridge the gap until Section 8 becomes available succeeds only some of the time. For some Advantage subsidy recipients, one or two years are not enough time to receive Section 8, whether it is because they do not meet Section 8's requirements, because the Section 8 process takes too long, or because their circumstances change in a way that leads the Section 8 program to force them to start the application process anew.

Third, as demonstrated so clearly by the current debacle, the city cannot control federally-funded subsidies like Section 8. If the federal government were to decide to cut the budget for this program, or were unable to meet its financial obligations, or even were to terminate the program entirely, the city would be left with hundreds of thousands of extremely poor New Yorkers who would be less than two years away from becoming homeless (again), in addition to the tens of thousands who would be homeless at the time. By providing only short-term subsidies that depend on the availability of long-term federally-funded subsidies, the city forces the poorest among us into a lifeboat that may capsize before it reaches land.

The City's Narrow Reliance on Section 8 Vouchers Perpetuates a Permanent Underclass

Pay for a homeless person's housing, and she will not be homeless for today. Help her become capable of paying for housing herself, and she and her family need never be homeless again. Though this twist on the old adage may be intuitive, the structure of Section 8 vouchers can instead keep people reliant on government assistance throughout their lives and from generation to generation.

The impulse behind the Section 8 long-term housing subsidy is laudable: provide stable housing for people who cannot afford it themselves. But Section 8 does nothing to help people become self-sufficient, to prepare them to one day graduate from Section 8 into housing they pay for themselves. The result is a permanent underclass of people who rely on the government for the roofs over their heads, leaving them dependent and circumscribing their options in life (such as where they want to live).

Rather than providing only housing, an anti-homelessness program should also provide the services that people need to reach the point where they can house themselves. These services include, at the very least, education and job training, to qualify recipients for living-wage jobs; child care, to enable recipients to attend job training and then to maintain steady work; and adequate, accessible health care, so that a medical crisis does

not wipe out a family's resources. It is comprehensive programs with components like these that can stop the cycle of generational poverty.

The biggest obstacle to a comprehensive and effective anti-poverty program like this is the widespread belief that a permanent underclass is inevitable in modern urban society. As long as taxpayers believe that there will always be homeless people, they will not be willing to expend resources on programs intended to end homelessness – why throw away money on an impossible dream? But it is not impossible. New York City has the means to implement a program that would provide both housing and the services and supports that will help poor people climb out of poverty and stay out.

For now, housing subsidies are absolutely indispensable to provide housing for homeless people. But in a world where poverty is not inevitable and help is available to make self-sufficiency possible, long-term housing subsidies would not be necessary. In that world, a federally-funded voucher that can be taken away at any moment would not be the only thing keeping a family from having to spend the night on the street.

Conclusion

The Partnership for the Homeless strongly encourages the City to make provisions to replace the Section 8 vouchers that were awarded and then revoked. The Partnership also urges the City to eliminate short-term housing subsidies in favor of long-term subsidies, and to provide support services in conjunction with those subsidies that will help recipients become self-sufficient.



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

SCOTT M. STRINGER
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer
Testimony Before the Committee on Public Housing
and the Committee on General Welfare
February 9, 2010**

Thank you Chairperson Mendez and Chairperson Palma for the opportunity to testify on the New York City Housing Authority's Section 8 crisis and the future of the Section 8 program in New York City.

As everyone in this chamber knows, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) exceeded the maximum number of Section 8 vouchers that are funded by the federal government and announced in mid-December that a considerable number of vouchers that had *already* been committed to high-need tenants and families would be terminated. The most recently published figures place the number of terminated NYCHA Section 8 vouchers at 2,330.

Shortly after NYCHA's stunning announcement, my office recommended a series of short and long-term policy proposals meant to return value to bankrupt Section 8 vouchers that were in the hands of potential tenants. Together with a broad collation of advocates and elected officials we have called for:

- Additional funding from the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA);
- Interagency collaboration to transfer or financially support Section 8 vouchers that have been disbursed by the Housing Authority;
- Full disclosure of NYCHA vacancies and priority placement of victims of NYCHA's Section 8 voucher mismanagement in vacant public housing units.

Meetings with advocates and elected officials have been convened, press conferences on the steps of City Hall have been held, and letters outlining our policy proposals have been sent to the relevant Deputy Mayors and the Chairman of the Housing Authority. Yet the coalition that has been formed, and more importantly the tenants and families holding terminated vouchers, have received no response from the Housing Authority or from the City.

The collective inaction on this issue is extremely disappointing. Therefore, I am renewing my call today on the Bloomberg administration to stop sweeping this issue under the rug and immediately begin a dialogue with practitioners, advocates and local elected officials so that we can put fully-funded Section 8 vouchers back into the hands of tenants that were led to believe that they had genuine vouchers in the first place.

Finally, I am re-voicing my call for a full investigation into this situation by acting NYCHA Inspector General Kelvin Jeremiah. On January 11th, my office formally requested a review and investigation into the termination of NYCHA Section 8 vouchers, which was acknowledged in a letter from Mr. Jeremiah on January 20th. However, since that time the acting Inspector General has given no indication as to whether an investigation will be forthcoming and his office declined my request to discuss a potential investigation.

An opaque response from the acting Inspector General demeans the hardship that thousands of families and individual Section 8 voucher holders have endured since mid-December and it is utterly unacceptable.

The only way to prevent a repeat scandal like this one is through a top to bottom investigation where key policy makers within the Housing Authority are held accountable for the decisions that suddenly left some 2,600 tenants and families with worthless vouchers. The City should be honest with itself and its constituents. This was not a run of the mill bureaucratic blunder – many people were rendered homeless at the height of the cold season with a hastily called press conference as their only notice – and it should not be treated as such by the New York City Department of Investigation or the acting Inspector General.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify at this hearing.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL HOUSING
AND BUILDINGS AND GENERAL WELFARE COMMITTEES ON THE
RECENT LOSS OF SECTION 8 VOUCHERS AND THE FUTURE OF
SECTION 8 IN NEW YORK CITY**

FEBRUARY 9, 2010

This testimony is submitted on behalf of Legal Services NYC. Legal Services NYC is the nation's largest provider of free legal services to the poor. For nearly 40 years, Legal Services NYC has provided critical legal help to low-income residents of New York City. The nineteen neighborhood offices of Legal Services NYC operate in diverse communities throughout the city, representing thousands of low-income tenants annually in disputes involving their rights to remain in their homes, including their right to obtain, make use of and retain Section 8 vouchers. Legal Services NYC has a long history of providing high quality legal representation to victims of domestic violence. In addition to advocating for orders of protection, we represent victims in custody, visitation, child support, and divorce matters. Our neighborhood offices have established strong ties to community based domestic violence groups as well as other agencies in the community and work closely with other public interest legal agencies involved in this work.

Legal Services NYC commends the City Council for holding this oversight hearing to draw attention to a critical issue affecting thousands of low-income families throughout New York City. The crisis caused by the withdrawal of Section 8 vouchers, according to the latest figures available, affects at least 1932 families.¹ In December 2009, the New York City Housing

¹ Briefing Paper Of The Infrastructure And Government Affairs Divisions, New York City Council, February 2010, p. 10

Authority (NYCHA) decided that it could no longer fund new vouchers and also began to summarily terminate the Section 8 vouchers of thousands of New Yorkers. Although the official numbers have varied over time, this group includes, at a minimum: 1,115 formerly homeless families with barriers to employment; 131 families with children in foster care awaiting reunification or youth aging out of foster care; 41 intimidated witnesses; 352 victims of domestic violence; and 293 “other” cases. This mass termination of Section 8 vouchers is unprecedented in the thirty-five year history of the Section 8 program. Unless a solution is found and found quickly, many of the tenants will wind up in the shelter system, at a cost far greater than that of replacing the Section 8 vouchers.² State and city government must find a solution for every family affected as soon as possible, as all of the tenants face housing crises, and many tenants, including some of the Legal Services NYC clients whose cases are described below, actually face life-threatening situations.

The Section 8 voucher program is a lifeline for the poorest New Yorkers and the last line of defense against homelessness for many. People receiving Section 8 vouchers can rent apartments on the private market and pay 30% of their household income for rent, with the voucher from a qualified public housing authority providing a subsidy for the rest. For the working poor, the disabled, and for people on public assistance, Section 8 vouchers are often a family’s only chance at staying together as a family or avoiding the shelter system.

Some of the tenants affected by the voucher termination crisis are those whose vouchers landlords refused to accept. Thanks to the City Council, tenants and their advocates have a powerful tool to use in Local Law 10 of 2008, which prohibits landlords from discriminating against tenants based on their source of income. Legal Services NYC advocates have been able

² The cost of shelter for a family is \$36,000 per year. Julie Bosman, “City Pays for One-Way Tickets Home,” New York Times, July 28, 2009.

to use Local Law 10 to secure permanent housing for low-income tenants who might have otherwise entered the shelter system, as well as to compel landlords to accept vouchers from existing tenants in order that their apartments can remain affordable. However, this law has been rendered, at least for the time being, meaningless for those tenants whose vouchers have been withdrawn by NYCHA.

We also want to draw attention to the devastating effect the Section 8 freeze has on families who have been separated by the placement of their children in foster care, including the clients of Legal Services NYC's constituent program, the Brooklyn Family Defense Project. Parents for whom homelessness or inadequate housing is the final barrier to having their children returned to their care are eligible to apply for Section 8 vouchers through the Administration for Children's Services' (ACS's) family reunification priority. For many families, a Section 8 voucher makes possible the long-awaited moment of reunification with children who were living with strangers through the foster care system. With a Section 8 voucher in hand, these parents can secure safe and permanent housing to bring their children home to – marking the end of their family's homelessness, overcrowded or otherwise unsafe living conditions, and of months or even years of traumatic family separation. We have been informed that 131 of the vouchers that were suspended on December 17, 2009, and the holders of which are still in need of assistance, are ACS-related vouchers. For the families on this list who were eagerly searching for apartments and preparing for reunification with their children, the Section 8 freeze means that their children will languish longer in foster care at the City's expense even though ACS has identified them as being ready to go home to their parents. For the families not yet on this list because their applications were still pending on December 17, 2009, their goal of reunification through Section 8 lies still further off.

For families who have been able to avoid foster care with the assistance of the Department of Homeless Services' (DHS) Children's Advantage housing subsidy, their temporary stability is threatened as they face homelessness once again when their one-to-two year Advantage leases end. Immediate action to assist the suspended voucher-holders, as well as long-term action to rehabilitate NYCHA's flawed administration of the Section 8 program, is essential to ensuring that this city provides responsible, long-lasting support to its residents in need of shelter, including children in foster care who are waiting as we speak to reunify with their parents.

Victims of domestic violence are devastated by the loss of Section 8 vouchers. For survivors without financial resources, the Section 8 Victim of Domestic Violence Priority Program (VDV) is often the only escape route from dangerous and abusive relationships. When we represent low-income domestic violence victims to secure orders of protection, a critical part of our assistance involves helping them with emergency shelter, and ultimately permanent housing. Emergency shelter is not always available and is time limited. Without a place to live, our clients are unable to leave their abusers. We have seen women return to abusive partners repeatedly because they had no place else to go. Recently an immigrant client left her abuser and moved into an illegal basement apartment while her section 8 application was pending. ACS threatened to remove her children if she didn't find a better, safer place to live. The Section 8 program was her only hope.

EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE AFFECTED

Below are a few examples of Legal Services NYC clients whose lives have been affected by the current Section 8 voucher crisis.

1. Patricia Argilagos (South Brooklyn Legal Services)

Patricia Argilagos lives in Brooklyn with her three children, aged 15, 18 and 22, and her one-week-old granddaughter. After experiencing serious ongoing domestic violence, involving hitting, stalking, and threats with a gun, Ms. Argilagos worked with Safe Horizon to obtain a Section 8 voucher as a domestic violence priority. Her voucher was dated February 3, 2009 with an expiration date of August 3, 2009.

On February 15, 2009, Ms. Argilagos' abuser pushed her out of her apartment window. She was seriously injured with a broken back, broken legs, and broken arm. She was in a coma for three days, and the surgery to repair her back lasted 14 hours. Her spine is now being held together by two plates and six pins. Ms. Argilagos spent two months in the hospital. When she was released, she went back to her apartment. She needed 24-hour nursing care for several months. During the day, she had a nurse come to the apartment, and at night, her daughter took care of her. Slowly, after being completely bedridden for months, she started to recover some of her mobility. At first, she could only use a wheelchair. Then, she began to use a walker or crutches. Moving around is still very painful for her.

Because Ms. Argilagos didn't want to lose her Section 8 voucher, she asked friends to be on the lookout for available apartments. In July, she heard about an apartment in a three-family house in Canarsie. She spoke with the landlord over the phone, and he told her that he would accept Section 8 and offer her a lease. The landlord brought all of the rental documents to her, and because a worker at the Section 8 office told her that she needed to come in person to meet

with them and deliver her apartment paperwork, Ms. Argilagos took Access-A-Ride to downtown Brooklyn on July 27, 2009.

During that meeting, the Section 8 worker told her that they couldn't process her rental package because the "address was wrong." She didn't understand what the issue was, but they told her there was nothing they could do, and that she'd need to find a new apartment. Because her voucher was set to expire in a few days, Section 8 offered to extend her voucher for two months, to October 3, 2009. She explained that she probably wouldn't be able to find another place, because of her injuries and her inability to move around and asked for help. The worker said, "Your problem is not our problem." During the two months of her voucher extension, she was in and out of the hospital. Because of her condition, she was not able to go around town looking for another apartment.

On October 6, 2009, she went in to the Section 8 office. She brought in her hospital documentation, and explained that during her two month extension she wasn't able to locate another apartment because she was disabled and couldn't really move around. The worker told her that she couldn't have any more time to find an apartment, because they weren't allowed to grant any more extensions. In December 2009, Ms. Argilagos asked for legal help from South Brooklyn Legal Services, to see if they could get her Section 8 voucher back. Her attorney, Latanya White, wrote a letter to the Section 8 office, but she was told that she couldn't have another extension or a new voucher, because they weren't letting anybody rent new apartments with Section 8.

Since the time her day nurses stopped coming to her apartment in August 2009, Ms. Argilagos has been very scared to be alone in the apartment where she was attacked. She has tried to stay with friends here and there, but right now she has nowhere else to go. She is still

living in her old apartment, and she is terrified that her abuser will try and hurt her again. He has not been apprehended.

2. Beryl Isaacs (Legal Services NYC-Bronx)

Ms. Isaacs is a sixty year-old woman living alone in a rent stabilized apartment in the Bronx. She suffers from several disabilities, including fibromyalgia and osteoarthritis. Ms. Isaacs first applied for a Section 8 voucher more than twenty years ago. She was finally issued a voucher in 2007. When she tried to get her landlord to take it, however, he refused. Instead he brought an eviction case against her, alleging that she had breached her lease as a result of being chronically late with a rent she could barely afford to pay. She sought the assistance of Legal Services, who brought a case alleging that the landlord was obligated to take her Section 8 because he was in receipt of J-51 tax benefits. She prevailed in that case but much time had passed while the case was litigated.

As per its former policy of re-issuing expired vouchers in cases where the tenant was involved in litigation against landlords who were wrongfully refusing Section 8, NYCHA re-issued Ms. Isaacs' voucher in August of 2009. Ms. Isaacs' attorney mailed the voucher package to her landlord but her landlord claimed not to have received it. Ms. Isaacs hand-delivered the package. Her landlord took several months to return her package. When he did, Ms. Isaacs brought it to her Section 8 worker who said it was incomplete. After making several efforts to get her landlord to complete the package, she arranged to meet her landlord at the Section 8 office in December. He didn't appear.

Ms. Isaacs' Section 8 caseworker did not tell her at her appointment in December that her voucher was in jeopardy. However, Ms. Isaacs got a letter at the end of December saying her voucher would not be honored though its expiration date had not yet passed.

Ms. Isaacs' landlord is suing her for unpaid rent. With an income consisting only of disability payments, and because of unreimbursed medical expenses, Ms. Isaacs will have trouble paying her full rent. Section 8 would double her income by lowering her rental obligation by \$300 a month.

3. Pavel Derevyanchenko (Manhattan Legal Services)

Pavel Derevyanchenko and his wife Lyudmila Strunitskaya live at 850 West 176th Street, New York, New York 10033. They are both 71 years old and diabetic. Ms. Strunitskaya's vision is impaired by her diabetes and Mr. Derevyanchenko had a heart attack in 2006. The only income the couple receives is a combined \$1,115 per month from Social Security. Forty-four percent of their income goes to pay their rent and, after the rent is paid, they have only \$621.25 left over for basic expenses. It is difficult for them to afford the healthy food they should eat because of their health and to afford the basic necessities of life.

Mr. Derevyanchenko received his voucher in May 2009, and he thought he would finally be able to meet basic expenses and have a better quality of life, but his landlord refused to accept the voucher. He sought the assistance of Manhattan Legal Services, which brought a lawsuit against his landlord, alleging a violation of Local Law 10. They are likely to prevail in the case but NYCHA's termination of the tenants' voucher undermines enforcement of Local Law 10 and emboldens the illegal conduct of landlords. This case also calls attention to the fact that

vulnerable populations such as the elderly and disabled need special attention in addressing this problem.

4. Mercedes Cruz (South Brooklyn Legal Services)

Mercedes Cruz applied for a voucher ten years ago. For thirteen years, she and her three children have lived in a single room she rents from another tenant. She is disabled and her only income is from Supplemental Social Insurance (SSI) and public assistance. With that income, she cannot afford an apartment. The room she lives in has space for only three beds and a table with three chairs where her children can sit to do their homework (her eldest son attends Brooklyn College). Ms. Cruz sleeps on the floor. The family's clothes are in suitcases or plastic bins because there is no room for a dresser.

After waiting ten years, Ms. Cruz finally received a voucher in the spring of 2009. She had trouble placing her voucher, however, because every broker she visited said that they "don't do" Section 8. South Brooklyn Legal Services has brought a Local Law 10 case against those brokers who were discriminating against Ms. Cruz, but the lawsuit will represent a pyrrhic victory if Ms. Cruz' voucher is not honored.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These examples make it clear that state and city government must take responsibility for addressing the needs of these and other low-income New Yorkers. Below are our recommendations for concerted action from various agencies to protect the affected Section 8 voucher holders.

1. NYCHA should give affected voucher holders a priority for public housing apartments immediately and inform them how to apply for this priority. We believe there are apartments available, as an audit by the City Comptroller's office drew attention to the fact that

many vacant NYCHA apartments were being kept vacant for long periods of time, instead of being rented to those in desperate need of housing.³ Alternatively, other agencies (ACS, DHS, or HPD) can make the appropriate referrals so that these tenants can receive the priority they need to get NYCHA apartments.

2. The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) should cover most or all households using the Advantage subsidy. This emergency infusion will help bridge NYCHA's Section 8 voucher funding gap and provide the funds necessary to protect New York City's most vulnerable populations. In addition, DHS should use some of the \$74.17 million in funds made available from the federal stimulus package to help resolve this crisis.⁴ DHS should use this stimulus money as intended -to bridge the funding gap threatening these families with homelessness.⁵

3. The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is currently holding approximately 500 Section 8 vouchers, which the agency should give to the affected voucher holders. HPD should also give its turnover vouchers to these households.

4. As soon as NYCHA has attrited the 2000 vouchers that it is over-leased, it should begin issuing vouchers to the affected households.

5. The Administration for Children Services (ACS) should cover the 131 families who were referred by ACS.

³ The Comptroller's audit found that 69% of the 3073 units off the market for capital renovations were vacant for more than three years. Office of the Comptroller Bureau of Management Audit, "Audit Report on the Timeliness of Renovation of Vacant Apartments by the New York City Housing Authority," July 13, 2006. See also Manny Fernandez, "City Room: Impatience Grows Over Vacancy Rate in Public Housing," New York Times, December 8, 2009, which calls attention to the issue and notes the excessive length of time that NYCHA apartments remain off the market.

⁴ See Mayor's Office of Operations, NYC Stat Stimulus Tracker at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/ops/nycstim/html/tracker/neighborhood.shtml>

⁵ Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP), OMB Approval Number: 2506-0180 (Expiration Date: 9/30/2009), pp. 8-9

6. The District Attorney should cover the 41 intimidated witnesses who were referred by them.

Finally, it is important to point out that the DHS Homebase program does not by itself provide a solution to this problem. Although Homebase is an important tool in preventing homelessness, this program by itself does not save people from homelessness. Only the availability of affordable housing can accomplish that goal, and in New York City, Section 8 is the major option for low-income people to find decent and affordable housing.

Conclusion

Legal Services NYC thanks the City Council for holding this oversight hearing and urges concerted action by the State and City agencies that can make a difference in solving this critical problem.

Respectfully submitted,

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February 9, 2010
Testimony before the City Council's Committees on General Welfare, Housing and Buildings and
Public Housing/NYCHA
"The Recent Loss of Section 8 Vouchers and the Future of Section 8 in New York City"
New Destiny Housing Corporation

Good morning, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Catherine Trapani and I am the director of the HousingLink Program at New Destiny Housing Corporation, a nonprofit organization that seeks to increase the permanent housing and services available to low-income survivors of domestic violence and others at risk of homelessness.

The loss of nearly 3,000 Section 8 vouchers has been absolutely devastating. Our HousingLink Helpline has received calls from dozens of voucher holders and advocates who are confused, frustrated and at a total loss as to what to do now that their vouchers have been rescinded. Most of HousingLink's callers are victims of domestic violence who desperately need affordable housing to escape their abusers and save their lives and the lives of their children. These victims were able to meet NYCHA's stringent documentation requires to prove that their lives were in danger due to the abuse they are suffering. They have complied with every request for additional documentation producing police reports, orders of protection, letters from social workers, police and District Attorneys offices. They have endured long waiting periods to actually receive the voucher and finally thought that they had secured the means to get out of an unsafe environment into a violence-free, permanent home. All of this, only to be told that there is no assistance for them after all; their vouchers are no longer valid.

Apart from entering (or remaining in) shelter until the crisis is resolved, there are no other housing resources available to them unless the documents they originally submitted to Section 8 to secure their priority in the first place are not too old to start the process of applying for Public Housing, an ordeal

equally onerous as the Section 8 application process that can take up to a year to come through even with an emergency priority. In essence, there are no real alternatives.

These victims of domestic violence (by last count there are nearly 500 of them) along with over 2,000 other equally needy households affected by the cuts deserve not simply an explanation, but the rental assistance that was promised to them. Since the Housing Authority does not have the funding to support the vouchers given, it is imperative that the City partner with all other relevant agencies throughout both the City and State to find a workable funding solution.

I have heard of several proposed solutions including a City/State funded rental subsidy to bridge the gap between now and the availability of Section 8 funding in the future, extending the Advantage program to cover DHS referred tenants who lost their vouchers, using stimulus money, using HPD Section 8 vouchers for the affected households or, to have each City agency who referred the tenant to the Section 8 program cover the cost of the tenants housing out of their own funds. The best solution probably will include some combination of all of these things but I would like to make a few points that I hope can help inform the process of identifying the best course to take.

First, many of the affected voucher holders were not referred by a City agency (including the almost 500 victims of domestic violence and the so-called non-emergency cases) so we must be sure that when a solution is adopted that every affected voucher holder is covered not just those that fall into certain categories.

Second, when taking other funding or homeless housing resources from another City agency like Public Housing or HPD Section 8 we must do so thoughtfully. We cannot solve this crisis by creating another for a different, equally need group of people.

Lastly, any solution we come up with on a City/State level will likely be a temporary one pending the availability of federal funds for Section 8. As we ask our partners in government to find a solution for these 3,000 households experiencing this unfair, acute crisis we must also ask to ensure that going forward when the Section 8 waiting list reopens, there is sufficient oversight to ensure that this never happens again. On behalf of the thousands of needy families with emergency priorities on the now-frozen waiting list and the countless others that will not be able to apply because of this Section 8 funding crisis, we ask that steps be taken to accurately account for all vouchers issued in the future such that no other group has to suffer this level of trauma and uncertainty again. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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Testimony of

**Michael Polenberg
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Oversight – The Recent Loss of Section 8 Vouchers and the Future of Section 8 in New York City

**General Welfare Committee
Hon. Annabel Palma, Chair**

**Public Housing Committee
Hon. Rosie Mendez, Chair**

New York City Council

February 9, 2010

Thank you, Chairwoman Palma, Chairwoman Mendez and members of the committees, for the opportunity to testify before you today on the New York City Housing Authority's decision to void nearly 3,000 Section 8 vouchers for low-income households in New York City, including 500 households headed by a victim of domestic violence. My name is Michael Polenberg, and I am the Vice President for Government Affairs for Safe Horizon, the nation's leading victim assistance organization and New York City's largest provider of services to victims of crime and abuse, their families and communities. Safe Horizon creates hope and opportunities for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers each year whose lives are touched by violence.

Safe Horizon works very closely with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) in a number of areas. We help NYCHA residents apply for emergency transfers because of the ongoing risk of violence they may face in their home or community. We are co-located in nine Police Service Areas (PSAs) where we work with the Police Department to assist NYCHA residents who may be experiencing domestic violence. And of course we help clients apply for the NYCHA housing or Section 8 priority status available for victims of domestic violence. Overall, we find the staff at NYCHA to be helpful and accommodating, particularly given the constraints under which they operate.

Since the announcement was made in late December, nullifying existing Section 8 vouchers, our offices throughout the five boroughs have heard from dozens of domestic violence victims whose window to safety for themselves and their children has suddenly been shuttered. From the women and children who live in our emergency domestic violence shelters and

transitional housing, to the victims of domestic violence who come to us through our network of community offices, court-based programs, hotlines and free legal services, the end result is heartbreakingly similar: crushing disappointment, continued homelessness and increased risk of further violence and abuse.

For our clients, safe and affordable housing can be the very backbone to starting a life without violence. It offers children the chance to lay their heads down at night without apprehension. It allows spouses to prepare for work or school without the risk of sudden violent confrontation. It replaces fear with normalcy, trepidation with comfort, and allows victims to become survivors.

While all of the households affected by this crisis equally deserve our collective sympathy and resolve, we are particularly focused on those households, nearly 500 in total, headed by a victim of domestic violence. For New Yorkers who are desperately trying to escape their abusers and find affordable housing where they can safely raise their families, Section 8 vouchers can be a critical and life-saving tool. We hope that by sharing a few of our clients' stories with you today, we can help elucidate how this crisis is affecting so many needy families, and help spur immediate action to find safe and permanent housing for everyone.

Ms. A

Following an extremely volatile felony domestic abuse incident in March 2009, Ms. A sought services at Safe Horizon's Queens Criminal Court Program at the Family Justice Center. She was referred to us by the Queens DA's office. She has three children, 17, 15 and 5 years old. Her husband, who was providing for the family financially, remains incarcerated. She receives public assistance and attends school to try and improve her skill set in order to get a job which will pay the rent when she is forced to move out. Her home, owned by her husband, is in

foreclosure because she is unable to pay the mortgage and even if it sells prior to bank seizure, her husband's credit card debt and legal fees will consume any money from the sale.

Ms. A. submitted her application for Section 8 with the assistance of Safe Horizon in April 2009. She received notice in July 2009 that she would be considered for the program and received her voucher in November 2009. She located a suitable apartment within the time frame allocated but when she submitted her package to NYCHA it was rejected by Section 8 due to the current freeze. Our client will have 4 months to remain in her apartment and then she will be forced into shelter or into an over crowded apartment with her brother. She will be forced to quit school to pay rent in order to become self-sufficient. While they are already struggling with the incarceration of a husband and father, healing from 22 years of domestic abuse and struggling to make ends meet, their only hope of self-sufficiency in terms of housing has been taken from them.

Ms. B.

After years of enduring physical, emotional and verbal abuse, Ms. B made the decision to leave her boyfriend. Despite their break-up, the violence and threats continued. In July 2009, her ex-boyfriend approached Ms. B in the street, slapped her and threatened to send his friends to attack her and her family. She reported the incident to the police and her ex-boyfriend was arrested. She also petitioned for an order of protection which the perpetrator violated a few weeks later, coming to her family's home then punching, kicking their apartment door and threatening to kill them. In addition, his siblings came to her home and threatened to kill her as well.

No longer safe in her family home and afraid that her mother might get hurt, Ms. B began the process of finding her own apartment. She came to Safe Horizon's Manhattan Community Program to learn about her options and discuss ways to manage her risk. In the meantime, she was staying with a friend, paying part of the rent. She applied for Section-8 housing and was excited and relieved when she received the voucher in the fall. But just as she was finalizing her search for an apartment, she was notified that her voucher was no longer valid. She has reached the limit on how long she can stay with her friend, and she cannot return to her mother's apartment. Ms. B. had hoped to have stable and safe housing to focus on her future but her plans to be self-sufficient are being now being jeopardized as she faces imminent homelessness.

Ms. C.

A resident of one of our domestic violence shelters, Ms. C. reached out to our Domestic Violence Law Project (DVLP) when she learned that her Section 8 voucher had been voided. About nine months ago NYCHA had given her a list of zip codes where she was allowed to look for an apartment. As they do for most victims of domestic violence, the Housing Authority wanted to be sure Ms. C. would not continue to be in harm's way by living in the same vicinity as her batterer. For months, she tried to find an apartment, only to be rejected because of her source of income. When she finally found a landlord willing to rent to her, she was thrilled and brought her paperwork back to NYCHA for final approval.

Unfortunately, NYCHA realized it had given Ms. C. a zip code that was off-limits by mistake, meaning that she would not be allowed to move into the apartment she had just found. She quickly contacted the landlord, who owned buildings in other parts of the city, and after a few more rounds of visits, found another apartment in a different part of the city. Two days later, her Section 8 voucher was voided.

I hope that these stories, like the others you will hear today, help give you a sense of how precarious things are for our clients. The need for safe, affordable housing is why NYCHA prioritizes victims of domestic violence for Section 8 vouchers. The loss of these vouchers will mean homelessness and greatly increased risk of further violence for our clients and their families. The loss of these vouchers will also mean a tremendous new expense for the City and the State; estimates are that the cost of these 3,000 households entering the emergency shelter system will exceed \$120 million.

We urge you to work with the Administration and with NYCHA to find immediate, safe and cost-effective solutions to this crisis. Thank you, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



*Yisroel Schulman, Esq.
President & Attorney-In-Charge*

**Testimony by New York Legal Assistance Group ("NYLAG")
before the NYC Council Committees on Public Housing and General
Welfare:
Oversight Hearing on The Recent Loss of Section 8 Vouchers and the Future
of Section 8 in New York City**

February 9, 2010

Chairwoman Rosie Mendez, Chairwoman Annabel Palma, Council Members, and staff, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak about the recent loss of NYCHA Section 8 vouchers and the resulting crisis. My name is Kamilla Sjödin and I am the Supervising Attorney of the Housing Project at the New York Legal Assistance Group, a nonprofit law office dedicated to providing free legal services in civil law matters to low-income New Yorkers. NYLAG serves immigrants, seniors, the homebound, families facing foreclosure, renters facing eviction, low-income consumers, those in need of government assistance, children in need of special education, domestic violence victims, persons with disabilities, patients with chronic illness or disease, low-wage workers, low-income members of the LGBT community, Holocaust survivors, as well as others in need of free legal services. For full disclosure, I am a former employee of the New York City Council where I, at one time, served as counsel to the Subcommittee on Public Housing, as well as counsel to the Committee on Housing and Buildings.

By all accounts, the New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA") was aware of a potential short-fall in its Section 8 program as early as May 2009, but continued to issue vouchers through November 2009 without warning to recipients of any potential problems of applying or counting on the vouchers. This caused great problems for many voucher holders, is forcing other government entities to respond to the crisis without warning or without having planned to do so, and is putting an additional strain on many non-profit organizations, both in terms of grants issued to tenants for rent and resources in assisting clients who were thought to have viable housing. Since late December through today, my office has seen a spike in housing intakes related to NYCHA's decision to revoke vouchers already issued to people in desperate need of finding both affordable and safe housing.

To mention but one client, Ms. T had a Section 8 voucher for 18 years. In July 2008, she had to leave her home because of severe domestic violence. When she fled her home she immediately notified Section 8 and was given a transfer voucher. Due to restrictions as to where she could look for an apartment, it took Ms. T until September 2009 to find a viable place to live. The apartment passed the required NYCHA inspection and all Ms. T needed was to receive a move-in letter from NYCHA. However, the caseworker who had been helping Ms. T left on medical leave and did not provide the requisite letter before leaving. Ms. T and her social worker kept attempting to reach NYCHA and spoke to various people. By the time they were able to speak to a supervisor, Ms. T was told that due to funding she was one of the people chosen for termination. At this time, Ms. T does not know what to do. Even if her voucher were to

be reinstated, which would be an immense help, she has lost the safe, affordable apartment it took her so long to find.

It is egregious that NYCHA was aware of its short-fall as early as May, but failed to prevent this crisis, failed to give people adequate notice of the crisis, and failed to work out a plan for all those affected by this crisis prior to its sudden announcement. At this point, NYLAG is attempting to assist clients on a case by case basis. However, we, like so many legal service organizations, do not have the resources necessary to file the kinds of labor-intensive cases that would be necessary to rectify the situation for each of our clients. Additionally, even if we were to file case on behalf of these clients, we have no guarantee of what the outcome would be or that a suit would restore their Section 8 vouchers.

Accordingly, keeping in mind that the Section 8 program is cost effective in that it “it costs approximately \$26,000 annually to provide someone with assistance in a homeless shelter . . . [and] only \$11,000 a year” to give that “same household affordable rental housing through Section 8,”¹ we join tenants, colleagues and advocates in urging the Council to work together with City, State and Federal agencies and elected officials to find a solution to this problem that particularly affects indigent and vulnerable New Yorkers. Specifically, we respectfully urge:

1. NYCHA to give affected voucher holders a priority for public housing apartments immediately and inform them how to apply for this priority;
2. The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (“OTADA”) to cover all households using the Advantage subsidy or, alternatively, to

¹ Letter to Governor Patterson and Mayor Bloomberg from The New York City Congressional Delegation, dated January 22, 2010, *available at* <http://www.house.gov/velazquez/newsroom/2010/pr-01-25-10-section-87-vouchers.html>.

cover most of the households with Advantage, and that the Department of Homeless Services (“DHS”) use its homelessness prevention stimulus money to cover the rest of the households until they receive Section 8 vouchers in the normal course;

3. The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to give the 500 Section 8 vouchers it is currently holding to the affected NYCHA voucher holders and give its turnover vouchers to these households;

4. NYCHA to start issuing vouchers to the affected households as soon as NYCHA has regained through attrition the 2000 vouchers that it has over-leased;

5. The Administration for Children Services (ACS) to cover the families who were referred to the program by ACS;

6. The District Attorneys to cover the intimidated witnesses who were referred by them;

7. That City officials, including Council Members, and the public be part of any discussions and solutions; and

8. That NYCHA increase the transparency of its operations at least to a level consistent with Constitutional requirements to avoid this type of crisis in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Kamilla Sjödin, Supervising Attorney



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Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY

**Testimony on the Loss of Section 8 Vouchers
New York City Council Subcommittee on NYCHA
and Committee on General Welfare
February 9, 2010**

Testimony by:
Linda Ostreicher
Director of Public Policy
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY



A United Way Agency

The Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY (CIDNY) is a leading advocate for New Yorkers with disabilities. For the past thirty years, we have helped to break down social, physical and perceptual barriers that can prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in mainstream life.

Thank you for holding today's hearing on a problem that is very important to our community. Housing is the issue that most often brings people to CIDNY for help in finding, keeping, and paying for it. Our consumers are overwhelmingly poor, living on public assistance or disability benefits.

Section 8 vouchers are the lifeline that people with disabilities depend on to get them out of homeless shelters, to keep them from entering the homeless system, and to get out of overcrowded and sometimes dangerous housing situations.

It is painful, isolating, and frightening for anyone to be homeless. Being homeless while having a disability is even worse. For many of our consumers, there are only two ways out:

- 1) To get a Section 8 voucher and find a landlord who will take it
 - 2) To get the Fixed Advantage housing subsidy and find a landlord who will take it.
- These subsidies expire after a year and are supposed to be replaced by a Section 8 voucher.

For someone who needs an accessible apartment, a Section 8 voucher has even more value. Any federally subsidized housing built in recent decades must have units that are designed to be accessible to people with mobility limitations (5% of total units) or sensory impairments (2% of total units). Most applicants for new subsidized housing in New York City have to apply for it through a lottery system. People who are deaf, blind or users of wheelchairs go to the top of the list until that 7% share of apartments is filled.

However, these apartments have minimum income requirements. For 99% of units, the minimum income is over \$17,000 a year, far above poverty level. Many people on disability benefits and all of those on public assistance have income below poverty level. The maximum Supplemental Security Income benefit is currently about \$9,000 for the year.

It is extraordinarily frustrating for our consumers to be homeless, to see advertisements in the paper for new housing aimed at "low-income" households, and to be too poor to be eligible to apply for the apartments. It is even more frustrating that some of the accessible apartments go to non-disabled tenants because the building managers cannot recruit disabled people who are eligible for the apartments.

The Section 8 voucher has been the magic wand that makes poor people eligible for affordable housing, no matter how little income they have. If their voucher is enough to cover the expected rent, their income does not matter.

In late December, CIDNY began receiving calls about Section 8 vouchers being withdrawn or invalid. Each call is from a person who has just had their plans and hopes wiped out, and whose life will remain on hold, and possibly unmanageable, for as far as they can see ahead. For example:

- Philip found an apartment where he could use his Section 8 voucher in November 2009. Section 8 delayed and then postponed the inspection, scheduling it for January 2010. Philip paid a realtor's fee and signed a lease on November 18, 2009. Now his voucher is worthless. He is afraid he will have to go back to a homeless shelter, where he was for 9 months.

- Sarah was in a shelter for 7 months before she got an apartment using a Fixed Advantage subsidy. It expires on March 1. She doesn't know what will happen to her then, and is extremely upset. She believes she would have had her voucher months ago if the Section 8 office has properly notified her that they were missing documents needed for her application.
- Isabel's mother contacted me after I sent out an announcement about this hearing to CIDNY's email list. Isabel is a social worker who cannot understand how her mother just lost her Section 8 voucher, with no warning. The mother found an apartment in November, was told to wait until December to finish the paperwork, and then suddenly the voucher was worthless.

We have also heard from CIDNY consumers who already rely on Section 8 vouchers about what this subsidy means to them:

- Karen went through several years of severe mental illness triggered by eviction from an apartment due to foreclosure on her landlord, who defaulted on his mortgage. She tried to live in an SRO, but was forced out when the Department of Buildings shut it down for violations. Then she slept on a friend's couch for three years. The instability prevented her from recovering from her illness until she finally received a Section 8 voucher and moved to the apartment where she lives today.
- Robert used to share an apartment with three other men, all of whom smoked and took drugs. Robert uses an oxygen tank and needs a lung transplant. He was not able to get on the transplant waiting list until he received a Section 8 voucher and could move to his own studio apartment. Although he has not yet received a transplant, his health is already improved by living in an apartment without second-hand smoke.
- Ellen is 61 years old and has multiple disabilities, including osteoporosis and severe asthma. She wrote to me when she received the invitation to this hearing, and asked me to share her words: "I am a clergyperson, an architectural designer and a holistic practitioner. I am also a disabled person, and if it weren't for my [Section 8] voucher, I would be living in my car or so ill, [I would] not [be] living at all."

CIDNY's consumers do not care whose fault it is that NYCHA's Section 8 vouchers were withdrawn. We hope this hearing is an early step in a successful process in which the city, state, and federal governments cooperate with each other and with NYCHA to find funding to cover the cost of the 3,000 vouchers.

Part of the solution, in the long term, may be the return to circulation of all Section 8 vouchers that NYCHA diverted to subsidize apartments in 21 developments that receive no operating subsidy. As of November 2009, NYCHA reported using 2,047 Section 8 vouchers in these developments, which were built with state and city funds, and therefore are not eligible for federal funding.

We were pleased to see that NYCHA amended its Draft Agency Plan for FY 2010 to include an ingenious proposal to gain a permanent federal subsidy for the 21 developments. The proposal would take advantage of a one-time opportunity to use federal stimulus funds for a "mixed finance modernization plan" that would render the 21 developments eligible for federal support.

We hope that this plan will free up those 2,047 Section 8 vouchers for use by residents of apartments outside of NYCHA developments, once federal subsidy funding begins to support the 21 developments.

Meanwhile, we expect that more consumers will call us as the 90-day time limit on their Section 8 vouchers expires and they learn that they cannot extend the vouchers. We want to have a better answer for them than we have been giving so far, which is to take down their name and contact information in case there is news of a solution to this problem.

The problem is not going to disappear. The people who have lost Section 8 vouchers are going to remain alive, we hope, and in need of housing. All of them are in desperate situations, because only people whose cases are considered "emergencies" have been eligible for vouchers in recent years. The other 128,000 people on the waiting list are not progressing.

NYCHA's Section 8 program subsidized almost 100,000 apartments as of last September, the largest number in its history. The agency attributes its shortage of voucher funds to 3 causes: a shortfall in federal funding; a decline in the rate of tenants leaving the Section 8 program; and an increase in the percentage of tenants finding apartments where they could use their Section 9 vouchers.

The shortfall in federal funding was not foreseeable, because HUD's responses to requests for supplemental funding are based on variables beyond our knowledge. However, we should not continue to be surprised by a growing need for Section 8 vouchers. Several ongoing factors contribute to this trend:

- Fewer tenants will have increased incomes that make them lose eligibility for the Section 8 program, as long as unemployment remains high, wages remain low, and a growing number of people depend on low, fixed incomes.
- More tenants with Section 8 vouchers will find apartments where vouchers can be used, because New York City now has a law banning discrimination against tenants based on source of income, and enforcement of that law is beginning to take effect.
- Fewer tenants will leave the Section 8 program as long as affordable housing developers build apartments that are out of reach for people poor enough to qualify for Section 8.
- Fewer tenants will leave the Section 8 program as long as the New York City Housing Authority's waiting list remains effectively closed to most people poor enough to qualify for Section 8.

It costs \$26,000 a year to keep someone in a homeless shelter, and \$11,000 a year to keep them in an apartment using a Section 8 voucher. It makes no economic sense to let 3,000 voucher holders become or remain homeless. We urge the City Council to work with your counterparts on the state and federal level, and with the Mayor and Governor, to put together a funding stream to replace the cancelled vouchers before this program failure causes harm from which its victims cannot return.

In the long term, we hope that you will contribute to policies that stop the galloping rise in rent costs relative to income for fixed-income New Yorkers.

[Note: all names of consumers above have been changed to protect their privacy.]

**Patrice Ejuwa (aka Patrice C. Queen)
375 Essex Street
Brooklyn New York 11208**

PatriceCQueen@msn.com

I cannot paint a bad picture of myself, so how do I state that I am disabled and that it is invisible to your eyes. I woke up and today is a day that I had 0 confidence to state my case to be understood. Yet, I still wanted to go to testify that I am disabled and my section 8 was taken away with the excuse that my disability does not put me in a wheelchair.

My body and mind just wants to vomit at the thought that I need to state I am disabled and there is a possibility that since I do not appear to be under a rubble in a disaster what could possibly be my problem.

I am disabled and because I am not in a wheelchair it is easy for NYCHA to take my section 8 or demand that the explanation of my disability be so precise that a missing comma or full stop could deem me as not having enough evidence of disability.

I will make a short list of things I battle to get through a day. Most times I am safe in my apartment if all the lights stay on cause darkness can pull me back to those yesterdays. To get out to my house I must burst through Agoraphobia to get out of my door, go down the stair and get out my gate. Two steps from my house those actions may feel like a weeks work with no sleep and I have not left the block. Small spaces, crowds, multiple changes can cause me to feel like a train wreck. Yet if I can make it through the day tomorrow will be better. Tomorrow I could come up with a plan for world peace enact it the next day and on the third day have no relationship to the ability of the two previous days. Thinking days, action days

and feeling days are rarely demonstrated with me at the same time. Today for me is murky for lack of housing for me means lack of stability to get out of a fog that severe childhood sexual abuse, adolescent rape and massacre along with attempted trafficking forced me in a DV situation lasting 17 years to which 4 years ago I hit a wall and have difficulty connecting to the genius within for without consistency of routine days my abilities are not consistent sometimes from moment to moment or day to day or hour to hour.

So what if I become homeless, the big deal is my capacity to recover is almost 0 as my confidence of today. It would be impossible for me to protect myself and I can sink into an abyss never to return. The skills I used in the past to protect myself mimic amnesia and can last anywhere from minutes to hours to years. They tell me I am not crazy and the issue is some type of lack of nurturing in critical years and the trauma of multiple or sequential abuse which most of us could not fathom has created these symptoms..

I can help others develop a life, business or career plan, yet for myself I have great difficulty filling out a simple form that I know all the answers, my section 8 application and most all applications within the last few years was filled out by someone else.

Since the age of 7 and this year I am 50 I have existed on less than 2 hours sleep a night most of the time and only sleep more than 6 hours in a night, less than a handful of times a year. I would like to move beyond my disability to a fulfilled life which I am capable of when I get through this impasse. I cannot get past this moment without a safe place to live and the support that section 8 and disability funds offers at the moment. The house I live in was stolen through predatory lending and I await the knock on the door telling me to get out, since I am stuck in motionless cycles as how do I respond to this. Section 8 was my only hope to prevent a shelter situation which I have no capacity to maneuver.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/9/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Afu Atta Mensah

Address: The God Ad Society

I represent: _____

Address: 199 Water Street, NY 10039

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: Feb 9th 2010

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yolanda Gillison

Address: PO Box 772 NYC 10039-267 West 152nd

I represent: SELF - Yolanda Gillison - Section 8 Client

Address: 267 West 152 St. NYC, NY 10039

Member VOW - Voices of Women.org

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ROCK HACKSHAW

Address: 60-01 A 194 Street (21)

I represent: COUNCIL MEMBER DARLENE MARY

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lindy-Ann Springer

Address: 4411 Church Ave Brooklyn

I represent: Brooklyn - disabled

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Natoya Hill

Address: Legal Aid

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/9/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ROSA Munoz 917 9161393

Address: 2160 Seward Ave #7 D Bklyn 10473

I represent: My self - ROSA Munoz

Address: 718 863 5482

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mashon Baines

Address: 1195 Sherman Ave

I represent: National Action Network Task Force

Address: 160 W 145 St NY NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

10:00 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jennifer Levy, South Brooklyn Legal Services

Address: 105 Court St. Brooklyn NY 11201

I represent: Patricia Argilagos, Beryl Isaacs,

Address: Mercedes Cruz, Pavel Derevyanchenko

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

9:30 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/1/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kamilla Sjodin / New York Legal Assistance

Address: 150 W 32nd St 11th Fl Group NY NY 10001

I represent: NYLAG

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

10:00 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Patricia Argilagosa

Address: Brooklyn NY 3728 Ave. K Apt. D20

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

10:00 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/9/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Pavel, Derexyanchenko services

Address: Manhattan Legal Services

I represent: death affected NY 10027

Address: Washington Heights

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

10:00 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/9/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Pavel Derexyanchenko

Address: Manhattan Legal Services

I represent: Pavel Derexyanchenko

Address: 1 West 125th St, NY 10027

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

10:00 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/9/2010

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tanya Bayera

Address: Milbank Tweed McCloy

I represent: Pavel Perevyandenko/transit

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Aisha Farrah Khan

Address: Legal Aid

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Legal
Services

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bayl Isaacs

Address: Bronx NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/9/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LINDA OSTREICHER

Address: _____

I represent: Center for Independence of the Disabled

Address: 841 Broadway NYC New York
10009-3

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 533204 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/09/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KUMARI ZORCE

Address: ASTORIA DR. COV. 1618 PIER MARI

I represent: _____

Address: 1618 MERMAID DR. PIER 16, 11224

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/9/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Steve Banks

Address: 199 Water St NYC 10038

I represent: The Legal Aid Society

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

10:01 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2-9-10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ALVIN JOHNSON - CB 11 HOUSING CHAIR

Address: 1900 LEX. AVE

I represent: MANHATTAN CB 11

Address: 1464 PARK AVE. NY 10035

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

10:02 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/9/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MICHAEL REISS

Address: 80 2ND PLAE, BKN, NY 11231

I represent: BALTIM STREET A.E.H.

Address: 250 BALTIM ST, BKN, NY, 11201

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

10:03 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

SECTION 8

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9 FEBRUARY 2010

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: NIKKI MARTINEZ

Address: 80 MAIDEN LANE 10th FLOOR

I represent: METROPOLITAN COUNCIL ON JEWISH POVERTY

Address: 80 MAIDEN LANE 10th FLOOR

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

10:04 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/9/2010

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ms. Winnie Lau (Irene)

Address: 158-10 Sanford Avenue, Apt. 2E

I represent: Center Independence of Disable of

Address: Flushing, NY 11358 N.Y.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

10:05 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2-9-10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: STEPHEN CORSON

Address: 1 CENTRE ST 19TH FLOOR

I represent: MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT SCOTT STRONG

Address: SAME

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

10:06 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/9/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Runa Rajagopal w/ Joyce Hill (client)

Address: MEY Legal Services, Inc

I represent: Tenants / Mental Health Consumers

Address: 299 Broadway, 4th FL NY, NY 10007

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

10:07 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: JARED CHAUSOW (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 322 8th Ave, #1700

I represent: NYS Senator Tom Duane

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

9:35 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/9/10

Name: ARAFAT SPEAKS (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: Homeless in America

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

9:36 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: FIRA Stukelman (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 2387 Ocean Av. 5th Fl. N.Y. 11229

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

9:37 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Piper Hoffman

Address: 305 7th Ave, 13th Fl, NYC 10001

I represent: Partnership for the Homeless

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

9:38 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/09/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Thomas A. Bonilla

Address: 347 East 18th St., NY 10003

I represent: Self

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

9:39 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 2-9-10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LORNA THOMAS

Address: 360 Suediker Ave 3J Bklyn NY 11207

I represent: Myself

Address: 360 Suediker Ave 3J Bklyn NY 11207

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

9:42 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 2/9/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Catherine Trapani

Address: 1140 Broadway St 1002 NY, NY 10001

I represent: New Destiny Housing Corp.

Address: Same as above

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

9:44 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Polenberg

Address: _____

I represent: Safe Horizon

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

9:34 AM

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. ^{LU} 24 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 2/18/2010

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JIMMY W. L. T. GREEN ST. COMM.

Address: 375 Essex St

I represent: NIPYSH - A disabled person

Address: 375 Essex St 10038

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