

TESTIMONY  
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
WOMEN'S ISSUES, GENERAL WELFARE AND COURTS/LEGAL SERVICES  
COMMITTEES  
HEARING ON  
COORDINATION OF SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

BY STEVEN BANKS  
COMMISSIONER  
NEW YORK CITY HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION

OCTOBER 20, 2014

Good morning Chairpersons Cumbo, Levin, and Lancman and members of the Women’s Issues, General Welfare, and Courts and Legal Services Committees. I am Steven Banks, Commissioner of the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA). Thank you for this opportunity to discuss our efforts to provide assistance and support for survivors of domestic violence.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It serves as an opportunity to remember and acknowledge that domestic violence affects every New Yorker. During this month we are reminded that no one is immune to the consequences of abuse, regardless of socio-economic status, race, gender or sexual orientation.

Domestic violence, or intimate partner violence, is a pattern of coercive behaviors aimed at controlling one’s intimate partner, which over time leaves a person powerless, fearful, and ashamed. It is not only characterized by hitting, shoving, and punching, but also by psychological and financial abuse that results in the destruction of a person’s sense of self-worth, security and safety. One in three women and one in ten men experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime.

HRA has a long history of providing services to domestic violence survivors through our Office of Domestic Violence (ODV). The largest domestic violence services system in the nation, ODV oversees an extensive network of domestic violence services, which include shelters, community-based services, and primary prevention programs. ODV’s staff is committed to providing a broad array of services to survivors of domestic violence.

Here is a snapshot of the array of services offered through Office of Domestic Violence in the past fiscal year:

- 44,000 families sought services related to domestic violence they were experiencing;
- 3,877 families entered a domestic violence shelter;
- 7,100 families in the Department of Homeless Services intake centers were assessed for domestic violence by HRA’s NoVA program;
- 9,600 public assistance clients in HRA Job Centers were assessed for domestic violence by Domestic Violence Liaisons;
- 4,000 domestic violence survivors received legal services, community-based advocacy and counseling;
- 10,700 students participated in workshops and received counseling through Teen RAPP, the relationship violence prevention program; and
- 8,500 New York City Housing Authority residents received domestic violence education, intervention, and aftercare services.

Our specific services are as follows:

### **Emergency and Transitional Shelter Services**

Shelter services for survivors of domestic violence are mandated under the New York State Social Services Law and are provided in accordance with the State Office of Family and Children's Services regulations regarding emergency shelter, services and care for survivors of domestic violence.

The HRA Domestic Violence shelter system is the largest domestic violence shelter system in the country. It includes 44 confidential emergency shelter facilities throughout all five boroughs of New York City with a total bed capacity of 2,228 beds, which can accommodate approximately 800 families, and seven Transitional Housing Tier II shelters, which have 243 units for families. In FY 2014, the HRA domestic violence system served 11,105 individuals, which included 3,877 adults and 6,784 children as well as 444 single adults.

Emergency domestic violence shelters provide temporary housing and supportive services for up to 180 days in a safe environment for survivors of domestic violence and their families. This 180-day time limit is set forth in a New York State regulation. The HRA Office of Domestic Violence is responsible for the administrative and fiscal oversight of 43 private emergency residential programs and the direct operation of the largest emergency domestic violence shelter facility with 176 beds.

Emergency shelter services are designed to stabilize clients in a safe environment. Programs are developed to work with families to manage the crisis and trauma of domestic violence, strengthen coping skills, and enhance client self-sufficiency. Required services include individual counseling, advocacy, psycho-educational groups and trauma-focused interventions that address the dynamics of domestic violence and particularly the impact on parenting. All shelter programs are required to provide childcare services, and assist clients with housing, benefit entitlement assistance, financial development services and workforce development and employment readiness services to maximize self-sufficiency.

DV shelter programs serve all members of the family, including male-headed households and LGBTQ survivors, with a particular emphasis on children to ensure the opportunity for healing and to break the cycle of violence. Several residential programs provide specialized services, including mental health, substance use treatment and expressive therapies such as art therapy, play therapy for children, movement and stress reduction programs. Several shelter provider agencies also specialize in serving the needs of particular populations, including persons with disabilities, Orthodox Jews, Asians and Latinas.

HRA also has seven Transitional Housing Tier II shelters. These programs have a total of 243 units for families. DV Tier II shelters are transitional residential domestic violence programs regulated by the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) that provide an extension of shelter services for families in the emergency DV shelter system in need of continued support and ongoing services to obtain safe permanent housing and re-integrate into communities. Services are aimed at preparing families for reintegration by strengthening client support systems and life skills to maximize self-sufficiency. Particular emphasis is placed on training and work force preparation, advocacy and referral services for special needs, and aftercare services.

Previously, after 180 days in an emergency shelter, families were either able to leave shelter with available continuing non-residential support services, move to HRA Transitional Tier II housing or, if they still needed to be in a shelter, obtain shelter from the Department of Homeless Services.

While families leaving an HRA DV shelter are eligible for placement in a DHS shelter, the process of moving between the two systems has not been as seamless as it should be. Working together, next month, HRA and the Department Homeless Services (DHS) are implementing a system to manage the transition of families from the HRA system to the DHS system without the need for families to be evaluated for shelter eligibility a second time at PATH since HRA has already determined these families to be in need of shelter.

However, using the new LINC program, instead of sending families from HRA shelters to DHS shelters, we are working to move these families with children into a permanent home. Implemented in September, the LINC rental assistance program, short for Living in Communities, helps families move from temporary, emergency shelter back to the community as quickly as possible by paying a portion of their rent for up to five years, if they continue to qualify. The program is targeted for families who have spent the longest time in shelter. There are three LINC programs, with one, LINC III, specifically designated for domestic violence survivors who have been in the HRA shelters for the longest periods to avoid having to transfer families from the HRA system to the DHS system when the 180-day regulatory time limit is reached. Almost half of the total LINC rental assistance program this year, 1,900 slots out of almost 4,000, is set aside for DV families.

LINC III is designated for survivors on public assistance, who make up approximately 85% of domestic violence survivors in our HRA shelters. Those who are working can qualify for the other LINC programs as we proceed with the implementation of this new rental assistance initiative. So survivors can end up with more than just the 1,900 slots in LINC III.

In addition to the LINC rental assistance program, as we have reported previously to the Council in testimony regarding HRA's reform initiatives, HRA, DHS and the New York City Housing Authority have worked together to streamline the NYCHA application process for families in the HRA and DHS shelters who HRA's No Violence Again (NoVA) staff has certified as survivors of domestic violence. Previously, even though HRA had determined that such families were survivors, they were required to obtain additional documentation to obtain the N1 NYCHA domestic violence priority. As a result, very few families in the HRA and DHS shelters were able to receive the N1 NYCHA priority. This process has now been reformed so that HRA's certification is sufficient.

Now that the relocation of the designated 750 families from DHS shelters to NYCHA apartments has been achieved, NYCHA will begin the process of identifying families in the HRA and DHS shelters who HRA has certified to be domestic violence survivors under the new streamlined N1 process. Based on apartment availability for the family sizes, NYCHA projects that over the next 10 weeks from now through December 31, 2014, between 50 and 100 domestic violence survivors in the community and in the HRA and DHS shelters with the N1 priority will be able to move into NYCHA apartments. Thereafter, the new agreed-to N1 priority process for certified survivors of domestic violence in HRA and DHS shelters will continue on an ongoing basis, with the number of families moving into NYCHA apartments with the N1 priority each year dependent on available apartments.

### **Project No Violence Again (NoVA)**

Project NoVA, established in 1991, addresses the needs of domestic violence survivors seeking emergency housing from the Department of Homeless Services. NoVA is staffed by MSW social workers who provide assessment, crisis counseling, information and referrals, and placement of eligible domestic violence clients into emergency DV shelters.

The NoVA Unit is located at the DHS PATH Family Intake Center and at the DHS Adult Intake Center at Bellevue Medical Center where clients are assessed to determine DV eligibility and risk.

As part of our reform initiatives, DHS and HRA are working together to revamp the space in which HRA NoVA staff interview families at PATH so that adults can be interviewed without having to answer questions about domestic violence in front of their children.

In FY 2014, Project NoVA assessed more than 7,100 families at the DHS PATH Center, and more than 500 adult couples at the DHS Adult Intake Center.

### **Domestic Violence Liaison Unit (DVLU)**

The Domestic Violence Liaison Unit (DVLU) is a service mandated by the Family Violence Option Act (FVO), which is intended to protect survivors of domestic violence who could be further endangered through compliance with public assistance requirements, particularly employment and child support.

Liaisons serve all HRA Job Centers and determine eligibility for waivers from work and other requirements when that is necessary to protect clients.

In FY 2014 the DVL Unit assessed more than 9,600 clients for safety and DV service needs and issued over 8,600 waivers.

As we have testified previously, HRA has reformed the process for obtaining DV waivers by modifying the former "partial waiver" system that put survivors at risk, while still permitting families who are able to participate in employment programs to do so as long as their safety is protected.

### **Anti-Domestic Violence Eligibility Needs Team (ADVENT)**

ADVENT is a specialized case management unit for clients in emergency DV shelters who are on cash assistance or receiving public assistance benefits. The ADVENT Program was developed as an extension of the Domestic Violence Liaison Unit to address the specific needs of DV clients in shelter.

In FY 2014, ADVENT provided specialized case management and work engagement services to an average of 1,100 DV clients in shelter each month.

### **Alternative to Shelter Program (ATS)**

The **Alternative to Shelter Program** offers domestic violence survivors and their children the option of remaining safely in their home or in the community instead of moving into a domestic violence shelter. The program provides clients with a personal electronic response alarm system linked to local police

precincts enabling them to remain safely in their homes. Clients are also offered ongoing case management services which include: crisis counseling and safety planning, support, advocacy, and referral and information services. ATS has an active caseload of over 200 clients per month.

### **Domestic Violence Intervention and Education Program (DVIEP)**

The Domestic Violence Intervention and Education Program (DVIEP) is a contracted program transferred from NYCHA to HRA in 2009. The program is based in nine NYCHA police service areas where case managers work closely with DV Police Officers to respond to domestic violence incident reports and provide crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for DV survivors in NYCHA housing. A goal of the program is to encourage clients to accept DV services to reduce the level of risk to clients and increase utilization of services available to clients in NYCHA.

In FY 2014, DVIEP engaged more than 7,900 clients in domestic violence services.

### **Domestic Violence Aftercare Program (DVAP)**

The Domestic Violence Aftercare Program (DVAP) provides intensive case management and support services to DV survivors living in New York City Housing Authority developments who are approved for an emergency housing transfer to transition to a safer apartment. DVAP is staffed with case managers and MSW social workers who provide NYCHA DV clients with home-based assessments, case management, referral and information, advocacy, safety planning, and relocation assistance. Clients are referred to DVAP upon approval of their applications for a NYCHA emergency DV transfer.

In FY 2014, DVAP provided case management services to over 600 NYCHA emergency transfer clients.

### **Non-Residential Domestic Violence Programs**

Community based non-residential services for survivors of domestic violence have proven to be an effective method of addressing the needs of some survivors of domestic violence and their children, particularly survivors who are seeking supportive services, but do not require or would not consider entering an emergency shelter program. In some cases, such non-residential services may alleviate a need for domestic violence residential services. In other cases, non-residential services offer community-based support for families who have left domestic violence shelter.

Non-residential domestic violence services are mandated by New York State and regulated through the State Office of Children and Families Services. The regulations state that the local social services agency, in this case HRA, must provide the following “core” services:

- **A Telephone Hotline.**
- **Information and Referrals** to specialized counseling and medical services and whatever else a client may need.
- **Advocacy**, such as providing liaison services or intervening with community programs on behalf of survivors of domestic violence.

- **Counseling**, including individual or group, for children and adults.
- **Community Education and Outreach**, that educates the community on the need for and benefits of domestic violence services, as well as educating the personnel of schools, police agencies, courts and hospitals.
- **Legal Services**, including orders of protection, child custody, child support, immigration issues and divorce.

HRA contracts with community based organizations to offer 15 programs that provide the core services listed above in all five boroughs. Two providers offer services to special populations: LGBTQ and survivors of domestic violence with disabilities. Services are offered in a range of languages, including Spanish, Russian, Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, Gurajati, Punjabi, Cantonese, Mandarin, Fukienese, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Serbo-Croatian, Tamil, Sindhi, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Creole, Italian, and Romanian.

In FY 2014, non-residential providers assisted an average of 3,000 families each month, and offered legal services to an average of 1,000 per month.

#### **Domestic Violence Hotline**

The New York City Domestic Violence Hotline was created in 1994 and receives calls from survivors of domestic violence seeking shelter, counseling, information and referrals to domestic violence services. The hotline is operated by Safe Horizon, a private not-for-profit social service agency and DV service provider. The DV hotline operates 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Hotline staff is able to link callers to available space in the 44 HRA DV emergency shelters.

In FY 2014, the DV hotline received more than 8,000 calls per month. This volume has been consistent over several years.

#### **Teen Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP)**

The Teen Relationship Abuse Prevention Program, a school-based program, is one of the most extensive domestic violence prevention programs in New York City, and is critical to ending relationship abuse among young people. Through a comprehensive curriculum, students learn to recognize and change destructive patterns of behavior before they are transferred to adult relationships. Since 1999, HRA's innovative RAPP Program has helped teens attending public high schools and middle schools develop healthier relationships. RAPP serves 54 high schools and 8 middle schools. The RAPP providers are: the Church Avenue Merchants Block Association (CAMBA), Center Against Domestic Violence, and STEPs to End Family Violence.

The summer program is offered in a work setting with emphasis placed on work place etiquette and responsibility, and participants receive a salary. During the summer of 2014, approximately 150 students participated.

In FY 2014, more than 7,400 students received RAPP intervention services and counseling, and more than 3,300 completed the three session curriculum. Since 2005, RAPP has reached more than 60,000 students.

**Financial Services**

HRA has successfully embedded financial development services throughout the domestic violence continuum of care with our partners the Financial Clinic and the Department of Consumer Affairs. These services assist clients in shelter and in the community improve their financial security in areas such as increasing assets, improving credit, reducing debt, and accessing free tax services and benefits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit.

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In closing, while our efforts to address domestic violence continue to be comprehensive, there is much work to be done to curtail the ravaging effects of domestic violence in our city.





REMARKS OF  
COMMISSIONER ROSEMONDE PIERRE-LOUIS  
MAYOR'S OFFICE TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON COURTS AND  
LEGAL SERVICES

"COORDINATION OF SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE"

October 20, 2014

Good morning Speaker Mark-Viverito, Chairperson Lancman, Chairperson Cumbo and Chairperson Levin and members of the NYC Council Committees on Courts and Legal Services, Women's Issues and General Welfare. I am Rosemonde Pierre-Louis, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV). Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about social and legal services available for victims of domestic violence in New York City. As a former public interest and civil legal services attorney, I want to thank the Council for establishing a Committee on Courts and Legal Services.

The New York City Family Justice Centers (FJCs), operated by my office and currently located in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens, provide comprehensive multi-agency services for victims of intimate partner violence, elder abuse and sex trafficking in one location. Each Center is co-located with the local District Attorney's Office and has NYPD Domestic Violence Prevention Officers (DVPOs) on-site, in addition to staff from over 35 community partners who offer counseling for adults and children, civil legal assistance, immigration assistance, economic empowerment and supportive services. The FJCs are walk-in Centers that provide free and confidential services regardless of the client's language, income, immigration status, gender identity or sexual orientation. A fifth Family

Justice Center is expected to open in Staten Island in 2015, making the NYC Centers the largest network of FJCs in the country.

In 2013, there were almost 45,000 client visits to the FJCs and, this year, we have already exceeded 43,000 client visits. We expect to reach at least 52,000 client visits by the end of 2014.

Domestic violence occurs in every neighborhood and community in New York City regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender. This diversity is reflected in the clients seeking services at the Family Justice Centers. Since January 1, 2014, 89% of our clients are women, 10% are men, and 1% are transgender.

Civil legal assistance is the second highest service need of FJC clients, after seeking safety planning and risk assessment services. At the FJCs, there are on-site civil legal attorneys and paralegals from community agencies to provide information, consultations and representation for clients in matters relating to family and matrimonial law. Since January 1, 2014, 12% of clients (2,813) requested civil legal services, 8% (1,875) needed family law assistance and 4% (937) required help with a matrimonial/divorce action.

The Family Justice Centers practice client-centered approaches to ensure that victims are aware of all options available to them. One of the

legal remedies often discussed with clients is obtaining an order of protection in Family Court. Since 2013, the Family Justice Centers have been participating in a program through the NYS Office of Court Administration (OCA) which allows case managers and advocates on-site at the Centers to electronically file family offense petitions for FJC clients. This was a welcome service addition at the Centers and added to the already robust civil legal service delivery available to clients. The web based family offense petition program saves clients a significant amount of wait time in the Family Courts, enhances the content and language included in the petitions with the assistance of on-site advocates and attorneys, and allows clients to complete the petition filing process in a safe, supportive and culturally competent environment with on-site services available to children.

For immigrant victims of domestic violence there are added layers of complexity that factor into the abusive relationship which may include a fear of deportation, a lack of knowledge about domestic violence laws in this country and the rights of victims, as well as language barriers. Since July 2008, through the Mayor's Office and public private partnerships immigration attorneys have been funded to work on-site at the Family Justice Centers. This year, 57% of FJC clients were foreign-born and 10% of overall clients (2,344) requested legal assistance for an immigration

related issue. To ensure quality service delivery to all FJC clients, on-site staff are required to attend training on cultural competency, in addition, within the FJCs, staff speak over 25 languages.

We have learned that one of the biggest barriers to leaving an abusive relationship is the inability of the victim to financially provide for themselves and their children without economic support from their abusive partner. This is a very real fear given that, in 2014, 46% of our clients reported that they were unemployed, 27% were receiving public assistance and 30% reported “some high school” as their highest level of education. At the Family Justice Centers, we have Self Sufficiency Coordinators and on-site programming to help clients obtain economic independence through ESL and GED classes, job training, computer skills courses, resume writing, financial counseling, budgeting assistance and family literacy programs. HRA staff are on-site at each Family Justice Center to provide substantive assistance in accessing public benefits and trouble-shooting case issues, obtaining low-cost childcare, and applying for emergency financial assistance programs.

In addition to operating the Family Justice Centers, OCDV also manages several programs and initiatives that focus on prevention, early intervention and resources for victims of stalking and dating violence.

In 2012, OCDV launched a Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT) in Staten Island to provide rapid response to high-risk cases by facilitating interagency coordination and collaboration to carry out individualized action plans to meet the service and safety needs of clients. Staten Island DVRT has partnered with over 35 community based organizations and City agencies, including the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and Richmond County District Attorney Dan Donovan's Office (RCDA). To date, DVRT has assisted over 100 clients who were at a high risk of escalating abuse, serious physical injury or death. Seventy percent of DVRT clients indicated that they had been stalked by their intimate partner, making stalking the number one reported abusive behavior by clients.

Nationally, 3 out of 4 women murdered by their intimate partners had been stalked by that offender in the year prior to their murder and 54% of female homicide victims reported stalking to the police before they were killed by an intimate partner. To address the serious issue of stalking, in collaboration with RCDA and the NYPD, we launched the Coordinated Approach to Preventing Stalking (CAPS) program. CAPS is a homicide prevention initiative to increase the identification and reporting of intimate partner stalking cases, enhance stalking arrests and prosecutions and engage

in appropriate risk assessment and safety planning with stalking victims. Since the program launched in July 2014, there has been at least a 250% increase in stalking cases identified by the NYPD in Staten Island.

A critical piece of prevention is educating our youth about healthy relationships. We know that nationally approximately 72% of 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders are “dating”.<sup>1</sup> Regrettably, abusive behavior is often normalized for young people making it difficult for them to recognize abusive behaviors as problematic and unlikely for them to report abusive relationships. In fact, in NYC over 1 in 10 high school students (almost 3 students per classroom) reported being physically abused by their boyfriend or girlfriend.<sup>2</sup>

In 2005, OCDV launched a Healthy Relationship Training Academy (Academy) to provide interactive workshops on dating violence and cyber abuse for adolescents, young adults, parents and service providers. The workshops are led by Peer Educators, ranging in age from 17-25, and a Senior Trainer, age 29, who encourage discussion and critical thinking about these challenging topics. To date, the Academy has conducted over 2,000

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<sup>1</sup> Foshee VA, Linder GF, Bauman KE, et al. The Safe Dates Project: theoretical basis, evaluation design, and selected baseline findings. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 1996;12(2):39-47; *see also* Dating Abuse Statistics *available at:* [www.loveisrespect.org/pdf/Dating\\_Abuse\\_Statistics.pdf](http://www.loveisrespect.org/pdf/Dating_Abuse_Statistics.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *See* NYC Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) 2011, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene *available at:* [https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/SASStoredProcess/guest?\\_PROGRAM=%2FEpiQuery%2Fyrbs%2Fyrbs&strat1=none&strat2=none&qtype=univar&year=2011&var=datef2](https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/SASStoredProcess/guest?_PROGRAM=%2FEpiQuery%2Fyrbs%2Fyrbs&strat1=none&strat2=none&qtype=univar&year=2011&var=datef2)

workshops, approximately 25 per month, reaching over 39,600 young people.

In order to effectively respond to the incidence of domestic violence in the City, OCDV focuses largely on outreach to raise awareness about domestic violence and connect victims with services at the FJCs and with community and government partners Citywide. Since February 1, 2014, OCDV staff have participated in over 739 outreach events, a 400% increase from the same period last year, and have distributed over 195,000 pieces of outreach material. Regular outreach efforts have occurred at transit hubs, business districts, beauty salons and grocery stores. In addition, by the end of 2014, OCDV staff will have presented at all 59 Community Boards and 77 Police Precinct Council Meetings in NYC. Awareness is the greatest tool we have to combat domestic violence and it is OCDV's chief priority.

In closing, we look forward to continuing to work with our City and community partners and with the Council on our shared goal of strengthening the safety net for victims of domestic violence throughout New York City. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and we look forward to answering any questions you may have.





**URINYC**  
Urban Resource Institute

**Testimony by Nathaniel Fields and Jennifer White-Reid  
Urban Resource Institute**

**The NYC Council  
Committees on Women's Issues, General Welfare, and Courts and Legal Services  
October 20, 2014**

Good morning Committee Chairs and Committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Nathaniel Fields and I am the President and CEO of the Urban Resource Institute (URI).

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a time for the community to shine a light on a serious crime that is widespread but not discussed enough due to a culture of silence that perpetuates shame, isolation and fear amongst those impacted by abuse.

This culture of silence coupled with public inaction enables the existence of domestic violence and limits awareness. Hence, I am morally, personally and professionally obligated to underscore the quantifiable effects of domestic violence and ask that you in turn ensure that what is discussed today transcends these walls and gives rise to actions that will make our world DV free.

A review of existing data concerning the impact of domestic violence on our community highlights that:

- 1 out of every 4 women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime
- 2 out of every 3 murders of women in NYC are a result of domestic violence
- In 2013, NYC DV Hotline advocates responded to 99,719 calls (an average of 270 calls per day)
- While police responded to 280,531 domestic violence incidents in 2013 (an average of 765 incidents per day), most cases of domestic violence are never reported to the police
- The financial cost of domestic violence is \$5.8 million (\$4 billion for medical/mental health care and \$1 billion for indirect costs due to lost productivity)

These figures alone do not expose the full impact of domestic violence on the lives of those who are victimized. What they do is remind you that our mothers, wives, sisters and daughters are representatives of statistics that say that 1 out of 4 of them will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. That is unacceptable.

Many life-changing movements were led by highly empathetic and aware leaders who knew very well who they were standing up for. Today, I want to show you who we are standing up for. Today, I ask that we speak of domestic violence in terms of who it affects and I introduce you to Titi.

[Play video]

Titi is a domestic violence survivor that opted to share her story of survival with the world. Titi's video is part of national domestic violence awareness video campaign launched by the Urban Resource Institute on October 1, 2014. The campaign consists of a seven-video series that profiles domestic violence survivors

who bravely opted to share their experiences publicly for the very first time, with the goal of raising critical awareness about our collective responsibility to stand up for a world free of domestic violence.

Like Titi, more and more women, as well as men, are courageously coming forward to speak out against domestic violence. I recently visited one of URI's shelters with an elected official and we met with approximately 20-25 domestic violence survivors. I shared the very same statistics with them as I shared with you today (1 out of every 4 women will experience domestic violence in her life time). While I should not have been surprised when the elected official disclosed that she was a survivor of domestic violence, I was. As I emphasized that 2 out of every 3 murders of women in NYC were a result of domestic violence, a survivor in the back of the room, whom we shall call Mary, held up a picture of a beautiful young woman, who loved life and people, and was tragically murdered last year. The woman in the picture was her sister and Mary chose that very moment to speak up and stand up against domestic violence for her sister, herself, and others like her in that room.

Jennifer White-Reid, URI's VP of Domestic Violence Programs will share how URI's shelters, and innovative programs, have assisted women like Mary and Titi to overcome obstacles and rebuild a better future.

Good morning Committee Chairs and Committee members. I thank you for the opportunity to share with you how domestic violence shelters, and innovative responses to domestic violence, save lives. The Urban Resource Institute (URI) is the second largest provider of domestic violence shelter services in New York City – with a total of 438 beds in its four domestic violence shelters located in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Each year, URI provides a physical sanctuary, counseling, individualized case management, housing assistance, legal services, and other supportive programs to approximately 1,400 adults and children to help them recover from trauma and abuse.

A domestic violence shelter is more than just a physical building. Domestic violence shelters are temporary homes where survivors can connect with vital, lifesaving resources and develop plans that will help them and their children increase safety and move forward with their lives.

In order to address the unique needs of domestic violence victims, URI developed innovative programs in shelter that reduce barriers to safety. We know from research that children who are exposed to domestic violence face increased risks and may suffer a range of severe and lasting effects. Recognizing that children represent the majority of the clients we serve, URI provides specialized on-site services to children, including child therapy, childcare, and recreational and educational programs in partnership with the Department of Education.

Economic abuse is very much a part of the cycle of violence that domestic violence victims face, particularly in New York City, where the cost of living is extremely high. Domestic violence victims often stay in an abusive relationship because they are unable to pay their rent without the income the abuser contributes. Understanding that 98% of domestic violence victims experience economic abuse, URI developed the Working Internship Network (WIN), a career readiness program that offers job-training, a paid internship, and financial literacy education to survivors to help them transition into the workforce.

Lastly, last year, we launched URIPALS (URI's People and Animals Living Safely), a program to address the needs of families with pets impacted by domestic violence. Up to 48% of domestic violence victims stay in an abusive situation because they do not want to leave their pet behind. As we witnessed during Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy, pets are important members of the family and no one should have to make the impossible decision to leave their pets behind during times of crisis. URIPALS is the first and only domestic violence co-sheltering program in NYC that allows the entire family – adult, children and pet – to be safe together.

Nat Fields will continue the conversation and ask for your support in order to help URI and other advocates remove barriers for victims of domestic violence who seek safety from their abusers.

In order to eradicate domestic violence, we need to work together to eliminate obstacles that keep adults and children at risk. There are some concrete steps we can take to prevent domestic violence. To start,

- You can support the development of dedicated shelter spaces for singles that are impacted by domestic violence. More than 1/3 of callers who request shelter through the NYC Domestic Violence Hotline are denied because most of the current shelters are not built for singles, and are mostly financially suited to serve mid-to-large family size configurations. We have to open the doors wider for single victims of domestic violence who often present as LGBTQ and elderly.
- Allow survivors residing at domestic violence shelter to have access to LINC 1. Safe and affordable housing is the top concern of our clients. After residing in shelter for up to 180 days, many feel forced to make the difficult decision to return to a dangerous environment because of limited or no options. Increasing housing options saves lives.
- Continue on-going community awareness campaigns with a focus on the most vulnerable victims, including immigrants, the disabled, and people with pets.
- Promote an integrated community response to domestic violence. To truly halt the rising numbers of women murdered by an intimate partner, our work cannot occur in a vacuum. We must coordinate our efforts (Police, Courts, City Council, survivors, Providers, Businesses, and the NFL) by sharing knowledge, experiences, and data, as well as work together to combat a threat that affects the safety of our entire city.

Thank you.

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**Testimony to the New York City Council**  
*Committee on General Welfare*  
*Committee on Women's Issues*  
*Committee on Courts and Legal Services*

Int. No. 361  
October 20, 2014

Good morning. My name is Jennifer Strashnick and I work in the Advocacy/Legal Services Department at Covenant House New York. I would like to thank the Committee on General Welfare, the Committee on Women's Issues, and the Committee on Courts and Legal Services for the opportunity to testify today on Int. No. 361, which would provide for the presumption of eligibility, in particular, for applicants to the shelter system who are exiting Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) shelters.

Covenant House New York is the nation's largest, privately funded, non-profit adolescent care agency serving homeless, runaway and at-risk youth. During this past year, Covenant House New York served over 3,000 young people, primarily between the ages of 16 and 21, in our residential programs, and through our drop-in center and street outreach efforts. On a nightly basis, we provide shelter to over 300 young people, including pregnant women and mothers with their children.

We are in favor of Int. No. 361, providing the presumption of eligibility for shelter for applicants exiting both HRA domestic violence shelters and DYCD RHY shelters. Since Covenant House is a RHY shelter, the focus of my testimony today is on the eligibility for young mothers and their children and pregnant young women attempting to access shelter through

Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing (PATH), the Department of Homeless Services' (DHS) family intake center.

In order to be found eligible for shelter through PATH, applicants must provide a two-year housing history, with the address of each residence and proof they resided there. It is then up to the applicant to provide evidence demonstrating the family can no longer reside at each residence. This is unduly burdensome for the young mothers and pregnant women we serve as many have lived from place to place or back and forth between places for brief periods of time. These young women are pregnant or caring for their children while moving around seeking shelter and transporting their belongings and children. The documentation that they must gather is often voluminous and is easily misplaced since they are without a stable place to reside. Even when these young women have assistance gathering the documentation, as they do at Covenant House, it is still difficult to obtain all of the documentation DHS requires. It is particularly difficult to obtain documentation when young mothers have stayed with friends or family members in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) apartments. NYCHA will only provide documentation to the primary tenant, therefore, if the primary tenant refuses to cooperate, which he or she often does, it is impossible for an applicant to obtain the documentation.

Another major barrier to DHS eligibility for the young people we serve is the adamant refusal of family members to allow the youth to return to the residence. As an example, a couple of weeks ago, a young woman named Maggie<sup>1</sup> came to my office stating she had been denied shelter by DHS because, in their determination, she could return to live with her mother. She explained to me she had not lived with, seen or even spoken to her mother since she and her son were kicked out in January 2013. With Maggie's permission, I called her mother to assess the

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<sup>1</sup> Name changed due to confidentiality requirements.

situation and explore the possibility of family reunification. The mother was very aggressive toward me and stated that Maggie and her son absolutely could not return. I then asked if she would provide documentation explaining her reasons and she refused. Maggie's mother expressed no interest in her daughter or grandson and did not even ask about their well-being. I called the mother back on multiple occasions but she repeatedly refused to cooperate in any manner. Shortly after arriving at Covenant House, Maggie turned 21, aging out of the RHY services we provide. She returned to PATH and was denied again due to DHS's determination she could return to live with her mother. After learning this, I called her mother yet again to ask, at a minimum, for a letter to give to PATH stating Maggie and her child could not live with her. The mother again was aggressive and ultimately uncooperative. When I accompanied Maggie to the fair hearing she requested, the DHS attorney indicated that Maggie's mother had twice refused to speak to DHS personnel or allow them to investigate, but because there was no proof that Maggie could not live there she was found ineligible for shelter. She is currently awaiting the fair hearing decision. On a nightly basis, for now, Maggie and her child sneak into a NYCHA apartment to stay with a friend, thereby jeopardizing the friend's housing with NYCHA. This creates an untenable situation for Maggie and her friend, but Maggie has nowhere else to go except the street.

RHY providers, including Covenant House, are required by New York State Law<sup>2</sup> to work toward reunifying youth with their families, when it is appropriate. When reunification with families is not possible or appropriate, we also explore the possibility of reunifying youth with appropriate supportive adults outside of their families. Therefore, RHY providers are already trying to find any appropriate placement, including family or other supportive adults. When that is not possible we make referrals to transitional living and supportive housing

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<sup>2</sup> See N.Y. Exec. Law Art. 19-H; 9 NYCRR 182-1.1.

programs, as appropriate. Unfortunately, there are far fewer beds available in these programs than there are young mothers and pregnant women in need. Beds are even more limited for young mothers with more than one child. Additionally, there is often a considerable waiting period for a bed to become available for those who are found eligible for supportive housing. Lastly, it should be noted that youth can remain in a RHY shelter for a maximum of 30 days, with the possibility of a 30-day extension, under New York State law.<sup>3</sup>

In conclusion, we urge the City Council to pass Int. No. 361, waiving the eligibility determination process for youth leaving DYCD runaway and homeless youth shelters, as well as for individuals leaving HRA domestic violence shelters. We would be happy to work with the Department of Homeless Services to develop a referral process that would ultimately provide these young families with the shelter services they need.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify on this important matter.

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<sup>3</sup> See 9 NYCRR 182-1.9(j).



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## **VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAM, INC.**

P.O. Box 1161, Triborough Station, New York, New York 10035

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### **VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

**P.O. Box 1161 Triborough Station**

**New York, NY 10035**

**Testimony City Council Women's Issues Committee**

**October 20, 2014**

Good morning. My name is Cecilia Gaston. I am the Executive Director of the Violence Intervention Program, a nonprofit incorporated in 1989. We provide a full continuum of services to survivors of domestic violence through our emergency and transitional housing programs as well as our non-residential community based services, free of charge and to citizens and non-citizens alike. We promote nonviolent partner relationships, families, and communities through raising awareness, activism, and culturally competent services that are respectful of each survivor's right to self-determination. VIP is a member of both the domestic violence residential and non-residential coalitions, the NYS Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the National Latina Network's Policy Advisory Council.

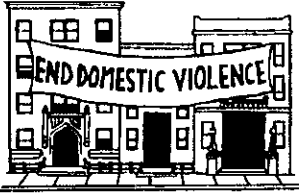
Immigrant women are at high risk for domestic violence, but due to their immigration status, they may face a more difficult time escaping abuse. Immigrant women often feel trapped in abusive relationships because of immigration laws, language barriers, social isolation, and lack of financial resources. Despite recent federal legislation that has opened new and safe routes to immigration status for some immigrant women, abuse is still a significant problem.

- A recent study in New York City found that 51% of intimate partner homicide victims were foreign born, while 45% were born in the United States. i
- Forty-eight percent of Latinas in one study reported that their partner's violence against them had increased since they immigrated to the United States. ii
- Married immigrant women experience higher levels of physical and sexual abuse than unmarried immigrant women, 59.5% compared to 49.8%, respectively. iii

TOGETHER WE CAN END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE / JUNTOS PODEMOS TERMINAR CON LA VIOLENCIA FAMILIAR

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- Abusers often use their partners' immigration status as a tool of control. iv In such situations, it is common for a batterer to exert control over his partner's immigration status in order to force her to remain in the relationship. v
- Immigrant women often suffer higher rates of violence than U.S. citizens because they may come from cultures that accept domestic violence or because they have less access to legal and social services than U.S. citizens. vi Additionally, immigrant batterers and victims may believe that the penalties and protections of the U.S. legal system do not apply to them. v

In some instances, foreign-born women who have survived terrible abuse have virtually no chance for legal relief, especially if they have kept the abuse a secret out of shame or fear. As advocates for survivors, we are acutely aware of the devastating impact the City's collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has had on the immigrant survivors that we serve. This not only makes our work more challenging but actually further victimizes and endangers a survivor on the road to safety.

In New York victims of intimate partner violence can risk arrest when they call the police either because they have had to defend themselves from abuse, or because an inability to speak English results in an arrest. We routinely hear reports of survivors who are not provided with interpretation when making the difficult and often dangerous decision to contact law enforcement, and then improperly arrested for being unable to report their victimization. Sexual assault, human trafficking, and family, homophobic and transphobic violence are already underreported crimes. Survivors are acutely aware of the risk of deportation when calling the police, and ICE/police collaboration pushes survivors deeper into the shadows.

i Femicide in New York City: 1995-2002. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, October 2004.



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ii Dutton, Mary; Leslye Orloff, and Giselle Aguilar Hass. 2000. "Characteristics of Help-Seeking Behaviors, Resources, and Services Needs of Battered Immigrant Latinas: Legal and Policy Implications." *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy*. 7(2).

iii Dutton, Mary; Leslye Orloff, and Giselle Aguilar Hass. 2000. "Characteristics of Help-Seeking Behaviors, Resources, and Services Needs of Battered Immigrant Latinas: Legal and Policy Implications." *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy*. 7(2).

iv Orloff, Leslie and Janice V. Kaguyuntan. 2002. "Offering a Helping Hand: Legal Protections for Battered Immigrant Women: A History of Legislative Responses." *Journal of Gender, Social Policy, and the Law*. 10(1):95-183.

v Orloff et al., 1995. "With no place to Turn: Improving Advocacy for Battered Immigrant Women." *Family Law Quarterly*. 29(2):313.

**Anti-Violence Advocates Against Deportation**

# **The High Cost of Collaboration Between Police & Immigration:**

## **Perspectives from Survivors of Violence, Sex Workers, and LGBTQ People**

detain this person for ICE to pick up after release from criminal custody) or apprehend this person at home, work, at court, or elsewhere. After being picked up by ICE, these people are often locked up in detention centers in remote locations, with severely limited access to lawyers, medical care, family, witnesses, and evidence to defend against deportation. Many jurisdictions have stopped detaining immigrant residents on behalf of ICE to ensure that the City is acting within the confines of its legal authority and not subjecting itself to liability. We call on the City to end all collaboration with ICE. We cannot allow ICE to undermine decades of advocacy to end violence in our communities.

The following stories focus on the impact on survivors of domestic, intimate partner and trafficking violence, LGBTQ people, and/or sex workers—groups already susceptible to gender policing, surveillance and other harmful interactions with law enforcement. Based on actual cases, these stories remind us that ICE's presence in local law enforcement places individuals at an increased risk for detention, deportation, and other forms of violence. The police should not play a role in limiting survivors' options in attaining safety and accessing resources by collaborating with ICE's deportation regime. Funneling abusers into the deportation system severely undermines survivors' agency in making their own safety determinations. These stories illustrate how there is no place for ICE collaboration with the criminal legal system.

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Jessica fled to the U.S. to escape a violent relationship and family. Jessica shoplifted and has received three convictions for petty larceny. Jessica later married Daniel, a U.S. citizen, who also abused her. Upon return from Brazil where Jessica traveled to see her ill father, she was put in deportation proceedings because of her petty larceny convictions. Her immigration attorney never pursued a VAWA self-petition application even though she told him about her abuse, and she was ordered deported. Jessica tried to piece her life back together but continued to find herself caught in the criminal legal system. One evening, the police stopped her while she was driving her drunk cousin. She panicked, refused to take the breathalyzer test, and the officer arrested her. Fearing extended separation from her children, Jessica pled guilty to driving while under the influence on her attorney's advice. While in the criminal legal system, Jessica was never identified as a survivor nor was she ever advised of the immigration consequences of her pleas.

Jessica recently became a priority target because of her prior deportation order and convictions and ICE agents searched for her for months at her previous jobs and addresses. She was mandatorily detained in an Alabama facility. Jessica was not able to access the highly specialized attorneys that she needed to successfully fight her detention and deportation. She was deported and is now separated from her three children and exiled to a country she fled to escape abuse after 20 years in the U.S.

Our communities are increasingly threatened by deportation—which in almost all cases is permanent exile. The U.S. has deported more people in the past 10 years—over 3 million—than in the preceding 110 years combined. The government increasingly uses the criminal legal system—most notably the police and jails—to identify people that they funnel into a unjust mass deportation system. Collaboration between police and jails and immigration has expanded rapidly, with very little scrutiny, despite the well-documented problems with the criminal legal system, including the discriminatory policies and policing practices that fuel it.

One devastating example is Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) "Secure Communities" (S-Comm) program. Under S-Comm, when police collect fingerprints at booking, this information is sent to ICE via the FBI. This allows ICE to rapidly identify potential deportees, and issue a detainer request (a request that the police

**ICE uses the words "fugitives" and "criminals" to provide the political justification for its mass deportation agenda. ICE's presence in the criminal legal system allows it to easily and neatly deport hundreds of thousands in the name of "public safety" without scrutiny. Survivors with prior orders of deportation ("fugitives") and/or prior convictions ("criminals") are especially vulnerable.**

**Survivors are vulnerable to retaliatory arrests and convictions that do not always appear to be related to the dynamics of abuse.**

Clara has been physically, sexually, emotionally and verbally abused by her former U.S. citizen boyfriend. He hired someone to break into her home to intimidate her and a private investigator to track her activities. Clara is the cooperating witness in two criminal cases pending against him and the petitioner in a pending family court order of protection case. The abuser's mother, in retaliation, falsely accused Clara of credit card fraud. Despite Clara's efforts to report her abuser and to seek protection, the police arrested her without investigation based on the mother's allegation. At booking, the police sent her fingerprints to the ICE database under S-Comm. ICE identified her as deportable as she overstayed her visa and lodged a hold request against her. At arraignment, Clara was eligible to post bail but the judge did not permit her to do so because of the hold request. Clara was frantic as she has a young child and was emotionally and physically at her breaking point. Unlike most others, she had a legal advocate when this retaliatory arrest happened who presented ample evidence of the violent history in the relationship to get the hold request lifted. Many survivors do not have evidence or access to suitable legal resources.

**Survivors of trafficking are often arrested for activities stemming from their subjugation. Rarely identified by police and prosecutors, they often do not assert themselves because of trauma and social stigma. Advocates pushed New York to develop an extensive statutory scheme to protect trafficking survivors. ICE presence in the criminal legal system severely undermines these efforts by interfering with access to benefits under these laws.**

Mary is a survivor of human sex trafficking from Poland who overstayed her tourist visa when she came to visit her parents in the 1990s. She was trafficked by her intimate partner for over fifteen years. Mary suffers from a mental illness that was not diagnosed until she was in her twenties. She first began using drugs as a coping mechanism and later as a way to be able to continue performing commercial sex acts. Before S-Comm's implementation, she was arrested numerous times and convicted of numerous controlled substance offenses. But she was always released from criminal custody. After S-Comm's implementation, Mary was arrested for allegedly trespassing at a New York City Housing Authority building. ICE almost immediately dropped a hold request to initiate deportation proceedings against her. Although the charges against Mary were going to be dismissed, she could not get out of jail by posting bail because if she did the City would turn her over to ICE.

Mary's public defender identified her as a possible trafficking victim and reached out to an immigration attorney to see if she could qualify for immigration relief. Mary had to remain incarcerated the ENTIRE time that her immigration attorney was working on her case because she faced the risk of being detained by the immigration authorities as a result of the hold request. Mary did not want to take this risk for many reasons and her advocates feared she would have less access to the medical attention she needed in immigration detention. Working on her application while incarcerated was no easy task for Mary. She spent countless hours reliving horrible experiences in a tiny, cramped interview room with no one to talk to afterwards to help her professionally deal with the trauma she had disclosed.

Mary spent three months more in jail than she should have because of the ICE hold request. Through tremendous advocacy and effort, her immigration attorney filed an immigration application for her as a victim of human trafficking and convinced ICE not detain her but instead to allow her to pursue the mental health and medical treatment she desperately needed while her case was pending. Today, she receives drug treatment, mental health services and job training while she awaits the outcome of her immigration application. Mary is also seeking to vacate her convictions under New York State's "Vacating Convictions Law."

Two transgender women were walking home one night and were assaulted by a man who had previously attacked them. They fought back in self-defense. The police refused to interview any witnesses and arrested only the women despite their statements to the contrary. They were charged with felony assault and received ICE hold requests. Both women were trafficking victims and neither had any prior convictions. Both women experienced repeated physical and sexual violence while incarcerated. They are now both fighting their deportation cases and fear serious abuse in Mexico because of transphobic violence they experienced there.

**LGBTQ non-citizens are often arrested in self-defense scenarios when they are defending themselves against homophobic or transphobic violence.**

The NYPD frequently targeted Tracey, an undocumented transgender woman from Trinidad, while she was living on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. The police profiled her as a sex worker and constantly harassed her outside of her home. They often charged her with loitering with the intent to engage in prostitution. Once the police charged her with a felony of luring a child simply because she was with a 16-year-old minor, and in another instance with public lewdness while she was eating pizza near her home. Because of this harassment, Tracey was arrested approximately 30 times in a two-year period. Tracey pled to many of the charges because she could not bear the violence she experienced inside the men's jail where she previously had been physically assaulted.

**LGBTQ non-citizens face higher rates of negative encounters and harassment from the NYPD if gender non-conforming.**

Laura is a transgender woman from Colombia. The U.S. granted her asylee status in 2004 because of the extreme abuse and harassment she endured by the Colombian government due to her gender identity and sexual orientation. In 2008, she got into an abusive relationship, and she called the police. When they arrived, her abuser told the police that she assaulted him first and that she had a knife. The police asked her if this was true and then for her ID. They then asked her why she had an "M" gender marker on her passport. She told them she was a transgender woman. They arrested her and charged her with felony assault. At her arraignment, she took a plea to misdemeanor assault because she feared abuse in jail. ICE identified Laura while in Rikers and she is currently fighting her deportation.

**People face enormous pressure to accept pleas, which may have immigration consequences, and LGBTQ people, especially those who are transgender, often face additional pressure due to gender-related abuse.**

Teresa had been living in the U.S. for over ten years when she married her citizen husband Zack. They had a baby girl named Natasha. Zack became physically, emotionally and economically abusive. One day, Teresa was arrested for shoplifting and sent to Rikers. Teresa had a prior deportation order (she was identified by ICE when previously convicted of criminal contempt based on false allegations by her former abuser) but never left the country. Although the charges in the shoplifting case were dismissed, Rikers still transferred Teresa into ICE custody. ICE sent her to detention in Texas even though her four-month-old daughter Natasha, who remained in New York, was still nursing. Zack then initiated a custody case against Teresa. Her time in detention was extremely traumatic because she could not easily obtain counsel and could not physically appear in family court on her child's custody case. If her country's embassy had not intervened with ICE to have her released from detention, Teresa's due process rights to litigate custody of her child would have been violated. She is back with her child, under ICE supervision, fighting her deportation back to Mexico. Although Teresa now has custody of Natasha, she requires Zack's consent (which he will not provide) to bring Natasha with her if deported.

**ICE's presence in the criminal legal system makes it extremely difficult for parents to exercise their rights. Immigration detention isolates survivors with children, substantially diminishing their ability to reunify with them and obtain needed resources and support.**

**Batterers are adept at using the criminal legal system to perpetuate violence against survivors. The complex dynamics of abuse scenarios are difficult for law enforcement to sort out, often leading to survivors getting criminal convictions and placing them at serious risk of deportation. The NYPD's mandatory and dual arrest policies only exacerbate this problem given the current state of cooperation between the police and ICE.**

Lourdes came to the U.S. in 1999 from Peru and was deported when crossing at the border. As part of the expedited removal process, she was fingerprinted. She reentered and later met her abuser, a U.S. Citizen, and they have two young children. Her abuser always used her immigration status as a threat to maintain power and control. Although they separated years ago, Lourdes' abuser still wanted to have a relationship. When she refused, he made false allegations to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) in 2011 that she was abusing their children. During the ACS investigation, Lourdes disclosed that he had been threatening to get her deported and take custody of their children. She told ACS about the time that he called the police and based on false allegations, she was charged with assault and harassment. ACS referred Lourdes to domestic violence services and instructed her to go to Family Court to obtain an order of protection. ACS closed the case because they could not substantiate the allegations of abuse and she was seeking appropriate services. Yet, Lourdes was forced to drop her order of protection case when she found that using the family court system only escalated the abuse.

Lourdes continued to try to only deal with her abuser on issues involving the children. But when she refused his sexual advances again, he made a series of false allegations to the NYPD resulting in her arrest in 2013 on assault, harassment, and menacing charges. Because the NYPD sent her prints to DHS via S-Comm, ICE issued a hold request. Because of her prior removal order and her pending assault charge, Lourdes did not qualify for release at arraignment under New York's detainer discretion law. So she remained at Rikers for four months to avoid being taken into ICE custody.

Lourdes was incredibly distraught at being separated from her children while at Rikers. There, she met another survivor whose immigration attorney was working to obtain a U certification for her. Lourdes has no idea what this was but begged for the immigration attorney's number and frantically tried to reach her. With immigration representation, Lourdes was eventually able to obtain a timely U certification from ACS which was instrumental in advocating that ICE not take custody of her on the completion of her criminal case. On being shown credible evidence that Lourdes was in fact a domestic violence survivor whose abuser used the legal system in a retaliatory manner against her, the District Attorney dismissed Lourdes' case ahead of schedule. Lourdes is working on her U application to fight her immigration case.

The day after she was released from Rikers, her batterer called the police to make a false complaint against her. Unfortunately, the NYPD system still showed a valid order of protection in place against Lourdes even though it had technically been dismissed by the criminal court the previous day. The police officers assigned to the case insisted that she had to be arrested. They refused to acknowledge the court evidence that the case had been dismissed when it was provided by the public defender and even when the district attorney made a call to explain that there was no legal basis for the arrest. Lourdes was distraught at the thought of being arrested again, especially because the risk of going into ICE custody. It took several weeks for the warrant against her to be vacated.

During this time, she feared going to family court for fear of being arrested on the warrant and this led to a one month delay in filing for custody of her children. Since Lourdes' abuser had physical custody of the children during her incarceration, he took the opportunity to file for custody in family court. He has been granted temporary custody while the case is being litigated in family court. Even if she is granted custody, her abuser would most likely end up with court ordered visitation with their children. This means that she would require his consent to take them back to Peru with her if deported, which is unlikely given the ongoing history of abuse.

**Anti-Violence Advocates Against  
Deportation, September 2014**  
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Testimony of  
Coalition for the Homeless  
and  
The Legal Aid Society

on

**Coordination of Services for Victims of Domestic Violence and  
Int. 0361-2014**

Presented before

The New York City Council  
Committee on General Welfare

Patrick Markee  
Deputy Executive Director for Advocacy  
Coalition for the Homeless

Joshua Goldfein  
Senior Staff Attorney, Homeless Rights Project  
The Legal Aid Society

October 20, 2014

The Coalition for the Homeless and The Legal Aid Society welcome this opportunity to testify before the New York City Council in support of Int. 0361-2014, legislation that would require the New York City Department of Homeless Services to grant a presumption of eligibility for applicants to the shelter system who are exiting domestic violence shelters administered by the New York City Human Resources Administration or runaway and homeless youth shelters administered by the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development. We also welcome this opportunity to highlight the need for more permanent housing resources targeted to families in shelter, including homeless families and domestic violence survivors.

### About the Coalition and The Legal Aid Society

Coalition for the Homeless: Coalition for the Homeless, founded in 1981, is a not-for-profit advocacy and direct services organization that assists more than 3,500 homeless New Yorkers each day. The Coalition advocates for proven, cost-effective solutions to the crisis of modern homelessness, which now continues past its third decade. The Coalition also protects the rights of homeless people through litigation around the right to emergency shelter, the right to vote, and life-saving housing and services for homeless people living with mental illness and HIV/AIDS.

The Coalition operates 12 direct-services programs that offer vital services to homeless, at-risk, and low-income New Yorkers. These programs also demonstrate effective, long-term solutions and include: supportive housing for families and individuals living with AIDS; job-training for homeless and formerly-homeless women; rental assistance providing rent subsidies and support services to move working homeless individuals and families into private-market apartments; and permanent housing for formerly-homeless families and individuals. Our summer sleep-away camp and after-school program help hundreds of homeless children each year. The Coalition's mobile soup kitchen distributes over 900 nutritious meals each night to homeless and hungry New Yorkers across the streets of Manhattan and the Bronx. Finally, our Crisis Intervention Department assists more than 1,000 homeless and at-risk households each month with eviction prevention, individual advocacy, referrals for shelter and emergency food programs, assistance with public benefits as well as basic necessities such as diapers, formula, work uniforms and money for medications and groceries.

The Coalition was founded around the effort to bring the landmark litigation on behalf of homeless men and women in Callahan v. Carey and Eldredge v. Koch and remains a plaintiff in these now consolidated cases. In 1981 the City and State entered into a consent decree in Callahan through which they agreed that, "The City defendants shall provide shelter and board to each homeless man who applies for it provided that (a) the man meets the need standard to qualify for the home relief program established in New York State; or (b) the man by reason of physical, mental or social dysfunction is in need of temporary shelter." The Eldredge case extended this legal requirement to homeless single women. The Callahan consent decree and the Eldredge case also guarantee basic standards for shelters for homeless men and women. Pursuant to the decree, the Coalition serves as court-appointed monitor of municipal shelters for homeless adults.

The Legal Aid Society: The Legal Aid Society, the nation's oldest and largest not-for-profit legal services organization, is more than a law firm for clients who cannot afford to pay for counsel. It is an indispensable component of the legal, social, and economic fabric of New York City – passionately advocating for low-income individuals and families across a variety of civil, criminal and juvenile rights matters, while also fighting for legal reform.

The Legal Aid Society has performed this role in City, State and federal courts since 1876. It does so by capitalizing on the diverse expertise, experience, and capabilities of 1,100 of the brightest legal



minds. These 1,100 Legal Aid Society lawyers work with some 700 social workers, investigators, paralegals and support and administrative staff. Through a network of borough, neighborhood, and courthouse offices in 26 locations in New York City, the Society provides comprehensive legal services in all five boroughs of New York City for clients who cannot afford to pay for private counsel.

The Society's legal program operates three major practices — Civil, Criminal and Juvenile Rights — and receives volunteer help from law firms, corporate law departments and expert consultants that is coordinated by the Society's Pro Bono program. With its annual caseload of more than 300,000 legal matters, The Legal Aid Society takes on more cases for more clients than any other legal services organization in the United States. And it brings a depth and breadth of perspective that is unmatched in the legal profession.

The Legal Aid Society's unique value is an ability to go beyond any one case to create more equitable outcomes for individuals and broader, more powerful systemic change for society as a whole. In addition to the annual caseload of 300,000 individual cases and legal matters, the Society's law reform representation for clients benefits some two million low-income families and individuals in New York City and the landmark rulings in many of these cases have a State-wide and national impact.

The Legal Aid Society is counsel to the Coalition for the Homeless and for homeless women and men in the Callahan and Eldredge cases. The Legal Aid Society is also counsel in the McCain/Boston litigation in which a final judgment requires the provision of lawful shelter to homeless families.

#### **Background: Record Numbers of NYC Families in Shelters and the Need to Allocate More NYCHA Resources to Help Homeless Families and Survivors of Domestic Violence**

As this committee is well aware, the current administration inherited an unprecedented homelessness crisis. There are currently 57,000 homeless New Yorkers, including more than 13,000 families and 24,000 children, sleeping each night in the municipal homeless shelter system, administered by the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS). (Please see charts attached to this testimony.) These are the highest numbers since the City began keeping records of the homeless population more than three decades ago and the highest since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

In addition, more than 1,000 families, including 1,600 children, sleep each night in the City's domestic violence shelter system, administered by the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA).

Along with the worsening housing affordability crisis and the failures of Bloomberg-era homeless policies, domestic violence is one of the major causes of homelessness in New York City. Indeed, it is in many ways misleading to distinguish between families in the homeless shelter system and families in the domestic violence shelter system, since many more survivors of domestic violence actually reside in DHS-administered homeless shelters than in HRA-administered domestic violence shelters.

Currently around one in four homeless families has a history of domestic violence. And DHS data shows that, in the current fiscal year, domestic violence was the second most common reason families sought shelter in the DHS system (22 percent of family shelter entrants) after evictions (31 percent).

Clearly the need for permanent housing resources for families in shelter is more critical than ever. Fortunately, in response to the prior administration's failure to address this slowly unfolding disaster the de Blasio administration has unveiled a plan that makes significant progress in providing permanent housing assistance to homeless families and domestic violence survivors. But more can and must be done.

In August the City unveiled its plan to provide permanent housing assistance to help families and children move from shelters to their own homes. The City's plan represents a significant step forward in reversing the most significant factor fueling New York City's homeless crisis: The Bloomberg administration's disastrous elimination of permanent housing aid which has been long-documented to help homeless families leave shelters and remain stably housed.

The current administration's plan proposes to move 5,200 families from shelters into permanent housing over the course of the next year through a variety of programs, including the following:

- 1,100 families helped through a new City-State rent subsidy program (dubbed LINC1) for working homeless families;
- 950 families helped through a new City-State rent subsidy program (LINC2) for homeless families who have had multiple stays in the shelter system;
- 1,900 families helped through a new City-State rent subsidy program (LINC3) for survivors of domestic violence residing in both DHS homeless shelters and HRA domestic violence shelters; and
- 750 families moved into New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) public housing apartments;
- 500 families helped through federal housing vouchers administered by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

While the administration's plan is a positive step forward, there are some notable weaknesses. For instance, the plan fails to address the housing needs of homeless single adults and childless families, many of whom are living with disabilities and serious health problems, as well as families with children living with special needs who reside in homeless and domestic violence shelters. The Campaign 4 NY/NY Housing, supported by more than 160 organizations, is pressing for a new City-State agreement to create 30,000 supportive housing units over the next decade to help move these families and individuals out of costly shelters, off our streets, and into stable, affordable homes.

We believe the most notable flaw in the administration's current plan is the small number of NYCHA public housing apartments allocated to families in shelters. The Coalition for the Homeless and The Legal Aid Society have steadfastly advocated that at least 2,500 public housing apartments be allocated each year to families trapped in emergency shelters, a recommendation that was echoed by dozens of New York City Council members and other leaders. Unfortunately, the administration chose to allocate only 750 NYCHA apartments each year. This, despite the fact that NYCHA expects to place more than 6,000 households in public housing over the next year.

The ability of NYCHA to direct more resources to rescue families with vulnerable children in shelter is most compelling when examining the current NYCHA policy, which actually allocates the majority of public housing apartments to households with no demonstrated housing needs.

## PLACEMENTS INTO NYCHA PUBLIC HOUSING VACANCIES, 2013 and 2014

(Source: New York City Housing Authority)

	2013 (Jan thru Dec)	Percent of total	2014 (Jan thru June)	Percent of total
<b>No demonstrated housing needs/ "working preference"</b>				
W1	629	15%	438	16%
W2	794	18%	452	16%
W3	1,060	25%	750	27%
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>2,483</i>	<i>57%</i>	<i>1,640</i>	<i>59%</i>
<b>Needs-based priorities</b>				
N0	889	21%	339	12%
N1	359	8%	307	11%
N4	590	14%	489	18%
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>1,838</i>	<i>43%</i>	<i>1,135</i>	<i>41%</i>
<b>Total placements*</b>	<b>4,321</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,775</b>	<b>100%</b>
W1 = 50%-80% of AMI W2 = 30%-50% of AMI W3 = Below 30% of AMI				
*Note that placement data does not include transfers.				

As the table here illustrates, during the first half of 2014, fully 59 percent of NYCHA public housing apartments were given to households who did not demonstrate any housing needs – such as high rent burdens, overcrowding, or hazardous housing conditions. This includes hundreds of households earning as much as \$67,000 annually.

These households with no demonstrated housing needs were in fact given the highest priority for available NYCHA public housing apartments – higher than for households with the most severe housing needs. Mayor Rudy Giuliani first crafted NYCHA's inequitable distribution of our vital public housing resources and Mayor Bloomberg expanded it, with a policy he christened the "Working Family Preference."

In contrast, households with demonstrated housing needs – including many poor working families, domestic violence survivors, homeless families, and New Yorkers living with disabilities, – were allotted only 41 percent of available public housing apartments. Indeed, in the first half of 2014, only 256 households were placed in public housing apartments under the priority for domestic violence survivors, representing only 9 percent of total NYCHA placements in that period.

To make matters worse, current NYCHA admissions policies make it harder for families residing in domestic violence shelters to obtain public housing. For more than two decades, under mayoral

administrations that spanned the entire political spectrum, New York City achieved tremendous success in assigning priority admission to NYCHA housing (and access to Section 8 vouchers) to literally thousands of households referred by DHS, HRA, and other City agencies. In one last senseless maneuver, the outgoing Bloomberg administration rescinded the NYCHA priority code that long permitted such priority referrals. (Beginning in 2005 the Bloomberg administration had, of course, ceased making such referrals for families in shelter – a major cause of soaring family homelessness under Bloomberg – but the priority code, which could have readily been activated by his successor remained in place until September 2013.)

We find it troubling that when the current administration revised the NYCHA admissions guidelines in July, it failed to restore HRA as one of the agencies designated to make priority referrals into NYCHA public housing. Only DHS, HPD, the Administration for Children's Services, and the HIV/AIDS Services Administration, a division of HRA, were included in the revised priority code. Given HRA's leadership role in sheltering families fleeing domestic violence, its exclusion is entirely counterproductive.

### **Expand Permanent Housing Resources for Families and Children in Shelters**

Looking forward, here are the essential steps that the City must take to allocate more permanent housing resources to homeless families, including domestic violence survivors:

1. Allocate at least 2,500 NYCHA public housing apartments annually to families in shelters. The City should increase the allocation of NYCHA public housing apartments for homeless families and families residing in domestic violence shelters to 2,500 apartments/year, consistent with the best years of the Bloomberg administration.
2. Restore HRA's ability to access the priority referral code for NYCHA apartments. The City should restore HRA to the roster of City agencies empowered to designate families with the N-0 priority code for NYCHA public housing. This is one immediate step the de Blasio administration can make so that families in the domestic violence shelter system can be once again given the best and quickest access to the stable housing they deserve.
3. Reform NYCHA admissions policies. The City should eliminate the Giuliani-Bloomberg "Working Family Preference" to ensure that preference is given to families who work, but are still poor and trapped in shelters. In addition, NYCHA should address longstanding bureaucratic barriers that make it difficult for domestic violence survivors to access public housing through the N-1 priority code.
4. Negotiate a new City-State agreement to create permanent supportive housing. As recommended by broad coalition of community groups and leaders who launched the Campaign 4 NY/NY Housing, the Mayor and Governor should sign an agreement to create 30,000 units of supportive housing over the next decade.

### **Introduction 0361-2014**

The Coalition for the Homeless and The Legal Aid Society thank the Council for introducing this important bill, which we fully support. Runaway and homeless youth (RHY) and domestic violence survivors and their families are among New York's most vulnerable populations and both the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and HRA are tasked with providing the shelter and support services to meet the unique needs and circumstances of these populations. Int. 0361-2014 would eliminate the wasteful and bureaucratic hurdle which hinders housing eligibility for individuals hundreds of households forced to leave HRA domestic violence and DYCD shelters due to arbitrary time restrictions of those systems.

New York's runaway and homeless youth are both extremely resilient but have tremendous and unique needs. They are predominately LGBT, frequently victims of trafficking and other crimes, and suffer from much higher levels of mental illness than the overall shelter population. DYCD's continuum of crisis shelter and Transitional Independent Living (TIL) placements provide specialized services for youth between the ages of 16-21 years of age. The risk factors facing RHY both before and after they end up on the street are different from those confronting other homeless populations, and the DYCD providers are able to address these factors through specialized services and training. Moreover, because the RHY shelters only service youth who are between the age of 16 and their 21st birthday, they can provide the safe space essential for youth who are often threatened in shelters serving the general homeless population. Unfortunately, DCYD shelter and TIL placements have time limits on stays and homeless youth are often forced back onto the street when they have timed-out of a DYCD shelter. These time limits, which are solely a function of funding limitations, must be eliminated. The Legal Aid Society is currently litigating the C.W. case to abolish these time limits and increase investment in better services for runaway and homeless youth.

Similarly, HRA's confidential shelter system for the survivors of domestic violence and their families provide a safe place for these families to begin planning their future, protected from the threat of violence from an intimate partner. Similar to runaway and homeless youth, domestic violence survivors become homeless for reasons different than many homeless New Yorker and thereby need unique service intervention. Understanding the traumas specific to this population and addressing their needs through intensive casework and service provision helps domestic violence survivors to move out of shelter and back into the community with the skills and support they need.

Unfortunately, shelters in both the DCYD and HRA continuums are also time-limited because of funding limitations and the unprecedented number of homelessness in our city, and so youth and domestic violence survivors are too-often forced to move into the general homeless population in the DHS-administered system. Time limits on domestic violence shelter force survivors who have just begun to get back on their feet into a yet another period of instability – at a time when they are most in need of certainty.

These vulnerable individuals and families who are newly homeless should not have to navigate the confusing maze of City agencies offering different services. Yet they suffer greatly because of their very differences, especially when they face the current wasteful and burdensome eligibility process. And in what can only be described as a truly Kafka-esque hurdle, domestic violence survivors and RHY are often forced to prove once again that they are eligible for shelter – even when they are transferred directly to DHS from another City shelter system. Int. 0361-2014 will eliminate these senseless barriers so vulnerable families can fully focus their energy and efforts towards healing and re-engaging in their community.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony. As always, we look forward to working with this committee and the entire City Council in the coming months and years to reduce homelessness in New York City.

# FOR THE RECORD



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Women's Legislative Caucus

**REPRESENTING**  
Flushing, Kew Garden Hills, Queensboro Hill  
Hillcrest, Fresh Meadows,  
Oakland Gardens, Auburndale,  
Bayside Hills, Douglaston

## **Testimony of New York State Assemblywoman Nily Rozic**

**Before the New York City Council Committee on General Welfare, Women's Issues, and  
Courts and Legal Services**

**Resolution 161-A of 2014 calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the  
Governor to sign into law A.7964-B and S.5032-B, which requires wireless telephone  
companies that offer shared or family plans to allow victims of domestic violence to be  
released from the account without penalty in instances of domestic violence**

**Hearing Date:  
October 20, 2014**

My name is Assemblywoman Nily Rozic and I represent the 25th Assembly District in Queens, which includes the neighborhoods of Flushing, Queensboro Hill, Hillcrest, Fresh Meadows, Oakland Gardens, Bayside, and Douglaston.

I would like to thank Council Member Espinal for his leadership on this issue, Chair Cumbo, Chair Levin, Chair Lancman and fellow supporters for holding today's hearing and offering representatives of our community and other interested parties the opportunity to provide testimony.

As many of you might know, in 2010 the State of New York extended a protection to domestic violence survivors of domestic by requiring local exchange telephone companies or cable television companies to provide an anonymous listing or pseudonymous identification free of charge. Since then, a number of survivors of domestic violence have made use of this protective service.

However, as the telecommunications industry transforms, circumstances have given rise to the need to extend the necessary protections for victims who have "shared minute" or "family plan" contracts with a wireless telephone company. While "shared minute" and "family plan" contracts allow customers to save money by consolidating costs, fees for early cancellation of such contracts vary widely across providers and can be levied against victims of domestic violence fleeing their batterers. As it stands, there are limited protections in place that would allow a survivors of domestic violence to opt-out of such plans without having to face the financial burden of paying an early termination fee.

Bill A7964-B/S5032-B that I co-sponsor with State Senator Parker would strengthen and expand existing protections for victims of domestic violence by eliminating one of the numerous

challenges victims face when trying to sever contact with their batterer. Under this legislation, we aim to empower the powerless and help victims acquire the security and safety they deserve.

According to the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, the New York City Police Department responded to 280,531 domestic violence incidents in 2013, averaging over 765 incidents per day and the City's Domestic Violence Hotline advocates answered 99,719 calls, averaging approximately 270 calls per day. Numbers like these show that efforts must be made to make the process a domestic violence victim goes through when moving to safety more supportive of their needs whether it be physical or financial.

Bill A.7964-B/S.5032-B is an important step in ensuring the safety of domestic violence victims and providing a new beginning of economic safety and self-sufficiency. This legislative session it passed the Assembly with overwhelming bipartisan support. It is supported by the Korean American Family Service Center and Women and Work: A Partnership for Empowerment, a program housed in my district at Queens College.

Providing an escape clause in "shared minute" and "family plan" contracts so that victims of domestic violence will not have to continue paying for services shared with their batterer is good public policy, and consistent with New York's and the telecommunications industry's historic support for domestic violence victims.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer testimony and for your consideration of my comments.

My name is Jacqui Williams. I am a lobbyist in the state of New York, the owner of a successful company, a veteran of the US Navy, and this year I became a victim of domestic violence.

Imagine being assaulted by someone you love, then being blindfolded, thrown in a dark room, and spun around in circles until you're sick. This is how I would characterize my experience as a victim of domestic violence, put through the system currently in place in New York City.

I'm not here to point fingers, but to help illustrate how the system that is intended to serve victims can often perpetuate, rather than alleviate the suffering caused by domestic abuse.

This began from the moment I called the local police to find out what my legal options were. They simply did not return my phone call.

And so, unable to wait any longer, I decided to report it in person. The first thing I was asked wasn't what had happened to me, or the name of my abuser, but whether I, a woman of color, really belonged in that precinct, which served a largely Caucasian demographic. The answer, in case you're wondering, is yes.

When an officer who specializes in domestic violence finally came to speak to me, she began to openly discuss details of my case out in an open, public lobby. I had to plead with her to speak somewhere privately. She seemed surprised by my request, which in turn surprised me: wouldn't an officer who specializes in domestic violence understand that it might be humiliating to discuss the details of my assault out in an open lobby?

When I was turned over to a city-appointed counselor, I found myself plunged into an unsympathetic, outdated, and incompetent bureaucracy staffed with a personnel that were rude, indifferent, and withholding of necessary information. The literature available in their office for victims of domestic assault was not in English, and dated back to the administration of George Pataki.

Keep in mind that this counselor was provided to help me with the immediate legal and emotional aftermath of my assault. But because of repeated delays and a total lack of communication, I was forced to seek out a counselor on my own, whom I paid out of my own pocket.



Let me make clear that to suffer from domestic violence is not simply a physical assault. It is an emotional and psychological trauma that grows even after the physical. The system made this worse.

All in all, I was embarrassed, humiliated, and made to feel unworthy. The system was supposed to be my savior, but instead it opened a new chapter in the nightmare of my domestic assault. And when I think back about my assault, the only time I begin to cry is when I think about how I was made to feel by the people who were supposed to help me. I am fortunate enough to be financially secure, with a loving support system of family and friends who rallied around me. But what about other victims? What about those who don't have my resources? And this is the point of my testimony today.

Just last week the Daily news published an article about the Justice Center, noting that the number survivors of domestic violence seeking assistance has increased dramatically. Given my own treatment at the Justice Center, I find this terrifying, and would urge this body to consider six recommendations for improving services for victims of domestic violence:

- 1) Consider bringing in a Customer Service Training Provider to render customer service training to the staff of the Justice Centers and NYPD DV Officers.
- 2) Allow the service providers in the Centers to use technology as a tool to communicate information to the users of the Centers.
- 3) Appoint an operational oversight officer to coordinate the three components that make-up the Justice Center to ensure that the quality of customer service provided to victims is efficient, polite, and humane.
- 4) Survey the users of the Center, so that the quality of the service can be measured and if necessary improved upon.
- 5) Allow every NYPD Precinct to allow anyone to speak to a NYPD DV Officer, no matter where they live in NYC.
- 6) Allocate capital funding for NYPD to create private meeting spaces to avoid public humiliation of victims.

It is my contention that the answer isn't more laws, but an overhaul of the current system to be more efficient, more humane, and more respectful of victim's. Thank you.

- African American Planning Commission
- Allen Women's Resource Center
- Barrier Free Living
- Center Against Domestic Violence
- Dwa Fanm
- Food First
- Good Shepherd Services Safe Homes Project
- HELP USA, Inc.
- Henry Street Settlement
- Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services
- New Destiny Housing Corp.
- New Vista For Families
- New York Asian Women's Center
- OHEL Domestic Abuse Program
- Paladia, Inc.
- Safe Horizon
- Sanctuary For Families
- Urban Resource Institute
- Violence Intervention Program
- Volunteers of America
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**Testimony**

**NYC Council Committee on Women's Issues**

**October 20, 2014**

Good Morning, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Judith Kahan and I am the CEO of the Center Against Domestic Violence and Co-Chair of the NYC Coalition of Domestic Violence Residential Service Providers along with Nat Fields President of Urban Resource Institute.

The Coalition's positions are guided by one principal – Safety. We advocate so that the women, children – and yes - men who turn to us for refuge from unspeakable abuse, can enter our shelters safely and can leave with the tools to build a secure life free of intimate partner violence.

Since 1995 we have advocated with a unified voice for a continuum of care that provides quality housing and services for all domestic violence survivors. I am attaching an additional sheet that states Who We Are and Who We Serve. A number of my colleagues will be testifying about mandated services, immigrants, the disabled, legal services, and housing assistance.

The people we shelter in HRA DV Shelters have had their lives devastated by an abusive partner. They have made themselves homeless because it is unsafe for them to stay in their homes. They are just as homeless as those residing in DHS shelters with an important difference: Domestic Violence survivors are not permitted to stay in shelter beyond 180 days.

Unlike homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters are required to provide a rich array of social services and other supports designed to assist victims and their children in the process of healing and rebuilding their lives. There are broad categories of mandated services in Parts 452 and 453 of the New York State Social Services Law. In addition, individual shelters provide many non-mandated services to meet the changing needs of the population.

Perhaps most important, DV shelters operate in an atmosphere of confidentiality safe guarding the wellbeing of their endangered residents. Although Safe Horizon operates the NYC Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-621-HOPE), every dv agency is required to operate its own 24-hour hotline. Shelters field calls from police, clergy, family members of victims, and other social service providers seeking information about domestic violence and resources for victims, as well as calls from victims seeking shelter or other services for themselves.

Shelter staff must stay updated on available community resources. They must provide referrals to shelter residents for services not provided on site, and conduct follow-up to ensure that residents have been able to access the service to which they were referred. Referrals include services such as legal assistance, vocational and educational programs, medical and mental health care, as well as services for a wide array of specialized needs such as services for veterans, children with special needs, and residents requiring cosmetic or dental reconstruction.

Shelter staff conduct advocacy with a wide array of systems, most notably legal, educational, medical, child welfare and public assistance. Working with any complex, multi-layered system can be time consuming and frustrating, requiring multiple phone calls, letters and other interventions. In an effort to control a partner who has fled to a shelter, or to intimidate them into returning, batterers frequently file child abuse reports or child custody petitions. Dealing with the legal system or the child welfare system can be particularly frightening for residents.

Shelter staff provides weekly individual counseling to all residents, assisting them in understanding the dynamics of abusive relationships, in mourning the loss of their relationship, and in setting short and long term goals for themselves and their families.

In addition to individual counseling, shelters provide ongoing domestic violence support groups which utilize a psycho-educational model. Most shelters also provide additional groups to assist residents with housing search, financial literacy, vocational or pre-vocational skills, parenting skills, or other needs.

Domestic violence shelters provide an array of services for children residing in shelter. These include services provided directly to children such as group counseling, and educational and recreational activities, as well as services provided to parents to assist them in helping their children overcome the effects of domestic violence.

This was a very brief summary of some of the mandated services provided by domestic violence shelters.

MEMBER

ORGANIZATIONS:

African American Planning Commission

Allen Women's Resource Center

Barrier Free Living

Center Against Domestic Violence

Dwa Fanm

Food First

Good Shepherd Services Safe Homes Project

HELP USA, Inc.

Henry Street Settlement

Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services

New Destiny Housing Corp.

New Vista For Families

New York Asian Women's Center

OHEL Domestic Abuse Program

Paladia, Inc.

Safe Horizon

Sanctuary For Families

Urban Resource Institute

Violence Intervention Program

Volunteers of America

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**WHO WE ARE**

Founded in 1995, the New York City Coalition of Domestic Violence Residential Providers ("Coalition") is a partnership of all City-funded nonprofit domestic violence residential providers in New York City. The mission of the Coalition is to advocate with a unified voice for a continuum of care that provides quality housing and services for all domestic violence survivors.

**WHO WE SERVE**

Domestic violence affects New Yorkers in all walks of life. It does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion, socio-economic status or nation of origin. Coalition members provide safe haven and supportive services to individuals and families who have often fled violence with just the clothes on their backs. Survivors in shelter share a history of violence that very often results in serious trauma, isolation, and a long road to recovery for adults and children. As a last resort to find safety, survivors entering shelter must uproot themselves and their families, leaving everything familiar behind. In a maximum of 180 day shelter stay, they are faced with the tasks of healing, learning to live independently, finding new jobs, new doctors, new schools for their children, and finally, safe and affordable housing.

**SOME STATISTICS**

- 31% of homeless families in New York City are headed victims of domestic violence.
- In 2010, there were 75 family related homicides in New York City.
- There are 43 emergency domestic violence Tier I shelters in New York City with 2,228 beds.
- There are 7 transitional domestic violence Tier II shelters in New York City with 243 units.
- In 2010, the New York City Domestic Violence Hotline answered 119,177 calls.
- Every day, the NYPD responds to over 680 domestic violence incidents.

**SAFETY IN, SAFETY OUT**

Survivors enter shelter seeking safety and expect that when their families leave shelter, they will remain safe as well. The best prospect for long term safety and stability for survivors and their families is affordable permanent housing. This is the reason that the Coalition has focused its resources on zealously advocating for appropriate, concrete housing options for all survivors. Unfortunately, specialized affordable housing and rental subsidy programs for survivors have been dismantled. Without these options, victims who flee danger face the same choices at the end of their shelter stay – become homeless again or return to the abuser. Neither of these outcomes is acceptable.

**To contact the Coalition Co-Chairs:**

Judith Kahan – [jkahan@centeragainstdv.org](mailto:jkahan@centeragainstdv.org) or (718) 253-9134  
Nat Fields – [nfields@urinc.org](mailto:nfields@urinc.org) or (646) 588-0030

## **October 20th City Council Hearing - Committees on General Welfare, Women's Issues, and Courts and Legal Services**

Paul B. Feuerstein, President/CEO, Barrier Free Living

In national surveys, the number one issue of women with disabilities is domestic violence. Studies show that children with disabilities have four times the rate of abuse of children who are not disabled. This same statistic follows into adulthood with women with disabilities having four times the rate of abuse as well. Few people automatically connect disability and abuse, but when we look at the heart of abuse as power and control over another, persons with disabilities are attractive victims. Some women with disabilities have never been trained for the activity of daily living skills to be on their own in the community. For some women, abuse is seen as the price they pay to get what they need. On more than one occasion, I have heard the story of a paratransit driver who has taken advantage sexually of a lone female passenger. For an individual who has been trained to comply with caregivers since birth, a command to "lie down and take your clothes off" is seen as the price of the ride. Some individuals have lived with so much abuse that it is seen as normal or is equated with love.

The knight in shining armor who will take care of every need is seductive for someone who does not know how to navigate either systems of care or the day to day activities many take for granted. Earlier in our history, we placed a support team of ASL trained social workers in a partner's domestic violence shelter. Not a single deaf women, many with children, who came into that project knew how to travel on a bus by herself.

Shelter for victims with disabilities is more than having an elevator and hallways and apartments big enough to meet ADA standards. Programs need to be aware of the special needs of victims with disabilities and be prepared to meet them. We have a team of graduate level Occupational Therapy interns in all of our programs to evaluate every adult's Activity of Daily Living skills so they can have an individual plan to meet their needs.

The first place an abuser will look after a person comes to shelter will be the specialized services needed by a family member with a disability. Having a nurse to help navigate the health care system and a Department of Education liaison to assist with special education placements in public schools is critical for the safety of a family. Accommodating special needs in child care, in groups and in the advocacy needed has to be a core part of accessible programs.

Isolation is a key factor in maintaining power and control. Without the knowledge that help is available, many victims will feel stuck in abusive situations. For the past few years, we have worked with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities to mount a public education campaign that could reach people isolated in their homes. While a series of public service announcements was produced in the Bloomberg years, they never were circulated beyond WNYC or the audio while on hold for 311. Finances were always the concern. We have seen a major change in approach by the new administration and we are hopeful that our current administration and current city council will make sure that the resources are available to reach out to all New Yorkers with disabilities to inform them that help is available and not to give up hope.

As families enter the Domestic Violence Shelters, due to fleeing from imminent danger, the focus quickly becomes assessing the risk and ensuring the families safety while in shelter. Efforts are immediately made to develop a universal and workable safety plan the family can utilize when faced with adversity or a troubling situation. Families are briefed on the safety measures that encompass entering a Domestic Violence shelter, such as ensuring the physical address of the building is never disclosed and only a PO Box is utilized for mail and other purposes for concerns the family may be found by the abuser. Families are informed of the identified 'safe' places within the community for drop-off, pick-up, given alternatives for transportation if their common means are unsafe, as well as encouraged to ensure they're aware of their surroundings and immediately report any suspicions of being followed or tracked back to the shelter.

During their shelter stay, families are offered and encouraged to engage in an array of on-site and off-site services. To ease transition and allow parents to focus on developing safety plans, needs assessments, future planning and share imperative information with their assigned staff, many of the shelter offers on-site Childcare & Recreation Services. While this serves as an avenue to aide a parent in discussing concerns and needs without hesitation and fear of divulging inappropriate information to their children, it also provides a learning environment for the child (ren) while reducing further trauma, for the family as a whole. Through active development of a needs assessment by the Case Manager and shelter team, residents are offered services such as on-site Parenting and Domestic Violence Education Groups, Substance Abuse Support Group, Clinical services, Employment and Aftercare services and assistance with their children's educational needs. Residents are immediately supported with Public Assistance, Housing referrals and medical needs, should any of those be outstanding upon their admission.

The shelter staff goes to great lengths to protect resident information and preserve safety. Some areas within the shelter that best encompass the importance of creating and maintaining an ongoing safe environment for the families, includes the shelter's 24 hour, 7-day staffing, surveillance cameras at each of the confidential locations, use of PO Boxes for any and all correspondence and transportation services upon arrival. In addition to the above, staff encourage all residents who report any concerns related to their domestic violence, to change cell phone numbers, deactivate social media accounts, ensure GPS services are not enabled, remain out of their identified unsafe borough(s) and to remain conscious of their surroundings and who they disclose their personal information to. Upon admission, residents are asked to provide an emergency contact, should the staff be unable to locate or contact them, in order to create an immediate way to ensure their safety. Residents are encouraged to actively work on discharge planning with their case managers, to ensure safe housing can be obtained once their shelter stay comes to an end.

**Testimony of Maureen Curtis,**

**Associate Vice President for Criminal Justice and Court Programs**

**Safe Horizon, Inc.**

**RE: Intro. 0361**

**New York City Council**

**Committees on General Welfare, Women's Issues, and Court & Legal Services**

**Monday, October 20, 2014**

## **Introduction**

Thank you Chairs Cumbo, Levin and Lancman and members of the Committees for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Maureen Curtis, and I am the Associate Vice President for Criminal Justice and Court Programs at Safe Horizon. Safe Horizon is the nation's leading victim assistance organization and New York City's largest provider of services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, human trafficking and other crimes. Safe Horizon is also a member of the Coalition of Domestic Violence Residential Service Providers, many of whose members are testifying today. We commend the City Council for taking a comprehensive look at the coordination of services for victims of domestic violence.

## **Background**

We are testifying today in support of Int. 0361-2014, a local law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of homeless services to grant a presumption of eligibility for applicants to the shelter system who are exiting Human Resources Administration domestic violence shelters or Department of Youth and Community Development runaway homeless youth shelters. As a provider who operates shelters for both domestic violence victims and homeless youth, we are particularly eager to see a more seamless transition for clients who are forced to move from one system to another while they seek more permanent housing.

## **Domestic Violence Victims**

Safe Horizon operates eight domestic violence shelters throughout the five boroughs of New York City, with a total of 725 shelter beds. Last year we provided a safe, healing environment for approximately 2,500 adults and children fleeing immediate danger. The City's Human Resources Administration (HRA) oversees the network of domestic violence shelters that Safe Horizon and our colleagues here today operate.

Prior to entering a HRA domestic violence shelter, individuals are screened and assessed by Safe Horizon's 24-hour domestic violence hotline or by HRA's No Violence Again (NoVa) unit to determine eligibility. Our clients enter domestic violence shelters to protect themselves



and their families from ongoing threats of abuse. For many, these shelters are a place of last resort. Unlike the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelter system, domestic violence shelters offer limited stays; for emergency shelters this is a maximum of 180 days. A limited number of families have the opportunity to transition to a domestic violence Tier II shelter where they may be able to stay another 6-12 months. The need for DV Tier II shelter spaces far outweighs the available spaces.

For the majority of families who are unable to obtain affordable housing during their relatively short stay with us, the next step on their journey will be to enter the DHS homeless system. Currently this means that families pack up all their belongings and bring them along with their children to the PATH intake center in the Bronx. Families must wait at the PATH center while the DHS system considers their eligibility for shelter – a process that can take several days or longer -- and then locates a placement. School age children will likely miss class as all children entering shelter with their parent must accompany them to the PATH. After being assessed at PATH they are eventually given the new shelter placement and once again moved to a new location. We believe this is administratively inefficient, physically difficult for families and often destabilizing and re-traumatizing. As they have already been thoroughly screened by the domestic violence shelters, a presumption of eligibility for the homeless shelter system would allow families to move more seamlessly from their DV shelter to an appropriate Tier II homeless shelter (or an adult shelter for clients without children.) The City Council legislation under consideration would address this long-standing issue.

### **Homeless Youth**

Safe Horizon's Streetwork Project provides a range of services to homeless youth who face violence and exploitation on the streets. We operate two drop-in shelters for homeless youth; a 24-bed youth shelter, and conducts nighttime street outreach to engage homeless youth who are on the streets. Our counselors and social workers advocate daily for young people who have timed-out of the short stays (typically 30 days) allowed in youth shelters or who, at age 21, aged-out of these facilities and find themselves applying for shelter in municipal system. The

City's Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD) oversees the network of youth shelters that Safe Horizon and our colleagues operate.

Many of our clients see the assessment period in the municipal shelters function, first and foremost, as a diversionary mechanism. Without another option, young people find themselves increasingly immersed in unsafe situations with family they had previously fled, or increasingly engaged in the survival economy, where trading sex for a place to stay or small amounts of money is common. With increased involvement in the survival economy comes increased drug involvement, higher transmission of infectious diseases like HIV and Hepatitis C, and increased involvement in the criminal justice systems – all of which have lifelong consequences.

“Bellevue” and “Wards Island” – two of the DHS assessment shelters for single men -- are facility names that often shut down conversations with the young men we work with at the difficult times when they are timing-out or ageing-out of DYCD shelters. Some have experienced assault in these large and at times chaotic shelters, or find their environment similar to a detention facility. Many of these clients suffer from mental illness like post-traumatic stress disorder or major depression. Locked into the mandatory assessment periods prior to being transferred to a more appropriate sheltering facility, many leave the municipal system and instead sleep on the subways, in abandoned buildings, or in NYCHA hallways. Tragically, some turn to trading sex for a place to stay. They sleep in these non-shelter situations for long periods of time, often not completing the mandatory assessment process for years, if at all. Engagement steadily turns to disengagement and they quickly – and unnecessarily -- transition from youth homelessness to chronic adult street homelessness, with periodic spells in the municipal facilities.

The eligibility processes at PATH and AFIC present different – but no less severe -- difficulties for the young families we work with. For pregnant mothers leaving the DYCD facilities, the intensive and often invasive eligibility process for family shelter leaves them in difficult positions. Many navigated the DYCD system for as long as possible before entering PATH, and in between youth shelter stays they spent time on the street. They find that the city's demands for documentation of street time to be an impossible hurdle. Many experience a

churning process of multiple re-applications, leaving them exhausted, alienated, and sometimes “diverted” to more dangerous situations. Mandatory appointments on short-notice, long-waits at PATH for interviews, alienating, demanding and confusing documentation requirements by eligibility determination workers, and simultaneous demands from HRA in mandated public assistance processes, often generate insurmountable barriers. Both PATH and AFIC applicants routinely experience eligibility determination workers who can be insensitive to family dynamics and may not understand the types of complications that homeless youth experience. These insensitivities and misunderstandings often result in denials for shelter for young families or pregnant mothers in desperate need.

The lack of a seamless transition mechanism between shelter systems have particularly acute effects for our LGBTQ clients, who make up nearly half of these young people we serve. Transgender or gender non-conforming youth often face insensitive eligibility staff and increased danger in the assessment facilities. Finding themselves targeted by other shelter residents or working with staff who are insensitive to their gender presentation, it is rare that these young people successfully make it through the assessment processes. Most often their “successful diversion” from the assessment process realistically means increased involvement in extremely risky behaviors in order to survive.

Seamless transition into adult facilities by youth already known to be homeless by city-funded agencies would allow for consistent engagement with these young people and increase their chances as achieving stability and exiting homelessness entirely.

To conclude, Safe Horizon strongly supports City Council legislation to grant a presumption of eligibility for applicants to the shelter system who are exiting HRA domestic violence shelters or DYCD runaway homeless youth shelters. Thank you and I am available to answer any questions you may have.

# FOOD FIRST

The Family Project  
A Domestic Violence Alternative  
P.O. Box 310180 • Brooklyn, NY 11231-0180

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James Auta, Ph.D  
Charlene Enette  
Raja G. Ogrirala, MD Ph.D  
Nzengha Waseme, Esq.  
Alfred Thompson, CPA

Testimony *Women's Issues, General Welfare*  
City Council Committee on ~~Public Safety~~  
October 10, 2014

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Erin Feely-Nahem, LMSW

## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

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Brooklyn, N.Y. 11231  
Tel: (718) 624-1950  
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E-Mail: [feely@foodfirstinc.com](mailto:feely@foodfirstinc.com)  
Web: [www.foodfirstinc.com](http://www.foodfirstinc.com)

## EMERGENCY SHELTER

Family Project  
Qudsia Chaudhry, MSW

Good Morning. My name is Erin Feely-Nahem. I am the Executive Director of Food First Family Project, Inc., a non-profit agency incorporated in 1993 to provide supportive services and emergency shelter to domestic violence survivors. I am also the Co-Chair of the NYC Coalition of Domestic Violence Residential Providers' Housing Committee.

On October 14<sup>th</sup> I was encouraged by the commitment articulated by City Council Member Richie Torres, who advocated for equal access to NYCHA's N-0 priority preference for HRA Shelter residents, and easier access for all domestic violence survivors.

On July 24, 2014 I testified, with other advocates and survivors, at the NYCHA Town Hall meeting. I expressed apprehension and concern at NYCHA's decision to sponsor an amendment to the Agency's 2014 Annual Plan, which limited access to the N-0 homeless priority preference to DHS referred clients, omitting HRA domestic violence shelter residents. The following day, in a closed, unscheduled meeting, with only one NYCHA Board member abstaining, the amendment passed, accepting into policy, this inequitable practice.

Historically, NYCHA has not discriminated against HRA domestic violence shelter residents, allowing clients within both systems to qualify for their "homeless" priority. The amendment to the NYCHA 2014 Annual Plan, as well as the Agency's 2015 Annual Plan, scheduled for submission on October 18<sup>th</sup> 2014, places HRA domestic violence shelter residents' long term safety behind the immediate housing needs of DHS shelter residents, as well as behind those DHS families who are on the NYCHA Working Family Wait list.

Changes made to documentation requirements for the N-1 priority, announced on July 18, 2014, which allows HRA shelter residents to qualify for N-1 priority, based on a risk assessment tool, is not enough to address this inequity. The move to a domestic violence expert

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## EMERGENCY SHELTER

Family Project  
Qudsia Chaudhry, MSW

administered risk assessment tool to award priority status is a positive development, but should be utilized for all survivors, inside and outside of the shelter system. Historically, HRA shelter residents were able to qualify for both priority preferences, N-0 and N-1, placing them at the top of the list.

On July 31, 2014 HRA submitted 631 applications to NYCHA, all qualified for the N-1 Priority preference. To date, none of these applications have even been coded, much less interviewed. During this same period, starting in July, DHS has referred and placed over 740 of their "homeless" residents into NYCHA apartments.

In the past, HRA Shelter residents were given a small number of HPD Section 8 vouchers. This year HPD will give 500 Section 8 vouchers to DHS families, and not one will be given to HRA Shelter residents. The inequity is staggering.

I have witnessed the housing options available to domestic violence survivors within our shelter system shrink over the years. Without access to a decent housing subsidy, or a viable priority like N-0 for public housing, our residents will be unable to find permanent housing during their shelter stay, employed or not, facing continued risk of serious abuse.

In an effort to reduce the escalating homeless population, HRA created and rolled out the LINC housing Subsidy, which also limits access to HRA domestic violence survivors to one of the three programs. The best of the programs, LINC 1, is only available to DHS families. This subsidy requires that the head of household be employed full time, and contribute 30% of their income towards the rent. The amount of the subsidy is based on the tenant's income, and is available for 5 years. Although HRA Shelter Residents are eligible for this subsidy on paper, presently it is unavailable to them, and there is no date when that is scheduled to change.

Unfairly, the only housing subsidy available to HRA Shelter Residents is LINC III, which is available to 900 HRA Shelter residents who have exceeded the 180 day time limit in shelter, as well as 1000 survivors' who are presently in the DHS system. Because this subsidy is funded by Tax Levy dollars, it is only guaranteed for 1 year, with the hope that

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## EMERGENCY SHELTER

Family Project  
Qudsia Chaudhry, MSW

the State will join in if it proves to be successful. To be eligible for this subsidy, the survivor must have and maintain an active Public Assistance case. In today's real estate market, landlords are not interested in taking this program. Since the program was rolled out over a month ago, only one HRA Shelter resident has found an apartment using this subsidy. Access to LINC 1, which is designed for "homeless families" with full time employment, should be available to the qualified "homeless families" within the HRA shelter system as well.

Awarding N-0 priority to all persons in shelter, whether it is within the HRA Shelter system or the DHS shelter system is the only fair way to implement a homeless priority.

We call upon the City Council to encourage NYCHA to codify these changes in their Annual Plan, and to encourage the Mayor to make LINC 1 available to all qualified families within the HRA Shelter System, and to ask HPD to give HRA a share of the 500 Section 8 vouchers for HRA Shelter's domestic violence survivors.

These steps will help to ensure that all homeless persons have meaningful access to housing and that all survivors of abuse have a reasonable chance to attain a pathway to permanent housing and the safety it provides.



October 20, 2014

Ted McCourtney  
Director, Sarah Burke House  
Sanctuary for Families  
Secretary, NYC Coalition of DV Residential Providers

Testimony  
to the  
City Council  
Committee on Women's Issues

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Ted McCourtney. I work for Sanctuary for Families as the Director of Sarah Burke House, our transitional domestic violence shelter in the Bronx. Sanctuary for Families is a nonprofit agency dedicated exclusively to serving domestic violence and sex trafficking victims and their children. I am also a member of the steering committee of the New York City Coalition of Domestic Violence Residential Providers, a coalition that includes all of the organizations providing domestic violence shelter in New York City.

I am here today because I am concerned about clients in the domestic violence shelter system not having access to the Living in Communities I, or LINC I, housing program.

Clients in domestic violence shelters currently only have access to the LINC III housing program. To qualify for LINC III, one must have an open cash public

assistance case. Clients who are employed do not qualify for the LINC III program because their income makes them ineligible for public assistance.

At Sarah Burke House, generally 35-45% percent of our 58 clients are employed. Many of these women have completed Sanctuary for Families' intensive workforce development program, and have found and maintained jobs. We have encouraged these clients to take steps toward economic self-sufficiency, and they have responded impressively. However, most of our employed clients are new to the workforce, and do not yet have sufficient income to pay New York City market rate rents. Temporary rental assistance would be tremendously effective in transitioning these clients out of shelter and into safe, permanent housing. Unfortunately, that assistance is only available to clients in the domestic violence shelter system who do not work.

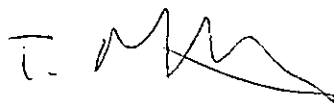
This is not the case in the DHS homeless shelter system. Working clients in the DHS system do have access to rental assistance through the LINC I housing program. Clearly, the city recognizes the need to support working clients in shelter in transitioning into housing, but why is this assistance only available only to clients in DHS shelters?

Working clients in domestic violence shelters are homeless, and they are homeless because it is unsafe for them to remain in their homes. They are every bit as homeless as clients in the DHS shelter system, but with an added risk factor, as well as a time-limited stay in shelter. There is no justifiable reason for working clients in the DV shelter system to be denied access to a rental assistance program simply because they entered a shelter system designed to protect their safety.



Admirably, New York City devotes considerable resources to supporting a robust domestic violence shelter network. We encourage women to escape dangerous relationships. We offer them safe, confidential shelter, where they and their children have access to extensive clinical services. Our shelters provide families the opportunity to begin putting their lives back together again, and clients that enter our shelters make significant progress toward stability and self-sufficiency during their time with us. However, much of this stability is destroyed if there are not safe housing options available to them at the end of their shelter stay. Without viable housing options, at the conclusion of their shelter stay, our clients often face an impossible decision - become homeless again or return to a dangerous situation. This is no way to treat the women who have made the courageous decision leave their abuser.

Well-considered housing programs clearly benefit the families that enter the domestic violence shelter system. Allowing these families to have fair access to rental assistance would play a key role in helping them transition to stable, violence-free lives. Clients who are homeless because of domestic violence should be on equal footing with other seeking permanent housing solutions. The LINC I housing program is already in place to assist working clients in DHS shelters, and it should be made available to working clients in domestic violence shelters as well.



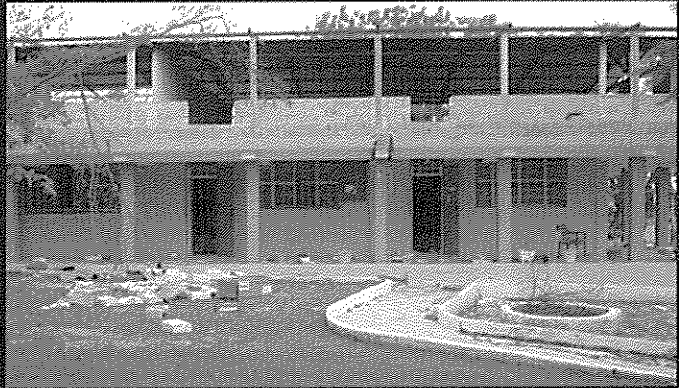
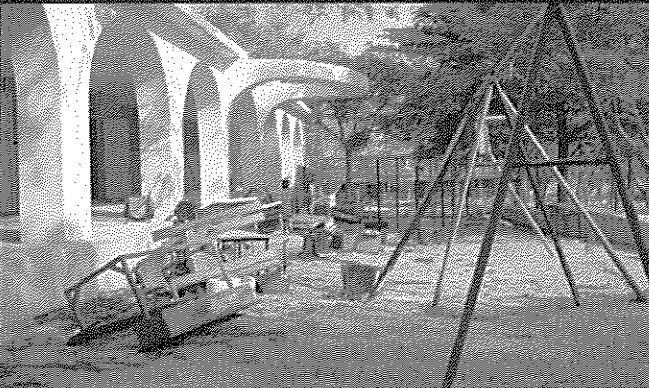
Ted McCourtney  
Director, Sarah Burke House  
Sanctuary for Families  
PO Box 1783  
Bronx, NY 10451



# School in Haiti Vandalized

## CAMPUS OF THE HAITIAN ACADEMY

ROUTE NATIONALE#1, KM 25



On August 7th, 2014 the Haitian Academy, a non-profit American accredited school and medical facility that has been operating in Haiti for over 24 years, was attacked by armed men. Employees were physically assaulted, medical equipment and school property was stolen and destroyed. The campus was occupied for almost 30 days by armed guards before the police removed them. Witnesses say the men occupying the campus stated they worked for neighboring land-owner and foreign-national, Bernard Martinod.

**UPDATE - 09/19/2014** A Haitian SWAT team disarmed the school security and forcefully ejected security, staff and students without any warrant or legal paper work. They then allowed Bernard Martinod's security guards to occupy the campus once more. Hours later, local residents chased Martinod's security guards from the main campus however were afraid to stay past dark. It was later determined that the police involved were off-duty.

**09/20/2014** Legitimate Haitian police returned to the campus and the remainder of Martinod's security guards fled.

For more Before and After pictures visit. – [www.haitianacademy.org](http://www.haitianacademy.org)

Let the Haitian government know that you will not stand for a non-profit school and clinic being bullied from their land!

**Take Action** - Sign our online petition @ Facebook.com: search Haitian Academy  
It takes just a second and makes a huge impact!

Questions? [pr@thehaitianacademy.org](mailto:pr@thehaitianacademy.org)

#### School Facts

- The Haitian Academy is a multilingual, multicultural educational institution offering preschool -12th grade and university level classes
- The Haitian Academy was founded in 1979 in Brooklyn NY (1st Haitian school founded in the US)
- For the last 24 years The Haitian Academy has been operating as an American accredited school in Haiti
- There are currently 13 doctors serving the Haitian population who graduated from the University of The Haitian Academy's 8-year medical program
- The campus Health Center is the only 24/7 medical care available to 10 communities, it is the first in the area licensed to hospitalize patients
- The campus functioned as a relief center in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake
- History and more information: [www.thehaitianacademy.org](http://www.thehaitianacademy.org)

#### Incident Facts

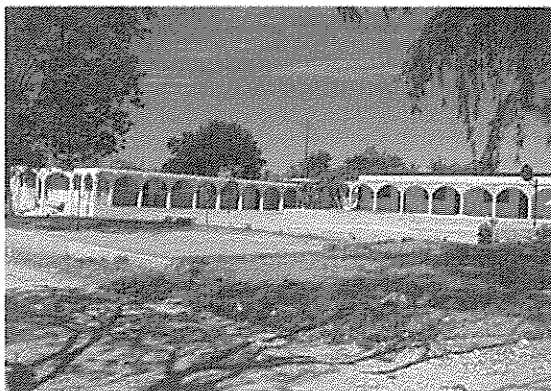
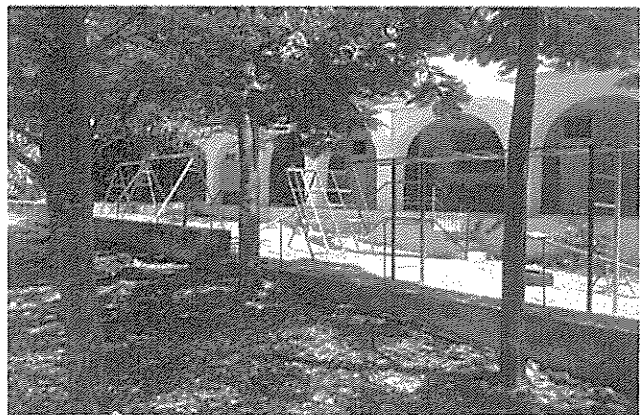
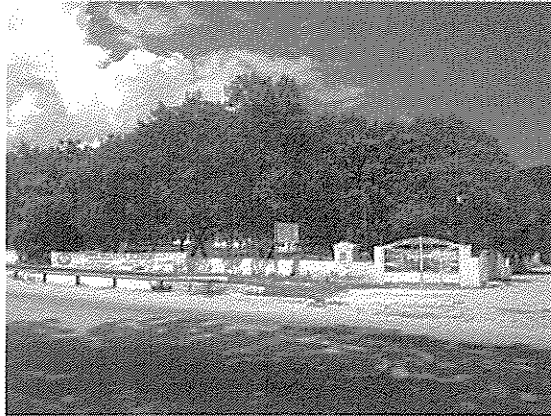
- Employees Physically Assaulted
- Health Center Vandalized
- Medical Equipment Stolen (including a full 40ft Shipping Container )
- Everything destroyed including smashed toilets, wiring pulled out of the walls
  - 36 Classrooms
  - Boarding Facilities (Pre-K to 12th grade)
  - Labs (Audio/Visual, Science, Computer)
  - University Dorms (Men and Women's)
  - Bakery
  - Library
  - Staff Residences
- Musical Equipment Looted (Violins, Guitars, Flutes, Drums, and more)
- Audio / Video Equipment Looted (Studio Mixing Board, Microphones, PA System and more )
- Computers Stolen (Both computer lab and office computers)
- Internet Installation Vandalized
- Power Generator SAVED!
- School Records - SAVED!
- Dissection Lab - SAVED!
- School Bus - SAVED!



# BEFORE IMAGES

## CAMPUS OF THE HAITIAN ACADEMY

ROUTE NATIONALE#1, KM 25

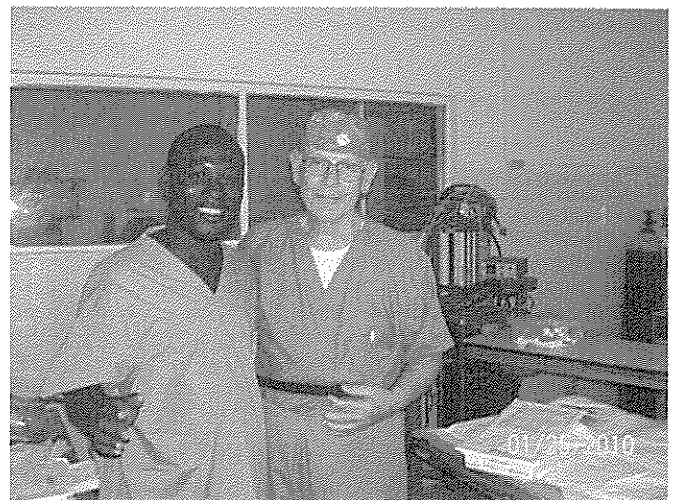


# BEFORE IMAGES



## CAMPUS OF THE HAITIAN ACADEMY

ROUTE NATIONALE#1, KM 25



**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: Ted McCourtney

Address: PO Box 1783, Bronx, NY 10451

I represent: The Coalition of DV Residential

Address: Providers

**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: 10/20/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Williams

Address: 20 Washington St

I represent: Self

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: 10/20/2014

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Constance Lesold, MSW

Address: 225 EASTERN PARKWAY #3J

I represent: Former Bd. member of Disabled in

Address: action

◆ 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: ROSE (PLEASE PRINT) PIERRE-LOUIS

Address: COMMISSIONER

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: 10/20/14

Name: STEVEN BANKS (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 180 Water Street, NYC

I represent: IRA

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: 10/20/14

Name: Daniel Fietz (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: IRA

I represent: IRA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. 016124

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/20/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nat Fields

Address: 75 B'way Street, NY 10024

I represent: Urban Resource Institute

Address: sec A26

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 361 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/20/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jennifer Strashnick

Address: 30-32 33rd St. Apt. 3F Astoria, NY 11103

I represent: Covenant House New York

Address: 460 W 41st St. New York, NY 10036

**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: 10/28/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christelle Pedatore

Address: 621 Sterling place

I represent: Volunteers of America

Address: P.O. Box 530 258 Hells NY.

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: 10/20/2014

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: knifer White - Reid

Address: 75 Broad Street, Suite 505, NY NY 10004

I represent: Urban Resource Institute

Address: see above

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0361 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/20/14

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: Joshua Goldfarb

Address: 199 Water St NY NY 10038

I represent: The Legal Aid Society

Address: same

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0361 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/20/14

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: Patrick Markee

Address: 129 Fulton St NY NY 10038

I represent: Coalition for the Homeless

Address: same

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0361 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/20/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MAURREEN CURKIS - SAFE HORIZON

Address: 2 Lafayette Street

I represent: SAFE HORIZON

Address: SAA

**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: Judith Hagan

Address: 25 Chapel St.

I represent: CEO

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: 10/20/2014

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CECILIA GASTON

Address: PO Box 1161 TRIBOROUGH STATION

I represent: Violence Intervention Program

Address: same

**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: 10/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: QUDSIA CHAUDHRY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Food First Family Project

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: Paul Feuerstein

Address: 270 East 2nd St

I represent: Barrier Free Living

Address: 270 East 2nd St

**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: 10/20/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ERIN Feely-Nahem

Address: 595 Main St

I represent: FOOD FIRST / DV Residential Coal.

Address: 165 Conover St.

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