

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

Jointly with

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

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August 10, 2023
Start: 1:20 p.m.
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Diana Ayala
Chairperson

Shahana K. Hanif
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Carmen N. De La Rosa
Rita C. Joseph
Shekar Krishnan
Francisco P. Moya
Pierina Ana Sanchez
Sandra Ung
Tiffany Cabán
Crystal Hudson
Linda Lee
Chi A. Ossé
Lincoln Restler
Kevin C. Riley

Althea V. Stevens
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Jumaane D. Williams
Public Advocate

Zachary Iscol
Commissioner of NYC Emergency Management

Ahmed Tigani
First Deputy Commissioner of NYC Housing
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Doctor Ted Long
Senior Vice President for Ambulatory Care and
Population Health at NYC H+H

Betsy MacLean
Chief Engagement Officer for the Mayor's Office

Manuel Castro
Commissioner of NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant
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Will Watts
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Maria Flores
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Dara Bibb
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Melissa Johnson
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Ariadna Phillips
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Meryl Ranzer
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Sarah Sachs

Klea Hazizaj

Doctor Henry Love
Women in Need

Christy

Agamma Ba [sp?]
Advocate

Ronna

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon and
3 welcome to today's New York City Council hearing for
4 the Committee on Immigration joint with General
5 Welfare. At this time we ask that you silence
6 cellphones and electronic devices to minimize
7 disruptions throughout the hearing. If you have
8 testimony you wish to submit for the record, you may
9 do so via email at testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once
10 again, that is testimony@council.nyc.gov. At any
11 time throughout the hearing, please do not approach
12 the dais. If you require translation services,
13 please notify one of the Sergeant at Arms and fill it
14 out on your testimony slip. Thank you for your
15 cooperation. Chairs, we are ready to begin.

16 INTERPRETER: [speaking Spanish]
17 [gavel]

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Good afternoon
19 everyone and welcome to today's hearing. My name is
20 Diana Ayala and I am the Deputy Speaker of the New
21 York City Council and the Chair of the General
22 Welfare Committee. Today, our committee will be
23 joined by the Committee on Immigration to hold an
24 oversight hearing on the Mayor's 60-Day Shelter Stay
25 Amendment for Adult Migrants. I'd like to thank my

2 co-worker, my co-chair, sorry, Council Member Shahana
3 Hanif, my council colleagues and representatives from
4 the Administration and members of the public for
5 being here to participate in this important hearing.

6 I will try to slow down because I am Puerto Rican and
7 I speak really quickly, and I know that there's
8 translation and I want to be mindful. We are here to
9 discuss the Administration's plan to serve notices to
10 single adult male asylum-seekers who have been in the
11 City's care for the longest amount of time.

12 According to the Administration, as of August 2nd
13 over 800 asylum-seekers have received notices that
14 they must find alternative housing in 60 days or
15 return to the arrival center and reapply for
16 placement. Although the 60-day deadline has not yet
17 arrived, it remains unclear what the Administration's
18 plan is for asylum-seekers who are unable to find
19 alternative housing after 60 days. There is a grave
20 concern that this policy may be counter-productive,
21 lead to significant increases in street homelessness,
22 and erode long-standing right to shelter in New York
23 City. The recent scenes outside of the Roosevelt
24 Hotel are not what we wanted replicated or
25 exacerbated. While the City Council understands the

2 challenge in housing asylum-seekers, homelessness and
3 shelter capacity have been long-standing issues in
4 New York City, long before the arrival of the first
5 asylum-seekers. This crisis requires a whole of
6 government and all-hands-on-deck approach to manage
7 and pursue meaningful reform that gets to the
8 underlying cause of long-standing issues in our city.
9 The Council is here ready and willing to assist with
10 managing this crisis in any way that it can, but this
11 Administration's approach thus far has made it
12 difficult for there to be proactive collaboration
13 with its City partners. The Administration has made
14 the decision to act alone and to pursue often short-
15 sided policies. We urge the Mayor and this
16 Administration to adopt a more collaborative approach
17 in handling this crisis. That being said, it remains
18 critical for our federal partners to recognize the
19 urgency of the situation and immediately step up in
20 providing more funding and support to localities like
21 New York City and fast-track work authorizations for
22 asylum-seekers. I look forward to hearing from the
23 Administration and advocates today and gathering
24 feedback on these oversight topics so we can better
25 understand the Administration's 60-day shelter

2 policy, what are the intended goals and how it will
3 impact the City's right to shelter requirements. At
4 this time, I'd like to acknowledge that we've been
5 joined by Council Member Brewer, Nurse, Hanif, Cabán,
6 Ung, and Ossé. Cabán and Ung are both online. I'd
7 also like to thank the Committee staff who work
8 tirelessly to prepare this hearing: Aminta Kilawan,
9 Senior Legislative Counsel; David Romero, Legislative
10 Counsel; Julia Haramis [sp?], Unit Head; Rose
11 Martinez, Assistant Deputy Director; and finally my
12 staff Elsie Encarnacion [sp?], Chief of Staff. I
13 would like to turn it over to my Co-Chair Council
14 Member Hanif.

15 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Thank you, Deputy
16 Speaker. Good afternoon everyone. I'm Council
17 Member Shahana Hanif, Chair of the Committee on
18 Immigration. Thank you for joining today's joint
19 hearing of the Committees on Immigration and General
20 Welfare to discuss the Mayor's 60-day shelter stay
21 limit for adult migrants. I'd like to thank my Co-
22 chair Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala for her leadership
23 in organizing this hearing. I also want to thank my
24 Council colleagues, representatives from the
25 Administration, advocates, providers, and members of

2 the public for being here, as well as those
3 participating remotely. It is vitally important that
4 we hear from agencies and advocates involved in
5 meeting the needs of migrants and asylum-seekers.
6 Today's hearing seeks to elucidate how the Mayor's
7 60-day shelter limit will affect asylum-seekers in
8 New York City. Three weeks ago, Mayor Eric Adams
9 announced that this Administration would begin to
10 limit shelter stays for single adult asylum-seekers,
11 males, to 60 days. According to the Mayor's
12 representatives, notices regarding this new shelter
13 limit are being distributed on a rolling basis to
14 asylum-seekers who've been in the system the longest,
15 beginning in the Humanitarian Emergency Response and
16 Relief Centers, or HERRCs. As of last week, over 800
17 asylum-seekers had reportedly received these notices.
18 This new rule requires asylum-seekers to find
19 alternative housing at the end of 60 days. If
20 asylum-seekers are unable to find housing within that
21 time frame, they must return to the arrival center at
22 the Roosevelt Hotel to reapply for placement in the
23 shelters. However, just last week, new arrivals were
24 denied bed placements at the Roosevelt, and asylum-
25 seekers were relegated to sleeping outside the center

2 as they awaited services. My colleague, Council
3 Member Lincoln Restler, and I showed up and saw up
4 close the hundreds of men, mostly black Muslims,
5 barricaded on a sidewalk for up to five to six days
6 with no updates as to when they might begin their
7 intake process. The very next day, these men were
8 gone thanks to the urgency shown by Ted Long who's
9 here, and I was really thrilled to be able to speak
10 to him and his honesty with us. Despite the very
11 real operational obstacles the City is encountering,
12 the scene outside of the Roosevelt was simply
13 unacceptable. I'm extremely aware of the fact that
14 our city is facing a serious challenge that has been
15 exacerbated by a lack of support from the state
16 government and federal government. I want to uplift
17 Mayor Adams' call for more funding from the Hochul
18 and Biden Administrations and his insistence on
19 expedited work permits. However, a lack of state and
20 federal action does not justify the deterioration of
21 the right to shelter mandate or our status as a
22 Sanctuary City and our welcoming spirit. We cannot
23 run away from our obligations to new arrivals, and I
24 will continue to push back against executive actions
25 and rhetoric that indicate we should. As Chair of

2 this committee, it is my duty to fight for the values
3 that make New York City a bastion for immigrant
4 rights. As a right to shelter city, we must do right
5 by the asylum-seekers who have come to New York
6 seeking safety and opportunity as they navigate a new
7 city and an unfamiliar bureaucracy. People applying
8 for asylum have often survived unimaginable
9 atrocities leaving them to flee their homes and have
10 undergone harrowing journeys to arrive in our city.
11 Many recent arrivals in New York City are of African
12 descent who face additional racial disparities in
13 accessing city services. We remain immensely
14 grateful to the advocates who have been on the ground
15 from day one providing immeasurable support and
16 resources to meet the needs of all asylum-seekers.
17 We want to ensure that our city government matches
18 that commitment to welcome asylum-seekers by housing
19 them and providing them with accessible and
20 comprehensive case management services. We look
21 forward to hearing from representatives from the
22 Administration, advocates, and asylum-seekers today
23 to gather details about how the Mayor's 60-day
24 shelter limit will affect New York's right to shelter
25 requirement where asylum-seekers who have received

2 these notices will be housed, how long it will take
3 them-- take to house them, and how the Administration
4 plans to provide and scale up case management
5 services. I want to thank all the Committee Staff
6 for their work on this issue including Jayasri
7 Ganapathy, Senior Legislative Counsel; Nicole Cata,
8 Legislative Counsel; Rebecca Barilla, Policy
9 Analyst; Aminta Kilawan, Senior Legislative Counsel;
10 David Romero, Legislative Counsel; Florentine
11 Kabore, Finance Analyst; and Julia Haramis, Finance
12 Unit Head. I would also like to thank my staff
13 including Nora Brickner, Chief of Staff; Alex Liao,
14 Legislative and Budget Director; Michael Whiteside,
15 Communications Director; and my summer interns Ryan
16 Alowe [sp?] and Savannah Jackson who are also here.
17 I also want to thank the Sergeants at Arms and
18 interpreters who are making this joint hearing run
19 smoothly. Now I will turn it back to Deputy Speaker
20 Ayala.

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you, Council
22 Member Hanif. I want to recognize that we've also
23 been joined by Council Member Moya who's online and
24 Council Member Restler. We will now hear from our
25

2 Public Advocate, and I would ask that you please be
3 mindful that translation services are being provided,
4 so we can speak slowly as possible. Thank you.

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE WILLIAMS: Thank you,
6 Madam Chair. I will try. As mentioned, my name is
7 Jumaane Williams. I'm the Public Advocate for the
8 City of New York. I'd like to thank Chairs Ayala and
9 Hanif and the members of the Committees on General
10 Welfare and Immigration for holding this hearing.
11 It's been over a year since the first bus arrived at
12 the Port Authority from Texas carrying migrants
13 seeking refuge, safety, and a chance for a better
14 life for themselves and their loved ones. Since
15 then, over 95,000 migrants have arrived in New York
16 City, and the majority have stayed. In the past year,
17 the City has struggled to accommodate asylum-seekers,
18 and as a result some have experienced violence,
19 abuse, over-crowdedness and unsanitary living
20 conditions, spoiled or no food, and a lack of access
21 to clothing, showers, and privacy. I recognize that
22 the City was already in a pre-existing housing crisis
23 with the shelter system unequipped to accommodate
24 over 100,000 people. At the same time, we know that
25 these conditions aren't acceptable, and the

2 Administration's continued efforts to undermine the
3 right to shelter, most recently illustrated in the
4 60-day limit on shelter stays will not address the
5 root of the problem. In 2002, the average length of
6 stay in a shelter for a single adult was 509 days.

7 New York City needs help from the state and federal
8 governments, as well as our neighboring communities,
9 not to weaken a crucial safety net for some of our
10 most vulnerable. I think it's important to mention,
11 the day before the first asylum buses came, there
12 were over 50,000 New Yorkers already in the shelter
13 system with an average time over a year, which means
14 this has been a crisis for a long time. Had we
15 addressed that crisis then, it may not be as acute
16 now. Following Mayor Adams' legal request to limit
17 the right to shelter in New York City, the
18 Administration announced 60-day limit on shelter
19 stays for adult migrants. If after 60 days the
20 person does not have housing, they must reapply for
21 shelter and case manager will discuss options and
22 "next steps" with the person seeking shelter.

23 However, the Administration has not provided any
24 further concrete plan for housing people who reach
25 the 60-day limit. Just in the last week, the number

2 of people affected by this new rule totals over 800.

3 While the Administration claims the goal is not to

4 force people into the street, we already see it

5 happening. Migrants are sleeping on sidewalks, in

6 parks, on the bridges and highways, including large

7 encampments under the BQE, Brooklyn Queens

8 Expressway, and outside the Roosevelt Hotel in

9 Manhattan. We need a clear plan detailing what

10 happens when a person reaches the 60-day limit, what

11 their options are, and the immediate steps. New York

12 City cannot handle this crisis alone. As I

13 mentioned, we need assistance from the state, the

14 federal governments including expedited work

15 authorizations granted by the U.S. Citizenship and

16 Immigration Services so asylum-seekers can generate

17 income to move into more permanent housing. We also

18 need more humane healthy temporary housing options

19 such as FEMA-supported directed temporary housing

20 sites created on federal land, including

21 transportable temporary housing units or manufactured

22 housing units. We also need to invest in permanent

23 affordable housing as well as social structures that

24 prevent homelessness, including reversing the

25 systemic divestment from NYCHA and local

2 implementation of President Biden's federal strategic
3 plan to prevent and end homelessness. Last, we must
4 encourage and ensure language access to our city
5 social and legal services, including indigenous and
6 African dialects relevant to incoming groups. Black
7 immigration usually gets left out of it, particularly
8 folks from Africa and places like Haiti. The right
9 to shelter has been in place for over 30 years, and
10 that right does not simply expire after 60 days in
11 the face of a crisis. While the challenges of
12 meeting this emergency are intense, so too is our
13 obligation to do all we can for the tired, the poor,
14 the huddled masses. We should be focused on helping
15 creating opportunities for people who come here
16 seeking asylum, not frantically denying that our city
17 is home to opportunity itself. And again, I'm hoping
18 that the federal government in particular and even
19 the state will help us better coordinate, and I hope
20 the state realizes the right to shelter is statewide,
21 not just the city, and the Governor steps in to
22 assist us. We cannot handle this alone. I want to
23 make that clear. I do know that right to shelter at
24 some point is a sustainability issue. We haven't
25 reached that point yet, but we do need assistance.

2 And I will end with hoping the Administration as we
3 move forward will support a policy that the Council
4 supported like supporting Good Cause Eviction and
5 supporting getting revenue raises in the state.

6 Opposing those things, putting people on the written
7 guidelines [inaudible] raise the rent actually helps
8 make this situation worse. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. I would
10 like to now turn it over to our Counsel to swear in
11 members of the Administration.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good afternoon.
13 Joining us today we have Zachary Iscol, Commissioner
14 of New York City Emergency Management, Ahmed Tigani,
15 First Deputy Commissioner of New York City Housing,
16 Preservation and Development, Doctor Ted Long, Senior
17 Vice President for Ambulatory Care and Population
18 Health at New York Health + Hospitals, Betsy MacLean,
19 Chief Engagement Officer for the Mayor's Office, and
20 Manuel Castro, Commissioner of the New York City's
21 Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. Will you please
22 raise your right hand? Do you affirm to tell the
23 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth
24 before this committee and to respond honestly to
25

2 Council Member questions? Thank you. You may begin
3 when ready.

4 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: Before we begin, let
5 me acknowledge the devastating events in Maui on
6 behalf of all New Yorkers. To those who are right
7 now mourning the loss of loved ones, and to those
8 impacted by the wildfires, know that this city is
9 holding you in our thoughts. Our profound respect
10 goes to the first responders whose courage and
11 dedication never waiver in the face of such
12 adversity. And now, with sincere compassion on
13 behalf of all New Yorkers, we can turn to the matter
14 at hand. Good afternoon members of the New York City
15 Council. My name is Zach Iscol. I'm the
16 Commissioner for New York City Emergency Management
17 and I'm here to discuss the surge in asylum-seekers
18 in New York City. Joining me at today's hearing is
19 Manny Castro, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of
20 Immigrant Affairs, Doctor Theodore Long, Senior Vice
21 President at NYC Health + Hospitals, Ahmed Tigani,
22 Chief Diversity Officer and First Deputy Commissioner
23 at New York City Department of Housing Preservation
24 and Development, and Betsy MacLean, New York City
25 Chief Engagement Officer. The influx of asylum-

2 seekers seeking refuge in New York City continues to
3 be challenging, but it's also a great example of what
4 this city can accomplish when we all work together.

5 This is one of the most significant humanitarian
6 crises the city has ever faced. Nearly 100,000
7 asylum-seekers have come through our system asking
8 for shelter or care since April of 2022. New York
9 City has provided services, support, and most
10 importantly care to more asylum-seekers than any
11 other city in the nation. We have done everything in
12 our power to serve these nearly 100,000 migrants.

13 However, with an average of 300-500 people still
14 arriving each and every day, and more than 57,300
15 migrants still in the City's care, New York City is
16 struggling against capacity constraints and has been
17 left largely alone to manage this crisis, a national
18 crisis. This is not a city-specific homelessness
19 issue, but a federal immigration issue, and every
20 state and every municipality across the country
21 should be a part of the solution. New York City is
22 and will always be a city that welcomes immigrants.
23 We're proud of that. Every day, myself and a team of
24 dedicated public servants from multiple agencies work
25 around the clock to find safe emergency sites for

2 asylum-seekers and families with children to rest
3 their heads. This team of professionals are truly
4 unsung heroes. However, despite our best efforts, it
5 has become increasingly challenging to find sites to
6 shelter people. As the coordinating agency for the
7 City of New York, Emergency Management is no stranger
8 to assisting people displaced from their homes,
9 whether it's a natural disaster like a hurricane,
10 flood, or other emergencies such as a fire or gas
11 explosion. We've played a role throughout this crisis
12 by coordinating with partner's agencies and the
13 opening of Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief
14 Centers, coordinating between incoming buses of
15 asylum-seekers and providing support to the
16 operations of the arrival center. In the face of
17 these significant capacity constraints, the City must
18 use every tool at our disposal to attempt to create
19 critically-needed space for families with children.
20 To support that effort, we have implemented a 60-day
21 notice policy. Let me be clear, we do not want
22 anyone sleeping on our streets, and if the Council
23 walks away with anything today, I hope it's that
24 understanding. In July, single adults who have been
25 in our care for the longest amount of time started

2 receiving these notices on a rolling basis. During
3 the past two weeks, some asylum-seekers have asked to
4 be reconnected with family and friends throughout the
5 country. We've been able to work with individuals to
6 get them other needed support like connecting them to
7 CBOs for support. Adult asylum-seekers who do not
8 find alternative housing by the time their 60 days
9 are complete, will be required to reapply for a new
10 placement at the asylum-seekers arrival center.

11 Again, with the number of families with children in
12 the City's care continuing to increase, this policy
13 will create critically-needed space so families with
14 children are not left to sleep on the streets. It is
15 incredibly important to know that we will continue to
16 support asylum-seekers as best we possibly can, but
17 there is no way around it. We are past our breaking
18 point. We cannot emphasize enough that we need
19 additional support from the state and federal
20 governments. The Governor has declared a Disaster
21 Emergency relating to the asylum-seeker crisis, but
22 the state has neither fully exercised its legal
23 powers, nor provided sufficient additional resources
24 to facilitate the City's response. Additional
25 federal actions and resources are also needed,

2 including a declaration of federal emergency for New
3 York that would allow the City to draw upon
4 additional resources. We also need the Federal
5 Government to establish a national decompression
6 strategy, and expedite work authorization so people
7 can start their path to the American dream. We urge
8 all members of the Council to join us in calling for
9 more support from our state and federal partners.
10 New York City cannot continue to shoulder the weight
11 of a national issue. As the Mayor has said, our City
12 will remain a beacon for all who come to our shores,
13 because that is the New York City way. It is time
14 for that to be the American way as well. We now
15 look forward to your questions from the Council.
16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. Let me
18 get my questions here in order, because I have so
19 many. I recognized you. Yes, you can go on the
20 list. We've also been joined by Council Member
21 Sanchez and Council Member Holden. Alright, so I
22 think for me the first question-- and thank you.
23 Again, I will recognize all of the work and I can't
24 even imagine. I mean, I'm having a day today and I'm
25 like, I couldn't imagine what your days have been

2 like since this beginning of this crisis, and the
3 difficultly, you know, of having to find a bed for
4 every single person every single night, because
5 that's something that weighs very heavily on my mind.
6 And so when I saw migrants sleeping on the sidewalk I
7 was devastated by that. You know, I don't want to see
8 anybody sleeping on the street, right? There's--
9 it's just not the ideal situation. But one of the
10 questions that I had, when this happened, I'm
11 assuming that it was because we were at capacity.
12 Were the folks that were out on the street offered--
13 did they have access food and to restrooms?

14 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: So I'll turn this
15 over to Doctor Long in a second, but I just want to
16 start by saying, you know, I appreciate the comments
17 about the amount of work that goes into this and how
18 difficult it is. We'll also say, though, every day,
19 and this is 24/7, seven days a week, the City has
20 been going through this for the better part of a
21 year-- I'm inspired every day. I'm inspired by the
22 people I work with every day and the lengths they go
23 through to try and keep that from happening. And I
24 can tell you, nobody's hearts were more broken at
25 seeing that happen, than the people who had been

2 working for months days in and days out behind the
3 scenes to try and find beds for everybody arriving to
4 this city. I am amazed that didn't happen when we hit
5 20,000 people, or 25,000 people, or 30,000 people.
6 It happened when we hit 57,000 people, almost 20,000
7 of them being children in our care. And so nobody's
8 hearts were more broken than ours when that happened
9 and we are still fighting every day to keep that from
10 happening. But I'll turn it over to Doctor Long to
11 talk about some of the things we did for the folks
12 that were on the street for those few days. Doctor
13 Long?

14 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yeah, I
15 first wanted to say, Council Member Ayala, thank you
16 for your comments. When we saw the line outside of
17 the Roosevelt Hotel my heart broke, and we worked
18 incredibly hard to try to find the solution to it
19 which was to find a place where we could place
20 everybody that was outside. In the intervening time,
21 I do want to tell you a little bit about what we did
22 to make sure that we were able to take care of people
23 to the best of our ability, as we did not have
24 placement for them immediately. So one thing you
25 asked about, food. So we serve people three meals a

2 day outside for the duration of the time that they
3 were in the line. We made sure that everybody was
4 well-attended to with respect to food and everybody
5 had the food that they needed, and we were
6 accommodating requests. One thing that you may not
7 have noticed is the line tended to be longer during
8 the day, but at night it got shorter. The reason for
9 that is the line was actually something that was
10 forming during the heat wave as you'll recall. So
11 every night, and I'll give the specific example of
12 the Saturday night during the heat wave when it was
13 the hottest out. We worked extremely hard to give
14 people respite during the night and bring them out of
15 the line that night, giving them a tele-counter [sic]
16 ticket so that they could retain their space the
17 following day. But that Saturday night, I remember
18 my team and I were up literally all night from--
19 finding a combination of buses that we had lined up
20 that had air condition in them, using old ball rooms,
21 every single one in all of the hotels that we had,
22 filling them with cots which had bathrooms, of
23 course, too. But at two in the morning that night,
24 if you were to go to the Ro-- if you would have gone
25 to the Roosevelt Hotel, there were zero people in

2 line. The next morning we had to obviously get--
3 have people leave the air conditioned vans, things
4 like that. But the line is something that we never
5 want to see again. when we did have the line, we did
6 do our very best to make sure that people were safe
7 with respect to heat and with respect to food, things
8 like that, for the duration of it. But I just want
9 to be very, very clear, we're going to do everything
10 in our power to avoid that ever happening again. And
11 the way to avoid that happening again, the only way
12 to have certainty that we wouldn't have a line like
13 that form again is if we have continued help from the
14 state. We're opening Creedmoor next week. We're
15 opening Randall's the week after that. We couldn't
16 do that without the state. Their support is what's
17 enabling us to do that, but opening new sites and
18 creating new spaces is what we need to do to avoid
19 having to form a line in the future. And we also
20 want to call in the Federal Government to give us
21 their support as well in terms of specific spaces
22 that they may have access to, and in terms of
23 resources to run sites at those spaces. That's what
24 we need in order to succeed in giving people the care
25 that they deserve.

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So, how many people
3 were actually-- did you reg-- I'm sure you kept a
4 record of the number of folks that were actually on
5 the line, and how many days were they there?

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Of course.
7 So, it varied day by day. Some days early on there
8 was 10, 15 people in line. Near the end there was
9 nearly 200 people in the line. That was on the final
10 day where we were able to unlock the option that
11 night that we needed new space. It was a literal
12 miracle that a church raised their hand that final
13 night and said that they have space for us, which had
14 been what we were-- had so desperately been seeking,
15 and we didn't waste a minute. That night, we had
16 everybody in line go to that church safely and they
17 slept safely that night in the church that offered to
18 help us.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Are they still there?

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Some of them
21 are. I believe most of them are still in that
22 particular church. Some of which we-- we shuffle
23 things around every day to make sure that we're
24 giving everybody access to all the services they
25 need, things like that. But the majority of people

2 are still in that church now. One other point I
3 wanted to say about the line, which I should have
4 said at the outset, is that when people were in the
5 line, we not only gave them a daily counter ticket
6 that had their number, so if you did go to the
7 bathroom, or if you'd go into the bus to cool down
8 and came back out, we'd wait, you know, a half hour
9 or an hour if you weren't immediately there so that
10 we'd make sure-- we could make sure that everybody
11 retained their spot. And we also gave everybody two
12 hour updates about if we were going to have any
13 other-- any new placement options coming online,
14 things like that, and we offered to re-ticket you.
15 so some people might actually did tell us that they
16 were ready to be re-ticketed to go to a different
17 place, and in those cases we would immediately take
18 them out of the line, bring them into a re-ticketing
19 part of the arrival center and re-ticket them
20 immediately, and then they'd go on to their final
21 destination that night.

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So, I just kind of
23 want to go back a little bit, because this is the
24 only way that I kind of-- I can make sense of this
25 and understand the whole-- the bigger picture. so,

2 in the initial months of this crisis, we were having
3 a lot of conversations about the re-ticketing process
4 and the fact that most migrants that were coming into
5 New York City were being sent to New York City, often
6 times against, you know, not their will but without
7 their knowledge, right? They had no idea where the
8 hell they were going. They just ended up in New York
9 City. I remember, and I think I testified. I spoke
10 about this in one of our hearings that when I was at
11 30th Street there was a gentleman that came from
12 Texas and he wanted to go to a different part of
13 Texas and was sent to New York, so now he has to be
14 re-ticketed and go back. And so when I hear about
15 the Mayor's proposal to implement a policy, it feels
16 to me that we're working from the assumption that
17 most migrants are coming here of free will, right?
18 And that isn't always the case. So I worry that
19 implementing this 60-day policy is going to leave
20 folks out on the street with nowhere to go and no
21 resources to provide for food or clothing, and I get
22 it, and I don't-- I want to be very clear that I am
23 not saying that, you know, this is anybody's doing.
24 This is horrible that we've all been put in this
25 position and that human beings are suffering in the

2 way that they are, and I push back against, you know,
3 all of the naysayers that, you know, have been very
4 critical and disrespectful in their rhetoric about
5 people being able-bodied and being able to work.

6 That isn't always the case, and I don't think that we
7 should make assumptions unless we have the facts in
8 front of us that really reflect that. So, I take
9 offense to, you know, to-- and I'm not talking to the
10 Administration. I'm talking now to, you know,

11 individuals that have called me and have, you know,
12 expressed outrage, right, that we're continuing to

13 coddle migrants. People are fleeing their country
14 and coming through very treacherous, unsafe

15 conditions with children, pregnant women, elderly,

16 people that are severely sick. It-- I would never do

17 that unless I felt I had no other choice than to do

18 something like that. And so I just really wanted to

19 say that, because I find it really unfortunate that

20 in our city like ours where most of us happen to, you

21 know, have family that migrated here, and some of us

22 had a little bit better luck than others, that level

23 of judgment would continue to occur. I don't think

24 that that rhetoric is, you know, is appropriate. But

25 of the num-- so, of the number of folks, if you

2 could-- I don't know if you have this information,
3 but of the number of folks that have been coming, of
4 the number that we have now-- specifically I'm
5 talking about the singles, the people that would be
6 targeted under this policy. Do we know how many of
7 those people decided that they wanted to be here in
8 New York City? And how many came here and ended up
9 staying because this is where they were sent and they
10 have nowhere else to go?

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: I'll start.

12 Because one of the things you said that has been the
13 cornerstone of our approach to all of this is we want
14 to give people what they want. That's our number
15 one goal. And we were seeing early on-- actually had
16 several examples of people coming from Texas trying
17 to get to different parts of Texas, and we would
18 immediately give them what they wanted which was to
19 re-ticket them back to Texas, but it was an enormous
20 waste of resources both ways, and a waste of time,
21 too. I mean, people would spend a week traveling for
22 no reason. They wanted to go from point A to point B
23 in Texas. With the arrival center, one of the ways
24 that we're able to get at that in terms of
25 immediately-- to your question around when people are

2 arriving here, is this is where they want to be, is
3 this where they're trying to go. The arrival
4 center's actually give us an opportunity we didn't
5 have before to really look into that and have the
6 conversation up front so I can ask somebody is this
7 your final destination or do you have friends and
8 family somewhere else? Are you trying to go
9 somewhere else? Do you have a sponsor somewhere
10 else? And the statistic I'll give you to show I
11 think why the arrival center is so important is that
12 today-- and it's true very day now-- between 3-500
13 asylum-seekers who enter the front door of the New
14 York City asylum-seekers arrival center, 3-500
15 people. Among those 3-500 asylum-seekers, one out
16 of every four will leave through that same door
17 within 24 hours with our help being re-ticketed or
18 reunited to go to the final destination, one out of
19 every four. In some cases, it's because their
20 sponsor was always somewhere else, but this was the
21 only option they were given from Texas. In others,
22 it's our ability to discuss with people, maybe you
23 had a brother in Chicago, hadn't talked to him in a
24 while. Let's call him right now. Let's work together
25 to use this period of time upon immediately arriving

2 in New York City to see what your needs and wants
3 are. And I think that the fact that one out of every
4 four people we're able to help them complete their
5 journeys within 24 hours proves your point, but also
6 shows that with our help we can be very effective in
7 helping people to take the next step forward. And if
8 you guys want to add anything to that.

9 COMMISSIONER CASTRO: Sure. First, I
10 would like to thank the City Council and the Public
11 Advocate for standing with us in calling the Federal
12 Government to do more, and I start with that because
13 what you saw in front of the Roosevelt last week is
14 directly correlated with the lack of support by the
15 Federal Government, not just here in New York City,
16 but to set up a decompression strategy that works for
17 this asylum crisis that we're facing not just in New
18 York, but as a nation. As some of you know, MOIA
19 deployed it's language access and support staff to
20 the arrival center when the lines began to form. We
21 deployed our language access staff who were able to
22 connect with the migrants that were coming from West
23 Africa, in particular, who informed us that they were
24 being sent here from Arizona, actually, and we've
25 learned that a number of different actors across the

2 country are basically sending people to New York.

3 This is why we're calling on the Federal Government

4 to create a decompression strategy to make sure that

5 there's a welcoming approach across the country so

6 that migrants can settle across the country and not

7 just come to New York because we are the only ones

8 providing this level of support. Not as important to

9 emphasize, because I can attest that my colleagues

10 here today do everything possible to support asylum-

11 seekers upon arrival. It breaks our heart to see

12 asylum-seekers, especially families with children,

13 arrive in much need of help, and we want to avoid

14 what we saw last week. And so you have a commitment

15 to make sure that we continue to work day and night

16 what happen yesterday-- I mean, last week-- but

17 without the support of the Federal Government, this

18 might continue to happen.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So where did the

20 recommendation for the 60-day rule come from? I

21 mean, was that something that all of the agencies

22 involved concluded was the best option, and if so,

23 you know, how did you arrive at, you know, at a place

24 where you felt comfortable enough? and I get it, we

25 have to house families, that's a priority, but my

2 concern here is really if I'm a single person and I'm
3 coming to New York City against my will, but I really
4 don't have anybody. I came here to-- you know, I'm
5 taking my chances, and now I've received one of these
6 letters, I'm going to end up sleeping, you know, in a
7 local park somewhere. So you guys have the data.
8 You're interviewing folks as they come in. Who
9 concluded that this was the best avenue?

10 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: Yeah, so-- sorry.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: No, go ahead.

12 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: It's a great
13 question. So first off, I think one of the things
14 that we're always doing is looking at the data,
15 always adjusting, making changes, right. That policy
16 could shift to the left or the right based on how
17 effective it is. There is some historical precedent
18 for it when you look at other forced migration
19 crises. We also think that that is-- I think we
20 should not under-estimate the abilities, the
21 resourcefulness, the agency of the people in our care
22 and a lot of them I think given 60 days will find,
23 you know, another place. They will find-- be able to
24 get out on their own feet. They just need that
25 period of time to sort of get some sense of stability

2 and figure out what that next step is going to be
3 when they first arrive here, and we think that is the
4 amount of time needed for them to do that, and then
5 to give them that amount of time. Ted, anything that
6 you would add to that?

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: I can speak
8 a little bit to the implementation of the policy at
9 my humanitarian center sites so far. So, so far,
10 we've issued 913 notices among asylum-seekers that
11 are humanitarian center sites. And a couple of
12 things we've learned so far. So one thing is,
13 nobody's surprised when we're giving them the 60-day
14 notices, and part of the reason I think for that is
15 the-- we-- when we're talking to people initially
16 really make the point that the critical opportunity
17 here is intensive case management. Case management,
18 to use your words, Council Member Ayala, is helping
19 people to get what they want, and that what we're
20 doing is we're starting to have those conversations
21 now, and among those that we've given a notice to,
22 and we've had a face-to-face conversation with them
23 about what they want with our case managers, 65
24 percent of them so far have told us, okay, we're
25 ready to make an exit plan with you, but we need

2 something. That something could be IDNYC. That
3 something could be OSHA training. That something
4 could be learning to speak English. That something
5 could be re-ticketing. We're actually hearing a lot
6 of people didn't know or didn't fully understand the
7 re-ticketing options that we're offering them in New
8 York City to reunite them with friends and family
9 across the country. So, after we've had these
10 conversations, some people so far, that same day or
11 the following day have actually already left our
12 humanitarian centers after we've taken this
13 opportunity at this stage in the crisis to better
14 understand what they need now. To me, that's very
15 important points. What our asylum-seekers needed six
16 months ago isn't necessarily the same thing that they
17 need now. So we're using this as an opportunity
18 through intensive case management to be crystal clear
19 about what people need now, and then our job is to
20 meet their needs as best we can. But that's
21 incredibly important to us, and that's what-- those
22 are some of the things we've learned so far. I'll
23 turn to my colleagues to see if you guys want to add
24 anything to--

2 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: No, I
3 think you captured most of it pretty perfectly. So,
4 for us, we have our center at 455 Jefferson. Notices
5 have gotten out to the 533 guests there for those
6 single adults that are in our hotels-- down-state
7 hotel system we manage. Those notices are going out
8 this week. I would just add two things. The
9 conversations as Ted pointed out is reminding,
10 reiterating information that they've heard through
11 their experience, and of course they're going through
12 and dealing with past trauma, existing work of trying
13 to get their feet under them, and so it may just be
14 that this was the opportunity that they were ready to
15 listen and hear what the options are. And we are in
16 the position through the, you know, intensified
17 casework to get them what they need to move to the
18 next stage. Additionally, you know, the intake
19 process that we talked about earlier goes through
20 multiple points of information, everything from, you
21 know, dietary needs through what do you need to get
22 to the next step, and we're learning from these
23 conversations and improving in the front end. As the
24 Commissioner mentioned, we're constantly looking at
25 the data. We're looking at our processes and we're

2 getting and we're learning from it and making it
3 stronger.

4 COMMISSIONER CASTRO: I just want to
5 emphasize intense case management is a big part of
6 this approach. Asylum-seekers are not surprised, as
7 Commissioner mentioned, because in most parts of the
8 country they've been they only get a handful of days
9 or weeks in their shelters after they are told that
10 they have to leave without case management or
11 support. Here, people will get this case management
12 and support to figure out what's next. It allows
13 them to plan at least for the asylum-seekers that
14 I've spoken with and I speak with them on a regular
15 basis. It allows them to figure out a plan along with
16 the support of our teams.

17 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: No, I get that. I
18 just-- I don't want to throw migrants into an
19 unfamiliar pool of water and hope that they can swim.
20 I want to know they can swim. And so that means that
21 I want to-- and I need to be comfortable knowing that
22 people have the ID that they need, right, which has
23 been a concern. People have complained about the
24 timeliness of the appointment, you know, being pushed
25 out months sometimes-- that they're going to be able

2 to feed themselves, and that they're going to be able
3 to have a roof over their head. And case management
4 is important in determining that, but for me, it
5 almost sounds like it's a blanket approach. Like, if
6 you're a single male or, you know, a single
7 individual in one of our shelters, you're going to
8 get this letter regardless, and I expect you to sit
9 with folks and interview them and try to find
10 alternative housing, right, if that is a viable
11 option, but to create a policy that seems to me-- and
12 I may be wrong right, and this is why we're having
13 this discussion today-- like a blanket appro--
14 response to a crisis because we're going to-- you
15 know, it almost feels like we're sacrificing one
16 group of people because we have a higher
17 responsibility to children, you know, and families.
18 I don't-- I just want to get that. I want to-- I
19 want to get clarity on that, if my assessment of it
20 is incorrect, and again, I-- you know, I heard a lot,
21 but I don't think that I really heard a response to
22 the question, like who determined that this was the
23 way to go? Was this a collective response or is
24 this-- like where did this-- like, who thought 60

2 days was an ideal number and that, you know, this is
3 how we should approach the situation?

4 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: Yeah, so a lot of
5 our decision-making is, you know-- we've got an
6 amazing team that works very, very closely together
7 and that's the genesis of many of these types of
8 decisions. At the end of the day, this effort is led
9 by Anne Williams-Isom, Camille Joseph Varlack, and
10 the Mayor. But the other thing I just wanted to
11 mention is just that, you know-- look, we share all
12 of your concerns. All of your concerns are 100
13 percent valid. I think one of the things that we
14 really hope the City Council understands is that we
15 have to make decisions every day that are impossible
16 choices that we don't want to have to make, and I
17 think, in a world of where you have to make decisions
18 based on the next worst alternative, it's not just
19 about families with children, it's also about newly-
20 arriving single adults. Would you rather have
21 somebody on the streets who has been here for two
22 hours? Would you rather give somebody 60 days, help
23 them get on their feet and open up a bed for that
24 person, and we believe that by giving them that 60
25 days, by doing this case management, by off-- giving

2 them those options, we can open up those additional
3 beds and capacity not just for families with
4 children, but also for incoming single adults in
5 order to keep that from happening. And as you have
6 noted, that if somebody has to go back to the arrival
7 center, they can go back to the arrival center.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So why not-- so this
9 is a part of it that I'm kind of like confused. If
10 I'm a single person, and I'm given the 60-day notice,
11 and now I'm at day 60 and I have to exit, but I can
12 go back if I really don't have anywhere to go. I can
13 go back to the intake center and hope that there is a
14 bed somewhere. If that bed is available somewhere,
15 why not just transfer the individual to the bed as
16 opposed to making them having to go through the whole
17 process again? I say this, because you know, this
18 is a really-- like, you know, people-- homelessness
19 is, you know, it's an experience. It's an
20 experience, you know. It's a-- it's a really lonely,
21 you know, place to be, and you know, I don't want to
22 coddle people, and if an able-bodied person, we can
23 help them get a job, I want to help them to get that
24 job. I want them to be self-sufficient. I'm with

2 you on all of that. But I am just really kind of
3 stuck here, you know?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yeah, well,
5 I'll start and I'll turn back to our team. I think
6 for me a really important point, and this is agreeing
7 with what you were saying, is that we want to take
8 the opportunity if somebody is ready to take that
9 next step forward to see what they would need in
10 order to take that step forward. And I think it's
11 encouraging that 65 percent of the people that we've
12 the discussion with so far have told us yes, I'm
13 ready to take the next step forward, but I do need
14 your help in order to do that. And the types of help
15 that they're asking for are some of the things that
16 you just shared as well. I would also say, I think,
17 it'd be great if we could all work together to figure
18 out how we could meet the needs of our asylum-
19 seekers. What I can commit to you is that I'll have
20 a much better sense as the days go by about what the
21 new needs are at this stage in the crisis. So we're
22 not making any assumptions about this. It's literally
23 us listening and seeing what the-- what people's need
24 are now, and then our shared goal can be to meet
25 those needs. Your question around on day 60 what

2 happens, and got somebody going back to the arrival
3 center-- our fervent goal here is to help as many
4 people not come back to the arrival center as
5 possible, because every person that doesn't come back
6 to the arrival center, we want to shake their hands,
7 wish them well and know that they're going on to take
8 the next step forward in their journey. And again,
9 65 percent of the people are telling us that they're
10 ready to do that now if we can give them the help
11 that they need. But for those that can't, the
12 arrival center for anybody coming into New York City
13 today which would be-- it would also be true for
14 anybody on day 61 as part of this policy-- is welcome
15 to come back to the arrival center, and that's why
16 we're seeking to open sites like Creedmoor, like
17 Randall's the following week so that we can build the
18 capacity to give people the care that they need and
19 deserve so that we can meet them where they are and
20 keep having opportunities to assess what their needs
21 are and to meet those needs.

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Alright. So, every
23 policy, obviously, has an unintended consequence.
24 Have you-- has the collective, you know, discussed
25 what those potential unintended consequences would

2 be, and do you have a contingency plan to address
3 those?

4 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: I mean, look, we're
5 concerned about all-- we share all of your concerns,
6 right? And so I think we believe that this plan is
7 something that will address most of them, but again
8 we've-- we have never been fixed in our positions,
9 and I think what we have done throughout this crisis
10 is where we've needed to adjust or respond or do
11 something differently we have. If we start to see a
12 marked increase in people ending up in the streets
13 because of the 60-day policy or at the end of the 60
14 days. We saw that there was a marked increase in the
15 number of people that just still needed to be-- we
16 would adjust, right? And I think we have remained
17 flexible throughout and we will continue to remain
18 flexible throughout.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I mean, I think-- if
20 we learn anything about people sleeping in the
21 street, I think that is catastrophic and not only--
22 it's not a good look for New York City to have folks
23 sleeping in a park. You know, and I think this is a
24 conversation, and I think this is something that the-
25 - even the Mayor agrees with, right? Because we've

2 had many conversations about doing outreach to the
3 street homeless population, and so we don't want to
4 create a situation where we have folks that are
5 sleeping, you know, out on the street. I have a lot
6 of questions, so I could literally be here all day
7 and I-- but I want to give my colleagues and
8 opportunity to ask questions as well. So I'm going
9 to turn it over to Council Member Hanif.

10 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Thank you so much,
11 Deputy Speaker. That was a strong start. And I want
12 to also begin by just extending my gratitude to each
13 of you here, and I see your work. I speak to you
14 frequently, and Doctor Long and Commissioner Castro,
15 I was with you at the Roosevelt intake center just
16 last week with my colleagues Council Member Restler,
17 and have no doubt about your commitment and the day-
18 in/day-out discipline that you are bringing to
19 showing for every one of our newest neighbors. So,
20 thank you for that. And yesterday, as I've been
21 touring our city's respite centers I got to visit the
22 Touro College Center and from the earlier days of my
23 visits to yesterday's visit and David, Deputy
24 Commissioner, had joined and it felt like a model
25 center. And I was really drawn to the very specific

2 accommodations, particularly for the Muslim asylum-
3 seekers there. It was the first center I'd visited
4 that had single women and couples without children,
5 and so really seeing those who have not been entirely
6 depicted in the news has been a critical part of
7 really being up close in the centers, and I
8 appreciate the cooperation you have shown so that we
9 can visit and really understand what's happening
10 inside and have the opportunity to talk with folks
11 directly. So, getting right into the 60-day
12 directive, could you share when the first notices
13 went out?

14 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: It was Health +
15 Hospitals sent the first ones out. You want to?

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yes, it was
17 a little bit over-- approximately two weeks ago.

18 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Was that before the
19 announcement in July or after the announcement?

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: After the
21 announcement.

22 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay.

23 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: And
24 for HPD, again, last week the first notices went out
25 after the announcement and this week. So those

2 notices went out for our congregate center at 455
3 Jefferson. This week, notices will be delivered to
4 single adults in our hotel system downstate.

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: I'll get you
6 the exact date right now, actually.

7 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Yeah, I'm just trying
8 to understand. You know, given the speed in which
9 policies and directives have been coming out, and I
10 understand the necessity to be flexible, but the
11 opaque-- the general opaqueness of policies being
12 announced versus whether policies are being
13 implemented without public disclosure or disclosure
14 to the Council has been a concern of mine, whether a
15 policy is being implemented already, or if a policy
16 is announced and then implementation begins. So I
17 would appreciate the dates and kind of the tier of
18 when and which cohort of people will be receiving.
19 If you could talk a little bit more.

20 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I
21 think I can confirm-- so I believe it's August 1st or
22 the 2nd where the first letters were delivered at 455
23 Jefferson, and that happened in waves. So there
24 were-- and that was because we put together a team of
25 individuals who worked with the folks who are getting

2 this communication, and we wanted to be able to do it
3 in a thoughtful manner. So it happened in waves
4 starting on the 1st or 2nd. I'll confirm that. And
5 then starting this week, I believe, either Tuesday or
6 Wednesday is when the notes were going to be
7 delivered to the individuals who are in our hotel
8 system downstate.

9 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: And is the notice
10 different per agency or it's one notice, every agency
11 has that notice, or are there several agencies in
12 charge of distribution?

13 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: We have modeled our
14 notice off of Health + Hospitals.

15 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay, so they are--
16 they are similar?

17 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: They're very
18 similar. There might be a couple of modifications.
19 We just started notifications yesterday, so I
20 couldn't tell you if it's exactly the same, but it's
21 modeled off of--

22 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: [interposing] Why are
23 there distinctions, or what are-- could you talk to
24 the--

2 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: [interposing] I
3 don't know if there are distinctions between the
4 notification letter.

5 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: I see.

6 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I
7 mean, again, our notice-- the notices are built and
8 designed for the individuals at the center. For
9 instance, we are indicating the name, who they are.
10 We're trying to make sure that it's personalized to a
11 certain degree to that individual, everything from
12 the language they indicated at their preference at
13 intake and we track throughout the process. They're
14 being delivered the notice in their preferred
15 language. They're verbally communicated to know this
16 in their preferred language. That information and
17 communication is tracked in the system. This way we
18 are making sure that we are not making-- having gaps
19 or skipping individual contacts. Also to what Doctor
20 Long mentioned, there is follow-up questions about
21 what they need to make that next step. So that,
22 again, is part of that process, and some of those
23 specifics based on the location may have required us
24 to make adjustments to base consistent [inaudible].

2 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay, that's helpful
3 to know, because I was under the impression that a
4 sort of-- a template of some kind went out en masse
5 and this personal touch component is-- I don't think
6 has been publicized in the NOA [sic], nor have I
7 gotten information about that directly, and so that's
8 helpful to know that there's a dataset of when folks
9 arrived, and according to a certain date and time is
10 when somebody will receive a personalized notice with
11 conversation.

12 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I
13 think the basic principles of strong service
14 delivering and just case management is about making
15 sure that the individuals are working and
16 understanding and keeping track of their
17 communications and making sure that communication is
18 delivered in a way that they understand. That's just
19 a principle that anyone who works in social service
20 follows and it's been adopted in the way that we
21 approach our work.

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Just on two
23 quick points there. I'm still waiting for my team to
24 text me. I want to give you the exact dates for when
25 the first notice went out and then for when the

2 announcement was. So we'll tie that down in just a
3 moment. But to your other question, just be precise
4 about them, the first notices that we sent-- that we
5 gave out were among asylum-seekers that had been with
6 us for more than 60 days, and we started with those
7 that had been with us the longest. So we
8 intentionally wanted to first have the discussion
9 with people that had been staying at our sites the
10 longest amount of time. the other important point
11 that you were saying, just to draw it out, is the way
12 that we did the notices was we-- if we were able-- if
13 you had a moment, you'd pair you up with a caseworker
14 right away so that we were able to, you know,
15 implement case management to have that discussion
16 with you that day, or we'd say, you know, you can
17 come back later or we could find you later,
18 whatever's best for you. But we wanted people to
19 know that we wanted to support them as part of this
20 process and have case management be something that
21 they would know about and be a part of, and from the
22 moment they get the notice.

23 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Understood. I'm going
24 to go into case management in a bit and want to dig a
25 little deeper here. Could you more precisely talk

2 about the determination around which residents
3 receive the notice? It is by-- if it's by location,
4 duration of stay, application status or other
5 factors?

6 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: For us, and again,
7 we just started notifications yesterday, but it's
8 primarily based on length of stay.

9 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: And so, however,
11 strong caveat, just because of the logistics of
12 giving those notifications at so many different
13 sites, it is also based on what site they are at. So
14 we try to do, you know, about 50 a day, just because
15 the case work and the notifications and then people
16 that need to do it. So that is somewhat also
17 determined by where people are in addition to the
18 length of stay. So those are the two primary
19 variables for us.

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: And I'll add
21 on. So, one-- I just want to be precise to your
22 question. The first notice went out on July 24th.
23 And just to be completely clear, we should-- I don't
24 remember when we made the formal announcement, but I
25 do know that the first notice went out July 24th.

2 So, we can cross-check that. Yeah, the way that we
3 ruled out the notices at our Health + Hospitals
4 humanitarian centers where we start at one site and
5 we talk to people that have been there for more than
6 60 days, starting with the people that have been
7 there longest at one site. the reason for that is we
8 wanted to be able to bring all of our resources
9 together to give you the opportunity to talk to a
10 case manager that was trained in the more intensive
11 discussion, because we were going-- the way that we
12 orchestrated it we had the initial discussion with
13 you as we were giving you the notice, but then we
14 planned to follow up on certain-- make an appointment
15 with you in one week and then the week after that,
16 too. so in order to have-- be able to schedule those
17 sort of, you know, all the appointments as you will
18 with people, we wanted to make sure that we had all
19 of our staff ready to do that at one site. So that's
20 why we started at one site.

21 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Chair,
22 I just want to correct. So I said August 1st and 2nd.
23 In fact, the first notices went out on July 31st.

24 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Thank you. And then
25 do people who get the 60 day notice have to go to the

2 arrival center, or can they go to the shelter intake?

3 Where are they directed to go? Like, if they are

4 unable to find and secure alternative housing

5 accommodations?

6 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: If they're not able

7 to?

8 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: If they're not--

9 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: [interposing] Back

10 to the arrival center.

11 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Back to the arrival.

12 So, they're instructed if you are unable to, you've

13 not succeeded in finding a re-ticketing or finding

14 housing here, you got to back to the arrival center,

15 not the shelter, not our general shelter intake

16 center.

17 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: Correct.

18 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: Correct.

20 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Do you expect there

21 to be a bleeding into of folks headed to the shelter

22 intake center, or how are-- how are we distinguishing

23 these two intake centers?

24

25

2 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: We don't expect that
3 to happen. We expect people to go back to the
4 arrival center.

5 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay. And then I
6 know, Doctor Long, you mentioned that one out of four
7 asylum-seekers have been re-ticketed successfully.
8 How many individuals have left our city? I'm-- the
9 60-day period hasn't been-- hasn't reached yet,
10 right? Folks have just gotten the notice saying at a
11 certain date you will need to leave the system or
12 come back into the system, but how many people have
13 successfully left the system?

14 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yeah, so if
15 I may, can I just clarify the one in four statistic,
16 and--

17 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: [interposing] Please,
18 yeah.

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: then I'll
20 answer how many have left our system. So the one in
21 four statistic is among asylum-seekers that are
22 arriving, you know, for the first time in New York
23 City, coming in through the arrival center. Among
24 all those coming into the arrival center, one out of
25 every four will leave the arrival center within 24

2 hours, either re-ticketed to go somewhere else that
3 they-- to use Council Member Ayala's words-- want to
4 go, or we've been able to talk to them and identify
5 that they have friends or family in New York City,
6 and we're able to help them to be reunited with
7 friends and family in New York City which wouldn't
8 require them to be re-ticketed, but that would be the
9 option they would take as opposed to entering our
10 city system. So, 25 percent of people that come into
11 the arrival center will leave the arrival center
12 without entering our city system, but with our help
13 taking the next step forward in their journeys for
14 where they're trying to go. In terms of all of the
15 overall denominator of 98,500 asylum-seekers over
16 that number that have come into our city system that
17 we've cared for throughout this crisis, there are
18 57,300-- over 57,300 that remain in our care, which
19 means approximately 40 percent or nearly 40,000
20 asylum-seekers that were in our city system that were
21 receiving our care, with our help have been able to
22 exit and take their next step forward.

23 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay, that's helpful
24 to know. So, could you repeat that number one more
25 time?

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yeah, which
3 one?

4 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: The-- how many have
5 successfully--

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yeah, so
7 approximately 40 percent or nearly 40,000.

8 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Or nearly 40,000.
9 And was that a result of the intensive case
10 management that you all lifted up?

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: So, that's
12 to-date over the last-- since the crisis began over a
13 year ago. I think case management served a critical
14 role in that.

15 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay, so you could
16 talk a little bit more about the specific case
17 management services people who've received notices
18 are receiving?

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: I'm happy
20 to. I'll start and then turn to-- so I don't talk
21 too much. So, just for everybody, case management
22 are-- is a service that's provided by people, case
23 managers, that seeks to identify what help you need
24 and then to connect you with referrals or resources
25 to help you get that help. It's akin to-- I'm a

2 Primary Care Doctor. I sort of view myself as a case
3 manager in healthcare. I evaluate my patients. I
4 make referrals as necessary to get them any help that
5 they need. So what we've done with the 60-day
6 notices, is as we're handing somebody the 60-day
7 notice we have a conversation and say, here's the
8 notice, here's what it means, have you thought about
9 making an exit plan, and what help do you need?
10 Let's start the conversation now, and we'll talk to
11 you again next week, if not before then. When we've
12 had those one-on-one face-to-face conversations,
13 that's where 65 percent so far of the asylum-seekers
14 that we've given notices to share back with us, okay,
15 I'm ready to make an exit plan. I'm ready to take
16 the next step forward in my journey, but I do need
17 help with something in order to do that, and that's
18 where they list for us the type of help that they
19 need. Then our case managers then work with them in
20 order to accomplish. Things like IDNYC, or need to
21 speak English, OSHA training, getting re-ticketed,
22 those are some examples.

23 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: And I'm just trying
24 to understand if this is a different level of service
25 than you were already providing? My understanding

2 was from most of the hearings we've had on the topic
3 of asylum-seekers, that there has been a level of
4 case management services because the original concept
5 around some of these alternative housing for asylum-
6 seekers was as triage facilities to be able to really
7 connect people with the services they needed and then
8 have them exit. Is what's happening right now
9 different, and how is that-- how is it different from
10 when in the past you all have mentioned IDNYC being a
11 feature of when an asylum-seeker arrives, or other
12 services?

13 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: From
14 the HPD perspective, so we-- we have had these
15 services in place since the beginning. We have
16 constantly been talking to individuals trying to move
17 them to different stages of readiness, connecting
18 them to legal support, connecting them to various
19 referrals to get help for what they've asked for
20 help. I think what we're describing here as we move
21 into this next stage, we are trying to more deeply
22 get into some of the problems or complexities and
23 then leveraging sort of a multi-agency solution to
24 solve for those issues. It was always available
25 before. I think we're putting more-- more people

2 involved in the process coming together to make sure
3 that if there are problems, and sometimes problems
4 came up over time. So it may have started and tried
5 to figure out ways that they wanted to do and didn't
6 quite know what the issue was in the beginning, but
7 as they continued their time with us talking to a
8 referral specialist, they learned in order for me to
9 make that next step, I need to do X. So that is part
10 of the evolution of our work with the individuals at
11 our center.

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: And just if
13 I add one more quick point there. I think what you
14 said actually captures it well. We've always had a
15 level of case management, but this is different and
16 higher defined as-- this is a proactive approach
17 where instead of waiting for you to come to us, we
18 are now coming to you in an organized way and coming
19 to everybody.

20 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: That's right.

21 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: The only thing I
22 would add to that is the letter doesn't say you're
23 getting kicked out in 60 days, right?

24 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Yeah. I sure hope
25 not.

2 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: What the letter says
3 is, you know, we need your help. That's how the
4 letter starts. We need your help. We need your help
5 making room for other people who are arriving, and I
6 think that it creates a greater willingness to engage
7 with the case managers at these sites as well that
8 maybe then had existed before.

9 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Yeah, no, I
10 appreciate hearing this proactive approach, because
11 we knew all along that there were services available,
12 but it wasn't entirely confirmed to us whether or
13 not, or how that process was working, and so to know
14 that there's a level of case management now that is
15 proactive. Could you share how many case management
16 providers there are? Who are the providers? Are
17 these the folks that we've met at the Medrite, the
18 Dotgo [sic], the Haggerty [sp?] contracts? Are there
19 outside partners providing case management? Could
20 you describe who the providers are?

21 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: For
22 HPD, Gardner is our-- who is contracted with provider
23 services at 455 Jefferson, and then Dotgo is managing
24 services for the downstate hotels we're talking about
25 here.

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Similar
3 model. I would just add-- you also said this well.
4 The case managers that when you visit our sites
5 you've seen, they're the same ones now. We're adding
6 more, but they're the same base that are-- it's the
7 person you've seen coming into the building, but
8 instead of you potentially walking by that person in
9 the past, today they're going to reach out to you and
10 proactively have the conversation to check in with
11 you about what you need at this point in the crisis.
12 So, it's people that are staff members, the people
13 already have experience recognizing their faces,
14 knowing who they are, but the difference now is
15 really the proactive approach.

16 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Are you all working
17 with a contractor?

18 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: Yes, sorry. We are
19 working with primarily Medrite.

20 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay. And I'll just
21 ask a few more questions and then pass it to my
22 colleagues. And I also want to acknowledge that
23 we've been joined by Council Member Althea Stevens
24 and Nantasha Williams. Of the people who have
25 received notices, how many have been provided legal

2 services? Are we tracking applications and
3 initiating those conversations as well?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: I'll just
5 give a quick response and I'll turn to my colleagues.
6 Your precise question is among those that have
7 received a notice, how many have already been
8 connected and are-- and maybe now may have a referral
9 to legal services?

10 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Yeah.

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: We may have
12 to get back to you on that, because part of the
13 approach is we are actively making referrals as part
14 of the process.

15 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay.

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: I don't know
17 if Manny--

18 COMMISSIONER CASTRO: [interposing] Yes,
19 we'll get back to you on that. I mean, we have been
20 providing legal services primarily to families and
21 children, and again, as we roll this out, I'm sure
22 we'll get back to you on those numbers.

23 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: That would be
24 helpful. I understand the priority of families with
25 children, but given that this is affecting the single

2 adults, would be curious to just better understand
3 the landscape of the legal services offered and those
4 who have successfully field their asylum
5 applications. And then finally, of the people who've
6 received the notices, have they all received their
7 IDNYC card, and if so, how many?

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Well, I can
9 start off by saying that have not all received their
10 IDNYC card, because it's one of the things that
11 they're asking us for. So, armed with that
12 information about one of the key things that they're
13 telling us at this point in the crisis is an
14 important need of theirs. We now get to do our jobs,
15 which is to figure how best to connect them to what
16 they're telling us they need in order to take the
17 next step forward.

18 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: Same here.

19 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Will we be able to
20 get a number just to continue to track the IDNYC
21 coverage and ensuring that everyone has been told
22 about the access to IDNYC and has applied and/or now
23 we know successfully have received their card? That
24 would be really helpful for the Council. Thank you.
25 I'll pass it back to Deputy Speaker.

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I just want to add
3 that one of my concerns is also the-- ensuring that
4 legal services is informing folks that they have to
5 change their address, because we don't want, you
6 know, a situation where folks are missing their
7 appointments, and that's been a really sensitive, you
8 know, topic. So I wanted to-- I know that Mr. Iscol
9 has a hard stop at 2:45-3:00?

10 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: 2:45.

11 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: 2:45? Okay, so I'm
12 going to pass it over to Public Advocate Williams.

13 PUBLIC ADVOCATE WILLIAMS: Thank you,
14 Madam Chair. I'll be quick. First, I want to shout
15 out my 15-year-old, Amelie Clairmont [sp?] who's here
16 having a civics lesson. So just wave. Alright.
17 Thank you very much. And then for folks who are
18 listening, I just want to make sure that we clarify
19 that we shouldn't treat anyone depending on their
20 legal status badly, but I want to make sure folks are
21 clear that the people who are coming in are actually
22 processing a legal way to be here. And so there's
23 nothing illegal about what's going on, and I know
24 that some of our friends sometimes across the aisle
25 will present this differently. I also know that the

2 reason that New York City is going through this
3 crisis, in my opinion first, is because of Republican
4 Governors who are sending busloads of folks here, and
5 I want to make that clear. And secondly, I do
6 believe that the White House and the President have
7 yet to act in a way that will help us in terms of the
8 things that we're asking for from decompression
9 strategy to money to getting folks situated in other
10 places and coordinating. And I'm thankful that Tom
11 Perez is here. I'm happy I met with him a few weeks
12 ago, and hopefully it will lead to something. And I
13 think the Governor and the State took too long to
14 act. It's starting to act now, but there's still a
15 lot more that needs to be done. With that said, I do
16 want to lend myself to-- from folks who saying, I
17 want to make it public that I think folks are doing a
18 job that is almost impossible. So I want to say
19 thank you for that. I know sometimes we have
20 interesting conversations, Commissioner Iscol, but I
21 want to make sure that we're clear that there are
22 very bad decisions that have to be made, very tough
23 decisions. That can't be easy to have to do that day-
24 in and day-out. But I know that we have to keep
25 going, and this hearing is about the 60-day notice,

2 and so I'm going to try to focus on that, because
3 there have been people who wanted to chip away at the
4 right to shelter for a very, very long time. My
5 biggest concern is that chipping it away now will
6 weaken it and allow it to go away forever. So, I'm
7 very concerned about that, and I want to know-- it
8 seems-- and I think there's a lot of agreement where
9 we are, why we're here, and what we have to do. I do
10 think there was some missed steps and maybe that's
11 for another hearing, but I-- is it-- this aside, is
12 the Administration and the Mayor believe that we
13 should not have a right to shelter? I want to start
14 there, because that's-- that's why I feel when I hear
15 a lot of the messaging that's coming from the
16 Administration and from the Mayor.

17 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: So, that is not the
18 case. Given even though that this is an
19 unprecedented emergency and there are things that we
20 need to do in the face of an unprecedented emergency.
21 But I think as you all noticed-- surprised the
22 question hadn't come up yet, that we don't have-- DSS
23 is not at the table right now. Reason DSS and DHS is
24 not at the table, is because this 60-day policy does
25 not apply to them. It applies to us with the

2 emergency shelters and work that we're doing, but
3 that is not the intent of the Administration.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE WILLIAMS: I do believe
5 when we're trying to get the permanent housing-- if
6 we can get the folks who have been in the system the
7 longest to permanent housing, I think it will help
8 open up some spaces for our new New Yorkers. That
9 too is probably another hearing and some
10 disagreements we have there, but some ways that I
11 think we can actually do that and push on that. And
12 I if understand correctly, there's going to be a
13 monitoring of whether the 60-day notice change
14 increases population on the street, is that what
15 we're saying? And who's doing that monitoring?

16 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: Well, I think what
17 we're going to be doing is monitoring the
18 effectiveness of it, you know. And there's other
19 variables here that we need to look at too in terms
20 of, you know, is there some sort of federal action
21 like there was in December and January that leads to
22 a precipitous decline in people coming to the City?
23 Is there some sort of action by the State or the
24 Federal Government that increases our capacity to
25 provide respite and shelter for more people? So, I

2 think there's a lot of sort of other variables here
3 that will then drive decisions, but for where we are
4 right now, we think this is the best policy to
5 actually keep people off the street. But it's
6 something that if we-- if this is not working for
7 some reason, or you know, we'll make those
8 adjustments.

9 PUBLIC ADVOCATE WILLIAMS: Who is
10 monitoring whether-- and what's the definition of
11 effectiveness, I guess? Because I will say my
12 concern-- one, I don't agree with this. I think it's
13 a chipping of the right to shelter and I realize how
14 difficult this is. I think we have to keep pushing
15 to do it and keep fighting to get the resources that
16 we need. But who is monitoring and what is the
17 effectiveness, the definition?

18 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: So, we are all
19 monitoring it, and then we-- you know, we have daily
20 reports. We do weekly data where we're all working
21 for Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom, the Office of Asylum-
22 seeker Operations, but that is where all of our
23 agencies feed information to on the implementation on
24 these policies and how they're working.

2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE WILLIAMS: Okay, I'm
3 going to end it here because I know folks have some
4 things they want to ask and you have to leave. I do
5 want to shout out Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom as well,
6 because I know how difficult this is. The Roosevelt
7 from when I visited, obviously the folks outside, and
8 this-- we have concerns about that, but the
9 operations I think were happening very well, so I
10 want to say thank you for that. But we really-- I
11 think the 60-day notice is the wrong way to go. I
12 already see people in the streets increasing. I think
13 we should not try to take away their right to
14 shelter. We have to push the Governor to do what she
15 should be doing, which is making sure that it is
16 clear that this right to shelter is statewide, and
17 help with our own decompression strategy from here,
18 from New York City. So I think that's an error, and
19 that's what this is about. But again, we have to
20 also do things that help the housing in this city,
21 and so I just want to make clear that there's some
22 things the Administration does that I think makes
23 housing worse, which then trickles down and affects
24 us here. So, thank you all, and I'm sure I'll see you
25 on the streets doing the work. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. We will
4 now hear from Council Member Brewer.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
6 much. Y'all have enough accolades, so I'm not going
7 to add to them.

8 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: We'll take the wins.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No, no, no, not
10 from me. Alright, the first question I have is on
11 the numbers. If you've got 913 notices, that
12 includes HPD's 533? No? Separately? So, what's the
13 total 913 plus 533 plus something else? Plus OEM or
14 whatever the hell you're called now?

15 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: I think the total
16 currently as of the 10th is-- the number that I have
17 is just over 1,400.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: 1,400.

19 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: Yeah, just--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. And then
21 the question is--

22 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI:

23 [interposing] And Council Member, just-- so it's 533
24 at Jefferson and then it's 45 within the downstate
25

2 hotel piece, and those notices are going out this
3 week.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. And
5 elected officials in those areas, do they get told?
6 Because I think people are somewhat confused. We
7 know where the families and children are, that's
8 easy, but between the HERRCs and the HPD's and the
9 whatever OEM--

10 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: [interposing] Respite
11 centers.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Respite centers.
13 Is it-- I mean, I just-- are you letting electeds
14 know that this center is under the 60-day rule, or
15 could somebody do that?

16 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: It's not the full
17 center that's under the 60-day rule. It's the
18 population that has received those notices, right?
19 SO, it's--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]
21 Exactly, but I'm just saying can you--

22 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: [interposing] not a
23 blanket. For example, for us we gave notice to 17
24 people yesterday.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. To the
3 elected officials in that area?

4 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: We will make sure
5 that we are, but that should be happening.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, because
7 what happens is nasty people in neighborhoods who
8 don't want migrants say oh, good, maybe our people
9 can leave. I don't like that. But I'm just saying--
10 so I'm just saying if you could let people know in
11 your center this population is eligible for the 60
12 days. Just a suggestion. The people in the public
13 are confused, and with all due respect to the press,
14 they don't make it clearer. Just a suggestion.
15 Alright. The second question I have is case
16 managers, are they City employees, or are they
17 contracted, or is it a combination? The reason I
18 ask, having done case management in 40 years, for 40
19 years, it-- you-- do you deserve-- you gain in
20 expertise, and I just hope that that expertise stays
21 in the City or is that all contracted out?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Well, I can
23 start on ours, on our side, and then I'll turn to my
24 colleagues to share on their side. So the case
25 managers themselves are often, if not always,

2 vendors, but to your point the people doing the work
3 are the same people that have been doing the work
4 with asylum-seekers at our sites for a long time now.
5 So really have been doing the work specific to this
6 population which has specific needs as you're getting
7 at. And they are always under constant supervision
8 of New York City Health + Hospitals, and we as you
9 know, have a rich history in case management and
10 social work as a corner stone of everything that we
11 do. So I have my team with-- who are city employees
12 of New York City Health + Hospitals. They're
13 overseeing every aspect of the case management work,
14 and it's further been complemented by, for example,
15 working with International Rescue Committee. They've
16 given us guidance about how to best do this work,
17 things like that, so we're able to bring in expertise
18 to make sure that that's informing the work
19 constantly, too.

20 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I'll
21 just add that in addition it's also more often than
22 that it's going to be the vendor who's in case
23 management services. We do ensure that any
24 certifications, training, ongoing trainings are
25 happening. They're working with our HPD staff that

2 has experience with emergency housing services and
3 the-- again, the thing to highlight is that we are
4 often talking with H+H, and we are sharing lessons
5 about how the case management should proceed [sic].

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I'm concerned
7 about. I'm not going to dwell on it, because in-- you
8 know, if you're referring to CBOs or you're doing
9 things that are within the five boroughs to help
10 them, I do think that having permanent city employees
11 doing this work would be helpful for our future as a
12 city. So I am concerned about generally how many
13 outside people are doing this work, and I think the
14 case management to me would be the most likely and
15 the best use. Let me give you a very quick example,
16 because I know my time is up. I'm in all the
17 shelters. I know social services. So I go and I say,
18 do you know that the library down the street, the ESL
19 around the corner? It's no, I don't know anything.
20 With all due respect to DHS, [inaudible] DHS, but it
21 could be anybody. They have-- they're from the
22 Bronx. They're in Manhattan. They don't know a
23 damn thing about the neighborhood. So, that's of
24 concern, because if you want to get the best case
25 management, you have New York City residents who love

2 our city, work for the City, and able to help people
3 to the best. So I'm concerned about that. I guess
4 my time is up. The only other question I have
5 quickly is what are you going to do if people do end
6 up on the street. In other word, you're hoping that
7 you 60 percent goes elsewhere, etcetera. What
8 exactly is plan b if more people are on the street?
9 What would you do? Would you call? I mean, the
10 neighbors are going to call, so then you're going to
11 have an encampment. You're going to have more 311
12 calls, more 911 calls. What's that plan b?

13 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: So, again, you know,
14 I think that the whole implementation of this
15 strategy is specifically to avoid that from
16 happening.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I agree.

18 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: And I think that
19 this is the best option of terrible options we have
20 to try and keep that from happening. As we have had
21 to do continuously through this crisis. The team
22 will do whatever it takes as we have been doing day
23 in and day out 24 hours to find--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]

25 Okay. Let me--

2 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: [interposing] a
3 placement--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: give you a
5 suggestion for plan B. Plan B would be whether it's
6 B-HEARD equivalent or PD but some kind of joint group
7 to be able to address that kind of situation. That
8 would be my suggestion. PD alone, I deal with them
9 every day constantly. Doctor Long knows that.
10 Because the most complaints are coming out of my
11 district. So, and the cops have absolutely no idea
12 what to do. So, I suggest that you have plan B just
13 in case, because you're going to have people in the
14 street. Thank you very much.

15 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. We will
16 now hear from Council Member Williams followed by
17 Council Member Nurse.

18 COMMISSIONER ISCOL: And I'm sorry, but I
19 have to take off, but thank you for having me here
20 today.

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you so much.
22 Okay, Council Member Nurse.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: I just have two
24 questions. Thank you all. I had a question. Your
25 statistic about 65 percent of folks are ready to go.

2 Can you share a little bit more about the criteria
3 that you all are using across your different agencies
4 that, like, you all agree confirms, like yes this
5 person is ready to go? Like what does that mean
6 specifically?

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yeah,
8 absolutely. So, when we have our case managers
9 having direct conversations with people, we ask are
10 you ready to make an exit plan? That would be
11 something that would be executed within that 60-day
12 period of time, and that's where the statistic is
13 derived from. So those number of people are telling
14 our case manager yes, I'm ready to make an exit plan.
15 We're going to write it out, but as part of that plan
16 there are certain things that need to happen. Some
17 of them, we can actually solve that day. So we've
18 had 50 people that within a day or two have been able
19 to actually immediately exit our system, because they
20 needed something that we could solve for them more
21 quickly. Others that constitute the rest of the 65
22 percent need something that we haven't been able to
23 meet yet, like the point that was brought up like
24 IDNYC or like figuring out a reconnection would work
25 through re-ticketing somewhere else in the country if

2 they haven't talked to family members in some time,
3 things like that. But them telling us that they're
4 ready to make that exit plan, that we would work with
5 them on for that 60-day period of time.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Okay. So, the--
7 that criteria you're saying yes I'm ready. When-- at
8 the point of when someone says yes, I'm ready to make
9 an exit plan, that is at the intake space, or that is
10 when they've been given a bed. Just trying to feel
11 between when they say yeah and the 60 days is up,
12 where is that?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yeah, a
14 total. So just to be really clear about the
15 denominator there. The 65 percent number comes
16 through among the asylum-seekers that-- of the 913
17 that we've given notices to, that we've been able to
18 sit down and have a one-on-one conversation with,
19 that's the denominator. So they're the ones telling
20 us.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: So, the notices,
22 when they receive the notices, that's when--

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: [interposing]
24 Correct.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: they articulate I'm
3 ready to make my exit plan, and then you have the 60
4 days to work on that plan.

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Exactly
6 right.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Okay, I just wanted
8 to clarify what that meant.

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yeah, thank
10 you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: And then my second
12 question is for folks that we anticipate needing to
13 most likely go back to the intake, percent the--
14 what, not 65 percent, the 35 or whatever that number
15 is, so they come back. What does it look like at
16 that intake center? You already have their
17 information. You already have their stuff. You
18 know, what does that-- what does that mean? Do they
19 go to the back of the line for people who arrived
20 that day? Can you just illustrate that a little bit
21 more?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yeah. So,
23 at the arrival center there's sort of two big
24 functions. One function is for anybody coming into
25 New York City. We want to take everything we've

2 learned over the last year to give you the services
3 that you need up front to be able to get you-- to
4 help you to complete your journey quickly. That's
5 more relevant to people coming into New York City
6 now. The second function is, if after we give you
7 those services you don't have anywhere else to go, we
8 would place you in one of our sites. That would be
9 relevant for people coming back to the arrival center
10 from-- on day 61 at one of our sites. So for them,
11 their experience with respect to placement will be
12 the same as somebody new coming into New York City
13 today, but the critical point is that that
14 effectiveness at the arrival center in placing
15 somebody is only as good as the placement options
16 that we have. So that's why we're working extremely
17 hard to open Creedmoor next week, Randall's Island
18 the following week after that for 2,000 more people.
19 That's the work we need to continue to do. But if I
20 can use this as an opportunity, we're extremely hard
21 doing that work today, but to continue it tomorrow,
22 we must have continued support from the State which
23 is supporting us opening those two sites, and the
24 Federal Government.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: We're all in
3 agreement on that.

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: So, when-- just--
6 and I'm done after this. Just to clarify, there's
7 two kind of lines. One is day one, and now we've got
8 people who are-- theoretically, will come to the end
9 of the 60 days. These are the percentage of folks
10 that didn't mean their exit plan or we didn't meet
11 their needs, or whatever's going on. Now they come
12 back into this other kind of line. What-- like, what
13 does that mean when they show up that day? Based on
14 what you have, you're working hard. We've
15 acknowledged that. You're working hard to get a
16 bunch of stuff up and running. But say you don't
17 have something. They're there. They're in this
18 other line, what is-- are they like-- after the
19 people are supported who have been just arrived that
20 day? Like, where are they in that kind of grouping
21 of people who are now at the arrival center?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: sorry, and
23 if-- the-- I'll try not to use the word line, because
24 I'm going to work very--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: [interposing] I'm
3 using line.

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: No, no, I--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: [interposing] I'm
6 making that up, because I'm trying to understand, so.

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yeah, just
8 know we're going to work very hard to avoid any
9 lines, but there's only going to be one to use that
10 terminology "line" for placement. So, whether it's
11 somebody coming into New York City today that we want
12 to vaccinate before we talk to you about placement,
13 or somebody that is coming from one of our sites,
14 coming back to the arrival center, you don't need to
15 be vaccinated again because you've already been
16 vaccinated, your pla-- there's only one li-- there'll
17 only be one ordering--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: [interposing] So,
19 they're just-- just to be quick, they come back to
20 wherever they are. They come-- if they're person 400
21 that arrives that day--

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: [interposing]
23 Correct.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: that's where they
25 are.

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Exactly
3 right.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Got it, okay.

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yep.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Just wanted to
7 understand that.

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Absolutely.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you. Those
10 are my questions.

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. We will
13 now hear from Sanchez, followed by Council Member
14 Restler.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you so
16 much, Chairs, and good afternoon to you all. First,
17 I just want to again echo the same set that has been
18 shared here. This is an extraordinarily difficult
19 situation, and I do believe that even if there are
20 missed steps and mistakes, that the history books
21 will ultimately look kindly upon all of the work and
22 the efforts that have been happening here by the
23 Administration. So, I have two sets of questions.
24 The first is really about the asylum-seekers who have
25 been in our care for longer, those that you mentioned

2 got the notices first. Can you tell us if there are
3 any unifying characteristics about these seekers?

4 Maybe they speak a certain language and they have
5 more difficulty accessing services. Just any trends
6 that we should be aware of. And then the second set
7 of questions really meant to understand the profiles
8 in general of the folks who you're working with.

9 When this council asked many of these questions last
10 year at one of the first hearings, you all mentioned
11 that you didn't have this data available, but
12 repeating them again here, do we have a breakdown of
13 where asylum-seekers who are still in New York City
14 care, who are in New York City, what are their
15 countries of origin? What languages do they speak?
16 What is the breakdown? Actually, the last one is how
17 are folks arriving? We've seen reports that folks
18 are-- the buses have slowed down. So are we seeing
19 that folks are arriving more by air, etcetera? And
20 I'll stop there.

21 : Great. So I wrote down three
22 questions for us. I just want to make sure I'm
23 giving you precise answers. The first was unifying
24 characteristics so far among those that we have given
25 notices to. The second is countries of origin,

2 languages, and do we have data on that. And the
3 third is, how are people currently arriving? So I'll
4 go in that order. I would say from my point of view,
5 the main unifying characteristic among those that
6 we've given notices to and had discussion with is
7 that they all need help. They all need something
8 specific, and they're able to tell us what that thing
9 is. So, that's-- my hope is that with having these
10 conversations so far and identifying among, again, 65
11 percent, they're ready to make an exit plan if we can
12 give them the help with that thing that they need
13 help with. It gives a clear job and call to action
14 for the next 60 days. So that's going to be our
15 focus. But I would say that's certainly the number
16 one unifying characteristic is that everybody has
17 something that they're asking for in order to be able
18 to leave. Second, for countries of origin languages,
19 we can certainly send you that data. One-- and
20 important point is that since we opened the arrival
21 center, one of their reasons for doing it and
22 advantages of having it is it lets us ask the same
23 unified set of questions for everybody. So I could
24 tell you, because everybody comes through that same
25 door at the Roosevelt Hotel, I know ask everybody

2 what country they're coming from. Everybody, have
3 you completed the 589 form, the 765? If so, when?
4 So we have all that data. We can get back to you
5 about cutting if you want it by month or however you
6 like. And then finally, how arriving is important
7 too. Just to be clear, I know as Council Member
8 Nurse was saying, I'm preaching hopefully this to the
9 choir here, but as we've seen the numbers of asylum-
10 seekers at the border go down, we've seen our numbers
11 in New York City take the opposite direction and go
12 up. That's what's made it so hard for us to be able
13 to keep up with options for where we would place
14 people. So, we know how people are arriving. We
15 actually ask questions about are you arriving by
16 plane, train, automobile? Were you in another first?
17 When did you cross the border? General highlights is
18 some people are coming directly to New York City from
19 buses from Texas, and we've seen those numbers
20 increase. There was a 24-hour period this week where
21 we had five buses come in. That's more than we've
22 been seeing in the recent weeks. But overall, we're
23 seeing people that spent a little bit of time in
24 other cities making their way to New York City, as
25 well. So we're going to see where that trend goes,

2 if it changes, but the key point is that even though
3 at the border numbers have been going down in New
4 York City, numbers have certainly not gone that
5 direction.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Just a
7 clarification on everybody needs something specific,
8 what do you mean by that? Do you have examples?

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yeah,
10 absolutely. So, some of the things that people are
11 telling us, that if we could solve this thing for
12 them, they'd be ready to execute the exit plan that
13 we created with them. Here's some examples. IDNYC,
14 some people are telling us they need that as a
15 precursor to gain other things like driver licenses.
16 Another example is English classes. People are
17 saying if they could learn English, that would be the
18 barrier they would need to surmount in order to get
19 the job that they want. OSHA training is something
20 that people are telling us as well. And then the
21 final thing, I think Council Members Hanif and Ayala
22 were bringing this up, is that while re-ticketing has
23 been an option that's always been present at all of
24 our sites, as you all know from visiting our sites,
25 we are hearing that people didn't fully understand

2 that's still as much of an option today as it was six
3 months ago. So as we're telling people how exactly
4 we could help them and that re-ticketing is still an
5 option and we'll help them to call friends and family
6 members, a lot of people are expressing interest in
7 that as their exit plan. That's why it's good to
8 have the conversations.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER CASTRO: Can I just add,
11 MOIA has a more of a bird's-eye-view of the
12 situation. The agencies are collecting specific
13 data, but I can say that still most of the asylum-
14 seekers are arriving without pre-existing connection
15 to the City, family members, friends, except for
16 those who are-- who they know that are now in the
17 shelter system or in the HERRCs which continues to be
18 the challenge. Most traditional immigrants arrive
19 with some form of existing relationship here in the
20 City that allows them to settle in. this wave of
21 asylum-seekers do not which makes it very
22 challenging, which is why we've contracted with
23 community-based organizations to set up community-
24 level navigation centers so that people can start
25 building those relationships at the community level

2 and hopefully be able to integrate into the existing
3 resources there.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Council Member
6 Restler?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so
8 much, Chairs Ayala and Hanif. I do have to say it's
9 less than two hours into this hearing. This issue
10 the Mayor has told us is the single most-important
11 thing facing the City of New York and NYCEM is gone.
12 They heard from four Council Members, and DHS didn't
13 even show up. It's really disappointing, and I
14 appreciate you guys being here, and appreciate the
15 work you're all doing, but if this was a real
16 priority of the Administration I would have thought
17 they'd be here to engage with the Council and take
18 this seriously. That being said, just a yes or a no
19 question, and I don't even know who to ask, because
20 we don't have anyone here left, sorry, but I'll let
21 you all decide. Does this Administration believe
22 that you can deny a new placement to an individual
23 who has been in your care on day 61? Yes or no.

24 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Sorry,
25 Council Member, just to-- so, denying meaning that

2 the continuation of their existing placement in one
3 of the centers?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: After 60 days
5 you're saying you're kicking people out I think you
6 have said the policy is. So on day 61 are you
7 denying a new placement to that individual?

8 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: We're
9 not denying placement in the system. What we've
10 explained is that the individual is-- if an exit plan
11 cannot concretely be put in place, they're then asked
12 to visit the arrival center to start that process--
13 to start that process.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: So, if somebody
15 does not have housing on day 61, is the city
16 continued to provide a right to shelter and guarantee
17 housing?

18 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: For--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing] Yes
20 or no.

21 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: For
22 the crisis that we're in, we're trying to manage both
23 incoming people who need help plus the people who are
24 in our care. So we're working in advance to make
25 sure that by day 61 they have an exit plan. If they

2 do not have an exit plan, we ask for them to revisit
3 the arrival center so we can engage with services at
4 that point.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And if they do
6 not have housing, will housing be provided. If they
7 do not have shelter, will shelter be provided?

8 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: It
9 will be based on our ability to provide at that
10 point. But again, we are not denying anyone. We
11 are--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing] But
13 based on your ability to provide is not a question,
14 that is to deny a right to shelter. It is to say--
15 it is, right? It's to say if we can. I mean, I will
16 say this--

17 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI:
18 [interposing] Every--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I think your
20 answer was clear, inadequate as it was, I appreciate
21 your service to the City and you are somebody who I
22 admire enormously. I don't think you're setting this
23 policy, but it is a problematic policy, and I don't
24 think it's set by HPD, is what I mean to say. The
25 Mayor sent out these flyers, you know, at the border

2 saying, you know, don't come to New York basically,

3 and having gone with Council Member Hanif to visit

4 the Roosevelt Hotel, I felt like he was putting out

5 images of human suffering to tell people the same.

6 And it was incredibly disappointing to see. On the

7 day, Doctor Long when we-- and Commissioner Castro,

8 when Council Member Hanif and I were there with you,

9 I think it was July 30-- August 1st, I believe, we

10 visited. There were hundreds of-- close to 200

11 people out there. Many of them had told us they had

12 been out there consistently overnight for seven days,

13 some four days, some five days. The longest we've

14 heard was seven days. People sleeping on the street

15 in just abysmal conditions. As one city official

16 said to me that day, it was the most disappointing

17 day of their life. Yet, the DHS shelter that day--

18 the single adult shelter census that day, does anyone

19 know what it was? It was 17,015, which was down

20 1,500 from just six weeks before. So we have

21 experienced a decline of 1,500 people in our single

22 adult shelter system over that six-week period, and

23 yet none of those individuals were brought into

24 shelters. They weren't brought into respite site,

25 centers or sites. The next day you all informed me

2 that you were utilizing the McCarren Rec Center--
3 you'd be utilizing the McCarren Rec Center for
4 temporary housing, and you know, I've done my best to
5 try to galvanize a welcoming response. I visited the
6 site. We're trying to be helpful. We've got a
7 clothing drive. We've met with OEM on site, or NYCEM
8 on site and Parks, and are trying to make it work in
9 a suboptimal site that I think we could all agree.
10 But how long had the McCarren site been considered by
11 this Administration? Can anyone speak to that? No,
12 nobody's left. But we appreciate you being here
13 again, but wish that the other agencies had cared
14 enough to show up. So-- and stay here and engage.
15 What I can tell you is I heard from finds within the
16 Administration nearly a month prior that they were
17 considering this. This is not something that came
18 out of thin air and that they decided the Thursday
19 before and decided to move people in when there were
20 hundreds of people sleeping on the street for a week.
21 They'd been looking at it for a month, and they
22 didn't do anything which again underscores this
23 notion that human suffering was used a political
24 pawn. And I agree very much that the State and the
25 Federal Government need to step up, but what we saw

2 on the streets of the Roosevelt Hotel was a disgrace
3 for every single person who works for the City of New
4 York that we couldn't do better. So, I know I'm gone
5 over, and I'm now just yelling people who aren't in
6 the room, but thank you for being with us. I only
7 wish that your counterparts had demonstrated the same
8 respect.

9 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: And
10 just-- I just want to reiterate, that while I can't
11 speak to the McCarren Park example, and we do thank
12 you for your support as we-- as a city, we put that
13 up. This team and many others who are not
14 represented here who are working right now scrubbing,
15 searching sites, taking inquiries, looking for
16 opportunities so that we can grow our capacity as
17 people come in. As we evaluate sites, we are looking
18 and prioritizing, looking for the best opportunity to
19 grow the greatest capacity, and they've fall into a
20 list of priorities. So while we maybe may have
21 looked at a particular site earlier in the process,
22 we may have been working on something that could
23 yield more capacity for us at that point. And as we
24 move through and we look at other sites, we bring
25 those on who-- that an earlier point didn't have that

2 larger capacity for us. So, at this point, we had to
3 activate that location. And again, thank you and
4 other local leaders who are supporting that growth,
5 but we're constantly in the process, us here, many
6 others, individual agencies, looking for sites that
7 we can grow.

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Can I add one
9 thing, too. And I want to say I appreciate your
10 support in all of this. I know that you want to do
11 the right thing for all the asylum-seekers, just like
12 I hope you know that we do, too. That night were you
13 saw the line which was very hard for any of us to
14 see, we were able to find an option that evening
15 which had not been apparent to us before that, that
16 we were able to move with lightning speed on to
17 actually get everybody safely placed in that option
18 which was a church that raised their hand to help
19 that night, immediately. Since then, we've been
20 working incredibly hard moving people between hotel
21 ballrooms every night to try to find the right number
22 of cots for the right population of people. We're
23 not going to stop our incredibly committed and hard
24 work, but as you know, we never want to see a line
25 like that again. I do just want to take the

2 opportunity to say, as I know we've all been saying,
3 that we do need help at this point in order to keep
4 up to ensure that we don't have a line like that
5 every form again. And the only way that I can think
6 of to ensure that we don't is if we have the support,
7 the continued support from New York State-- New York
8 State is supporting us for Creedmoor, for Randall's,-
9 - and the support of the Federal Government to
10 identify new options for us and to give us the
11 resources we need to continue the model that I stand
12 behind. I believe that we've made a life-changing
13 difference for tens of thousands of asylum-seekers.
14 They deserve that, and we want to continue that, but
15 we do need help to continue that.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Can I just
17 respond for two seconds, and then I'll shut up, I
18 promise. Thank you, Chair Ayala. Dr. Long, you are
19 one of the public officials who I deeply admire and I
20 know how much you care. You do a terrific job.
21 Deputy Commissioner Tigani, you know, I have great
22 respect for you. Commissioner Castro, you're a
23 constituent so I love you just by nature of, you
24 know. Betsy, you know, you are one of the people in
25 this Administration whose values I admire most. I'm

2 not criticizing you as individuals. I am criticizing
3 this Administration's handling of the issue. To me,
4 after a week of people sleeping on the street, the
5 reason people moved because it was within hours of
6 Legal Aid sending a letter to the judge saying you
7 got a problem, and that's when action happened. I
8 am-- have severe-- I am deeply concerned about what
9 happened last week, and I'm deeply concerned about
10 what's happening moving forward. We've put out some
11 suggestions and policy ideas for how we can expand--
12 move-outs from our shelter system to expand capacity
13 in the shelter system to house people who are need.
14 We have not seen those issues taken seriously. The
15 2,600+ vacant supportive housing units, the 4,000+
16 vacant NYCHA units, these are opportunities for us to
17 house vulnerable New Yorkers and then expand capacity
18 in our shelter system for people who are coming in.
19 It's not a silver bullet or a panacea, but it would
20 help in a meaningful way, and I wish that it was
21 prioritized appropriately. Thank you.

22 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Well,
23 I'd just say that last week we announced a complete
24 22 percent rebound in the number of starts, almost

2 2,700 starts of housing for this Administration
3 after--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing]
5 Yeah, but when will those starts be completed, Deputy
6 Commissioner. I mean, in-- I'm getting in trouble.

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Council Member--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: But I love you.
9 We can talk more. I hope you have a good day.

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: You can call it-- you
11 can call him, yes.

12 COMMISSIONER CASTRO: Just want to say
13 something before-- just to follow up on what Doctor
14 Long said, I want to take the opportunity to thank
15 Pastor Gill Monroe [sic] and MOIA's Assistant
16 Commissioner Salgado who helped tremendously and
17 connect us-- connecting us to the churches and the
18 communities of faith and supporting us that night.
19 We were there that day. As you know, it was long and
20 arduous, and we really want to avoid the kind of
21 circus that was created there. We want to respect
22 the privacy of asylum-seekers, so again, you know,
23 we're doing our best with what we're faced against.

24 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. I have
25 three questions and then I'm going to pass it over to

2 Council Member Hanif who will have a couple of other
3 follow-up questions, and then we will go to public
4 testimony. The letters that are being-- I mean, this
5 is pretty-- I'm sure this is a simple question, but I
6 have to ask. The letters that are given out, are
7 they given out in an individual's native language?

8 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So,
9 they are-- yes. So, at the intake, as part of an
10 exhaustive list of questions to make sure that we're
11 responding to them, we also get their preferred
12 language. At the point of contact where the team is
13 making-- is talking to the individual, they are
14 asking them and talking to them in their preferred
15 language. They are also giving them a letter. It's
16 both verbal and written communication at that point.
17 And our-- you know, we have a service that is making
18 sure that it is capturing both the language and
19 finding the access of that language. We have dozens
20 of-- it goes above and beyond the standard language
21 access list of languages.

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: And you've given out
23 913. How many more letters do you anticipate you'll
24 be giving out?

2 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, we
3 have-- for the HPD side, so we have 533 at the--

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [interposing] And the
5 45.

6 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: And
7 then the 45.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: And for Health +
9 Hospitals?

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: So, we've
11 given out 913 so far, and we would anticipate giving
12 out the notices to any adult at any of our remaining
13 sites. I can get you those numbers if you give me
14 just a moment. Okay, so at our sites, the-- we have
15 the individuals constituting adult families is 1,733,
16 and for single adults it is 2,001.

17 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: 2,001?

18 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So you anticipate
20 giving letters to all 2,001?

21 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Alright. And that--
23 so is that in addition to the-- that's not in
24 addition to-- the 913 is part of the 2,001.

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Correct.

3 Yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay. So you have a
5 little over a thousand letters still to give out.

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Among single
7 adults, yeah.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay. Now, could you
9 explain to me what the difference between a housing--
10 what a difference it is between housing for families
11 and singles? Because my impression is that if, you
12 know, single-- families have to be housed in a very
13 specific type of housing structure, and so if we're
14 moving singles out of, you know, a building or a
15 location that was identified as maybe just suitable
16 for singles, how are we going to be moving-- like,
17 what type of modifications are we making to make it
18 appropriate for families, if any?

19 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So,
20 right now based, as Doctor Long spoke, the numbers
21 that were single continue to see new single adults
22 coming. We still need to have that capacity. So
23 for-- so for us, we are primarily using hotels for
24 our families and then adult singles is congregate
25 settings for adult singles.

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: So, two
3 points. One, just to be crystal clear, and I
4 apologize I should have been more clear about this
5 earlier, but you're bringing up the point now. These
6 notices are-- completely exclude families with
7 children. So, no families with children are a part
8 of the 60-day policy.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: No, I know that, but
10 I'm saying that the reason-- the rationale for the
11 60-day rule is to make room for families with
12 children, but the singles--

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: [interposing]
14 Yeah.

15 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: are being housed in
16 settings that would normally not be appropriate for
17 families with children. So, how-- like, I'm trying
18 to understand like how are we going to adapt those
19 spaces to meet that need?

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yeah, well,
21 I think we can get back to you with specifics, but
22 I'll give you the precise example of 99 Washington is
23 one of my humanitarian centers. It is-- I believe
24 it's actually I think the tallest Holiday Inn maybe
25 on the planet, but that is a hotel with individual

2 rooms that, you know, would be suitable for families
3 with children, but right now we have adult families
4 and single adult women in that hotel. So as we
5 transition that's an example how we'd want if we
6 need-- if we are-- have no other rooms available,
7 give one of those rooms to a family with children as
8 a priority.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Well--

10 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI:

11 [interposing] And I-- and I'm sorry for
12 misunderstanding the question, again. So the 45 that
13 I mentioned earlier in our hotels, since those hotels
14 would be appropriate for families, would then be
15 available for families as capacity-- we would move
16 single adults as they come into our system into our
17 capacity design for single adults.

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: And you might not
19 have this information now, but it would be really
20 nice to get, you know, kind of an account of how
21 many-- how many sites we have that are able to house
22 families that would benefit from this policy.

23 Because it almost--

24 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: [interposing]

25 Yeah.

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: looks a little bit
3 like we may be warehousing beds in the event that we,
4 you know, we have families and children that are
5 coming in and we need to, you know, offer them a bed.

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Well, I
7 wouldn't say warehousing, because our experience so
8 far is we use the beds.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: No, no, no, but it
10 kind of sounds like, you know, we're going to get rid
11 of the singles be we may-- we may, right-- have this
12 need and we want to have that bed available, so.

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Well,
14 actually, I'll give you a specific example, and I
15 will-- may intentionally say this at a high level,
16 because I'll let our DHS colleagues follow up on more
17 detail about number of sites in process. But
18 several-- many of the hotels that DHS has had that
19 have housed single adult men, we've transitioned
20 those men to other sites and used those same hotels
21 with, of course, private hotel rooms appropriate for
22 families with children for families with children.
23 So this is a model that we've been using to continue
24 to support families with children, and it's been the
25 way we've been able to always offer families with

2 children an option, and none of them have ever had to
3 sleep on the street. So we'd be taking what's already
4 working well and applying that across our
5 humanitarian centers as well.

6 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay. I had another
7 question, I forgot what it was.

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Does this policy
10 apply to DHS as well?

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: It does not
12 currently apply to DHS.

13 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Does DHS not house
14 asylum singles?

15 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: DHS does
16 house. DHS houses every population of people, but my
17 example from a minute ago has been DHS' approaches
18 thus far which is the DHS hotels where single-- for
19 example, single adult men have been in rooms, like
20 two per room. Those with appropriate notification
21 have been transitioned to other settings like
22 congregate settings so then we could use those hotels
23 with those rooms for families with children.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay. Okay. I will
3 turn it over to Council Member Hanif. Thank you so
4 much.

5 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Thank you. So, as
6 we've hit the maybe two-hour+ mark of this hearing,
7 you know, I just have many more questions. It just
8 speaks to the opaqueness of this policy, which I am
9 still trying to really wrap my head around, but it
10 feels really hard to justify as both legally and
11 morally the thing to do in our city right now. And
12 each of the agencies having a little bit of
13 differences around how the notice is written-- and
14 I'm reading a notice in front of me. I would like
15 for each of the agencies to share with the Council
16 the sort of template your agency is working with
17 before it gets personalized so that we have it for
18 our record and can read it. And I know Commissioner
19 Iscol had mentioned that they-- there isn't a-- there
20 isn't an explicit mention that we're asking folks to
21 vacate, but when I read this it does feel that I am
22 receiving a notice that is asking me to leave on this
23 date, and that is anxiety-inducing. It is-- it feels
24 threatening. It feels really hard to have to-- had
25 to have left one's home to come to a place to receive

2 mercy and a temporary shelter, and then being asked
3 again to move out and get displaced further. And so I
4 don't want to keep getting at the values that this
5 Council today has really prioritized, or what we've
6 heard from the Public Advocate, but this policy needs
7 to be undone. It needs to be undone. We can't put
8 in measures that are pilot experiments to see what
9 could happen. And as Council Member Brewer alluded
10 earlier, we will definitely experience the kind of
11 street homelessness, even if we're not calling it
12 homelessness, of the men, the 200+ men who are on the
13 sidewalk for up to seven days with no arrangements
14 given, as we spoke to them. I wasn't even aware of
15 the food distribution. This is the first I'm
16 learning, because I had met those passing by
17 somewhere from mutual aid groups, but there were
18 people who were just in the area working and had seen
19 this, and just didn't have the heart to just walk,
20 walk by and do nothing, and had come back with snacks
21 and water and other beverages and toiletries and
22 blankets. So, I have a lot of questions and
23 confusion about what I've heard you all say versus
24 what I saw and heard on the ground. But one, would
25 love to get the notices from each of the agencies.

2 And then, I want to reiterate again that this council
3 would like the specifics around obtaining the IDNYC
4 because right now the application requires an address
5 and our folks who are being re-ticketed or moved--
6 asked to vacate because in the language here, it says
7 that as of-- and there's a line to designate what
8 date you can no longer stay at this location. So, I
9 am curious how the IDNYC card would be obtained given
10 the precarity and the changes of one's address.
11 Could, Commissioner Castro, you speak to that, or
12 others, about just the IDNYC piece? And I know
13 Council Member Brewer and I have legislation to make
14 it easier to obtain an IDNYC card, but what's the
15 mailing address they could use if the task at hand is
16 to get them out of this facility?

17 COMMISSIONER CASTRO: And you're speaking
18 about the respite centers, correct?

19 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Or where the folks
20 are receiving the notices, and that's the HERRCs,
21 correct? The HERRC-- right now, it's just the
22 HERRCs?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Right now it
24 is the HERRCs, but as Commissioner Iscol said, the
25

2 respite sites started to notifications as well. I
3 believe he said 17 so far.

4 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: So, the ID-- who's
5 managing the IDNYC portion of it? Is it each of the
6 agencies, or is that the Office of Asylum-seekers,
7 which you know, they're not present here and would
8 have been great for them to join, too, and I wish
9 Commissioner Iscol stayed, because this is a very
10 important critical issue, and directive like this
11 that don't come with a booklet to the council or even
12 a briefing which we didn't receive really brings to
13 attention the kind of opaqueness that we've charged
14 the Administration with. We deserve to know what's
15 going on and for the issues that we're hearing, both
16 in our districts and citywide around the services
17 like IDNYC. It would be great for you all just to
18 elucidate. How are we actually contending and giving
19 out services when we are asking folks to leave?

20 COMMISSIONER CASTRO: Well, as you know,
21 IDNYC is overseen by the Department of Social
22 Services, and I know that each situation here is
23 different when it comes to mailing and receiving and
24 collecting mail. So, we'll have to get back to you
25 on that, especially from the respite centers who had,

2 I think, the most challenges. But know that I'm
3 working intensely to figure out IDNYC.

4 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Commissioner, could
5 you repeat what you said about the respite center
6 part?

7 COMMISSIONER CASTRO: So, the-- I know
8 that there's been challenges with respect to mail at
9 the respite centers, because of the nature of the
10 respite centers, and so Commissioner Iscol will get
11 back to you on that, the aspect of that. But with
12 respect to IDNYC, it was a program created before the
13 crisis, and we understand that we need to adjust to
14 be able to accommodate now close to 100 or over
15 100,000 people who are in need of this ID.

16 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: And
17 the only thing I'll add is the focus on the ID did
18 not start now. It started before. You know, at the
19 Jefferson we actually had a significant portion of
20 the populations that come through that successfully
21 was able to get the ID. So, not speaking to the
22 address question, I just wanted to emphasize that for
23 us we're working through the vendor. The vendor is
24 aware and familiar with the work. They work closely

2 with MOIA through this partnership and we've had
3 success getting people at the Jefferson the ID.

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: And if I
5 could just add one point. It is that I think you
6 bring up a really important point which is how are we
7 going to connect people to resources and the services
8 that they need during the 60-day period. But I just
9 wanted to take the opportunity to say that is case
10 management and that is critically important to this
11 effort. For me, again, as a primary care doctor, I
12 want to help my patients get what they want and when
13 we're asking people now, they're telling us. Our
14 asylum-seekers are telling us what they want, and
15 we're able to have the opportunity now to actually
16 meet their needs. But I think, I wanted to say we'll
17 best meet their needs if we can work together on
18 this. IDNYC is one thing. It's a very important
19 thing, but it's one thing. There are several other
20 services and resources that we talked about like our
21 ability to re-ticket people, like OSHA training, like
22 English classes. The more that we can do together,
23 and I just really wanted to say this out loud, you
24 know, I think the more successful we'll be in helping
25 our asylum-seekers to take the next step forward in

2 their journeys which is what they want to. But I
3 don't think they can do it without all of our
4 collective help. I think they deserve that.

5 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: I agree with that.

6 And then building on Council Member Restler's line of
7 questioning and the revelation that there were 1,500
8 beds or some capacity in the DHS shelter system, what
9 prevented transfer of the men who were there at the
10 Roosevelt sidewalk to go into the vacant beds?

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: So, I'll

12 say-- I'm good. The up-shot of this is I do think we
13 should pose that question to DHS. I don't want to
14 speak on their behalf. What I will say is that very
15 day we have a meeting at 9:30 in the morning that DHS
16 is always a part of, my team and I are always a part
17 of, and we make every effort to work together
18 throughout the day, literally every minute of the
19 day, to place people as DHS availability comes up.
20 That's not limited only to adults, but also for
21 families with children. DHS has opened several
22 hotels recently for asylum-seekers. It's been really
23 a make or break help in terms of our ability to
24 always offer children and families a place to stay
25 for the night moving forward. So we're in constant

2 communication with DHS, but I do think we should
3 defer to them to answer the specific question about
4 their day to day capacity and what that-- to capacity
5 our [inaudible]

6 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay, I mean, I'm
7 disappointed by-- I mean, one, I knew that there was
8 this interagency and I know there's an interagency
9 effort and a sort of recurring call and being engaged
10 day to day, but these hearings have not always had--
11 all of the agencies that are on these 9:30 calls
12 present. And so I would just extend that to the
13 agencies not present to be able to at least with
14 their colleagues in the Administration, just give us
15 a note of some kind, because this is a shocking
16 number of vacancy when people were on the street for
17 up to seven days. There's no reason beyond just the
18 optics of Mayor Adams just wanting to send the signal
19 and the message that New York City is at capacity, we
20 don't want you here. And that is a horrifying
21 message as a city rooted from the quote on the Statue
22 of Liberty that this is your city. This is where you
23 will receive mercy, and all the work we've done that
24 you all have proactively participated in. The
25 detainer laws and the various protections that comes

2 with this city is the foundation of why this city has
3 to lead. And so I hope DHS is able to respond to
4 this question. And then finally, before I go into my
5 colleagues Council Member Cabán's questions, what
6 conditions would need to be met by the Administration
7 to repeal the 60-day rule? For how long are we
8 monitoring, let's say, the efficacy of this
9 directive? It's a day by-- it sound-- you all look
10 like it's a day-by-day--

11 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I

12 don't think there's a set day. I think right now
13 we're at the beginning of implementation. We are
14 still learning just the implementation side. So,
15 that is-- that is something we'll continue to do and
16 continue to monitor at this point.

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: And I just

18 would add one thing. I think your question is
19 getting at with the policy as implemented how we
20 evaluate its effectiveness. And there was a question
21 earlier about how we would define success. and I
22 just wanted to put forth that for me, a very
23 important aspect of success will be how can we get--
24 how can we know that we're getting people what they
25 want. When we're making exit plans with people we'll

2 see if at the end of the period that 65 percent
3 actually is able to activate the exit plans and
4 actually leave. I think that'll be an important thing
5 to follow up on. I don't know what's going to happen
6 with that yet, but I do know I'm going to do
7 everything in my power to make sure that they have
8 every opportunity to take the next step forward
9 giving them what they want. But I think that will be
10 important thing for us to collectively look at, at
11 the end of the first 60-day period.

12 COMMISSIONER CASTRO: I would just add
13 that we're still at the height of the humanitarian
14 crisis. I mean, we announced 200 beds earlier last
15 week. Last week we received 2,900 asylum-seekers,
16 and so we're very much still trying to figure out
17 what to do day-to-day. And so as Doctor Long said,
18 really a lot will-- the availability of the spaces
19 where we can shelter people will really determine how
20 we respond moving forward, and of course, the support
21 from the federal and state governments.

22 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: I have no doubt that
23 each of you individually are going to be doing
24 everything as I've seen you do and I've talked to you
25 to ensure that folks are housed and have the

2 services. But for there to not be any parameters or
3 conditions already kind of sketched out is
4 disappointing. There should be a contingency plan as
5 was mentioned, or kind of like the evaluation as its
6 happening. You know, when that first notice of
7 September 22nd, or whenever that first set of people
8 will be asked to vacate, exactly what we're expecting
9 or how we're making sure those very folks who will
10 need to come back to the Roosevelt intake center and
11 be online to re-register with the system, what we
12 will-- what we're expecting as success or the
13 shortcomings or how we're going to really move
14 forward, and how you all will involve the Council in
15 that conversation.

16 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Well,
17 I-- that's-- first of all, thank you. It's always
18 helpful and continues to be helpful how the Council
19 has wanted to work with us, especially at 455
20 Jefferson. Council Member Gutiérrez has been
21 incredibly helpful connecting us to a local
22 neighborhood and there are many other examples. So
23 for us, throughout the process, we are very carefully
24 managing and monitoring how success looks every day,
25 every point of contact, every movement forward in

2 trying to get to an exit plan, and as we move forward
3 I think part of the process is going to be not
4 waiting 'til day 60, but for us, we want to know what
5 success is going to be at day 15, 30, 45, and we're
6 breaking it up even more granularly. So, we will
7 certainly be pulling in and asking for Council Member
8 support, ideas throughout the process.

9 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Thank you.

10 CHIEF ENGAGEMENT OFFICER MACLEAN: Hi.

11 Happy to be here. Thanks for all your questions and
12 the opportunity to really respond. I think, you know,
13 just big picture, I think as an Administration we're
14 really, you know, a year and a half into this crisis,
15 really needing to take a step back and think about
16 long-term what does this look like. It's not abating
17 anytime soon. We're being forced to use, you know,
18 public facilities that we'd really rather not use.
19 Those are, you know, McCarren Park rec center, Sunset
20 Park rec. Those are places-- you know, schools,
21 gyms, like none of us want to use those spaces.
22 Those are community spaces that are meant for a
23 different purpose. So, I think as-- you know, we are
24 being forced to look at those as options for siting.
25 That's when we're like ah, we have to try something

2 different and make some really difficult choices. I
3 know you all know, every time we set up an emergency
4 site, it's remarkable expensive. It takes resources
5 away from us being able to do with Public Advocate
6 talked about really channeling those resources into
7 permanent housing for folks who have been in shelter
8 for a really long time. So I think we're at a place
9 within this crisis where we have to make some really
10 challenging decisions, that kind of Sophie's choice
11 type decision.

12 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Sure.

13 CHIEF ENGAGEMENT OFFICER MACLEAN: And we
14 would love to have your partnership as we're really
15 confronting those super challenging decisions and
16 think about what that looks like kind of
17 collaboration--

18 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: [interposing] We would
19 love that, and I think the Council has repeatedly
20 extended that partnership, but as you know, this
21 oversight hearing was catalyzed by us not even having
22 received a briefing on this issue. And all of these
23 questions that we're taking are coming from a real
24 place of wanting to understand how without
25 consultation from the Council the Mayor feels that he

2 can take this authoritarian move and determine that,
3 you know, we are going to now create this limit and a
4 petty big barrier to how long someone can stay in a
5 housing facility. Can you commit to not extending
6 this policy to families with children and to DHS
7 shelters? Have those conversations happened around
8 exceptions? I mean, right now after what we've
9 learned today, I do not support the 60-day directive,
10 and feel-- you know, I came in wanting to understand
11 a little bit more about it without having taken a
12 position, but now after what we've heard, I-- there's
13 nothing in me that can really say yeah, I really
14 understand and support this. I don't. But to see that
15 rash decisions are getting made by the Mayor, can a
16 commitment be made that that this policy not be
17 extended to families with children in particular?

18 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, I
19 don't think we've been prepared to answer a question
20 like that. Again, to get to this point as the Chief
21 Engagement Officer spoke to, it's been a year and a
22 half of a lot of work, a lot of learning, a lot of--
23 a lot data to decide and when decisions are made are
24 based what we can and cannot do to meet this
25 humanitarian crisis. I think we understand and hear

2 your questions, and collectively we'll make sure we
3 take that back to our colleagues.

4 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Thank you. I'm going
5 to ask a couple questions from Council Member Cabán
6 who is here but online, but since we don't have
7 quorum, she won't be able to get to ask her
8 questions. So what special provisions have been made
9 to safely shelter LGBTQIA+ immigrants? Shelters are
10 segregated by the gender binary. Are TGNCNBI
11 individuals allowed to go to the shelter that is
12 appropriate for them?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Are people
14 able to go the shelters that they want to based on
15 how they identify?

16 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Yes.

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: And how does-- how
19 does that happen? Is it at the intake center that
20 there are some demographic questions and then a
21 determination based on interests or--

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG:

23 [interposing] Yes.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: And then are all
3 shelter staff trained not to assume all applicants
4 are cisgender and straight?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: I'm sorry,
6 you're using the word shelter, so I just want to be
7 clear--

8 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: [interposing] We're
9 talking about asylum-seekers in the system.

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yeah, so I
11 could speak for my staff and then I'll turn to my
12 colleagues to speak for theirs. So at the arrival
13 center, the way that we've crafted the questions
14 around how somebody identifies so that we can use
15 that [inaudible] or self, find out how somebody
16 identifies and the type of setting they want to go
17 into. We train our staff in how to have those
18 discussions and what the options for people would be.
19 So the answer to that is in terms of our frontline
20 staff that are having the discussions, of course,
21 they're trained on how to have those discussions and
22 what the options they should present to the person,
23 the asylum-seeker would be.

24 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I
25 believe we're following the same protocol and

2 polices, but I'm happy to circle back and get any
3 more detail that the Council Member needs.

4 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Thank you. And is
5 there anywhere in the application process for all
6 individuals to list their pronouns?

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: So, at the
8 arrival center-- well, what I can tell you
9 definitively is we ask for how somebody identifies,
10 and then we use that discussion to ask them if they
11 want to be, and we give them the different options in
12 terms of a setting which might have only single adult
13 women, only single adult men, single adult women, and
14 adult families, and that's the discussion we have
15 with them, because we don't want to assume that they
16 would-- their desires be one way or another before
17 asking them directly. With respect to their pronouns
18 I will have to double-check to see if we're reporting
19 people's preferred pronouns. We can go-- I'll get
20 back to you on it.

21 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay. So, do folks
22 have a card-- just not an IDNYC, but a card that they
23 come in and out of? Does that card have pronouns on
24 it?

2 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I
3 don't believe. I think we'll just come-- we'll come
4 back with that information.

5 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: And then are LGBTQIA+
6 individuals encouraged to self-identify, and then
7 this information is used to make appropriate
8 placements?

9 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Just
10 for HPD-- so, once that information is made aware to
11 us, that's escalated immediately, and we immediately
12 make accommodations at intake when we have that
13 information. If that information comes later, the
14 staff there will again escalate and work to
15 accommodate.

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yes, and
17 just to be very clear, we have a question that's part
18 of our unified data set, which is exactly what you
19 were saying. So I would consider that encouragement
20 for them to identify because we're asking them
21 directly.

22 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay, and then are
23 the individuals entering the shelter system, the
24 asylum system housing-- for housing specifically for
25 asylum-seekers, connected with asylum application or

2 other appropriate assistance which helps to get work
3 permits and social security cards issued? And the
4 context that the Council Member provides here is that
5 none of the advocates that the-- her office has been
6 partnering with at Seeking Asylum, Finding
7 Empowerment, or SAFE, namely the network of pro se
8 legal providers seem to have had any contact with or
9 meaningful information from the Administration
10 regarding quickly and efficiently addressing the
11 massive need. Would the Administration work with and
12 fund grassroots providers working in this area?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: I'll turn to
14 Commissioner Castro to answer the legal question in a
15 moment. I just wanted to quickly-- I'm trying to
16 give you as precise answers as I can. So with
17 respect to the pronouns on the ID badges, the answer
18 is no.

19 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay.

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: We do not
21 list pronouns. What we have is your picture and a QR
22 code that we require you to scan in and out when
23 you're coming in route of any of our humanitarian
24 centers so we know exactly who's in the building, but
25 no pronouns.

2 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: It's
3 the same ID for H-- It's the same format for HPD, so
4 no pronouns.

5 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay. And could
6 accommodations be made to add the pronouns as part of
7 this card?

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: If that
9 would be important, we definitely welcome the
10 discussion.

11 COMMISSIONER CASTRO: To answer the
12 question on connecting people to legal services, we
13 have a website set up that will circulate where
14 people can find information about how to access our
15 legal services. Just to say a little bit about our
16 legal sprint [sic], or asylum application help
17 center. It's been very successful. We've been able
18 to help, you know, 1,700 people in a very short time.
19 I think that that is a model to follow. Again, we're
20 also working to building community capacity, so we
21 have been working with our community-based navigation
22 centers to refer to the asylum application center,
23 but we've also announced the five million dollars
24 investment to expand capacity among our community
25 provider. And I'm happy to announce to that. We are

2 partnering with CUNY, CUNY Citizenship Now, CUNY Law
3 School.

4 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Amazing.

5 COMMISSIONER CASTRO: They'll be able to
6 connect law students in the CUNY system to a
7 community service organizations to expand legal
8 services in those communities. Again, we have
9 100,000 asylum-seekers that need to submit their
10 application within their one-year deadline. And
11 unfortunately, the programming does not have a plan
12 to support people in applying in accessing asylum and
13 work authorization.

14 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Right.

15 COMMISSIONER CASTRO: So, we're going to
16 have to do it ourselves.

17 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: No, appreciate your
18 efforts and the new initiatives should bring in CUNY
19 Citizenship Now and all of the other community
20 partners and really scaling that up, and I just want
21 to again underscore how critical it is. As this
22 directive reaches its first cohort of people who will
23 need to vacate that all of these individuals have at
24 least started their application and have field for
25 asylum. It's really, really important for us to

2 follow. And then finally, I know we talked a little
3 bit about the IDNYC card, and I know that there's a
4 backlog and capacity issues. What is being done
5 right now particularly with the time being so limited
6 to reduce the turnaround, the turnaround time for
7 obtaining a card? Will there be additional IDNYC
8 center or events set up to help folks get their card
9 expedited?

10 COMMISSIONER CASTRO: I would just say
11 that I know that DSS-

12 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: [interposing] At the
13 DSS.

14 COMMISSIONER CASTRO: and now IDNYC teams
15 are working tremendously hard around the clock to
16 help as many people as possible. And as you know,
17 our navigations center had walk in IDNYC assistance,
18 so any of the asylum-seekers in our system were able
19 to walk in and access IDNYC. I believe they've moved
20 over to the arrival center. But again, 100,000 people
21 in need of an ID is a big challenge. But we'll
22 definitely follow--

23 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: [interposing] And
24 could be extremely-- could be an incredible
25 opportunity for New York City to show that the

2 municipal card can look like when we have the mases
3 signing up for this, and that's critically important.

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: We agree.

5 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Thank you. All--
6 that's all for me.

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. I have
8 one question and Council Member Brewer has a follow-
9 up, and then we will let you go. But yesterday there
10 was a press conference, and I missed it. I was
11 really busy, but I did hear something that caught my
12 attention and really bothered me and I just want to
13 read it. And again, this is, you know, on the daily
14 news. I wasn't there, but basically it says, you
15 know, due to the ballooning price tag, Adams said
16 that his Administration is in the process of scaling
17 back services being offered to migrants in the City's
18 care. Perks, the word perks like free meals, laundry
19 and hygiene products are likely to be on the chopping
20 block. What the hell does that mean?

21 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Well I'll
22 start, and I'll turn to my colleagues. So, it is
23 true that in OMBs most recent analysis we predict a
24 12 billion dollars expense within the next three
25 years. So as such, we're going through the exercise

2 right now with OMB to see what services we can
3 streamline how we could be more efficient. I'll give
4 you an example. For example, we have -- we've got an
5 array of medical services at all of our HERRC sites.
6 Is there an opportunity to have vaccinations at the
7 arrival center to like push forward and that's where
8 we do vaccinations. Maybe we do them at other sites
9 on an as-needed basis. We also have virtual version
10 of the emergency room, and when we enroll people in
11 health insurance-- which we've know reenrolled 14,000
12 people in health insurance that actually draws down
13 state and federal funds, so we actually make money
14 from this-- the perspective of the City when we enol
15 people in health insurance. So things like that were
16 inactive discussions about now, but it is because of
17 the fact that New York City has continued to bear the
18 vast majority of the burden in terms of the cities
19 and the current protection is 12 billion dollars of
20 expense.

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Understood, but to
22 imply that food is a perk is not only inhumane, it's
23 so disrespectful. And I don't-- you know, I don't
24 respect that hype of rhetoric. If you-- everything
25 that you just said makes sense to me. If you are

2 saying to me we don't have the resources, we may
3 have to scale back on staff. I get that. If you say
4 to me we may not be able to mop five days a week.
5 Maybe we have to mop like two. I get that. We may
6 have to renegotiate with buildings owners and hotels
7 and rescue the rats. Completely understand that.
8 But food is not a perk. It is a necessity. And to
9 say that it is, you know, even if it's just to get
10 the attention of Washington is inappropriate use of
11 language. And I just wanted to say that on record,
12 because I found it highly offensive, and I don't
13 understand. You know, I get we're all really
14 frustrated, and I get that we're all really
15 concerned, but when we as government are so stressed
16 out about a situation that we start to use language
17 like that, and that we start to you know, create
18 little innuendos that don't really help the
19 situation. You know, I think we have a responsibility
20 to do better and be better. I just wanted to say
21 that, because again, it really bothered me. My
22 family was, you know, food insecure growing up. We
23 grew up on food stamps. You know that I-- my
24 family's also been homeless. And it's not just my
25 family. Like, I can tell you, you know, in my own

2 community and the buildings I grew up in. I still
3 have, you know, family there that have never moved,
4 who suffered from the same, the same issues, right?

5 And so I just-- you know, I take these things really
6 personally because I want to understand, right? I'm
7 very practical, but there are things that we should
8 be doing, and things that we should absolutely not
9 even be discussing, and so to say that, you know,
10 shame on the Mayor of the City of New York for using
11 that language. With that, I will pass it over to
12 Council Member Brewer and--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]

14 Thank you very much. I assume that we have this, but
15 I just wanted to double-check. Could we get the list
16 of the sites that are under the 60-day rule to the
17 committee so we know which sites they are? That
18 would be number one. And then the second issue is--I
19 mentioned the Wellington on 55th and 7th, completely
20 empty. I mentioned it earlier. But why are we
21 doing, for instance, Randall's Island or some of
22 these other locations when we do have empty hotels.
23 And then the other question is, the hospital, state
24 hospital psychiatric on Wards Island, not full. So I
25 just-- while we're-- I understand Randall's Island. I

2 only have, I don't know, 50 coaches who have called
3 me, maybe just 40 or 50 coaches. Every single soccer
4 player in Manhattan. And so we're-- I just want to
5 be sure that as we're I guess tearing up those four
6 fields, we're trying to find other fields. We need
7 to get some light son certain location. I have a
8 long list which I will be putting in writing. But
9 you know, you're putting one group against another
10 group, and I find that offensive. I just want to put
11 that on the record also. I think in terms of
12 collaboration, I know that there's often a call out
13 for other sites, but that needs to be intensified so
14 we don't put one group against another. Thank you.

15 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: A couple of
16 just quick responses. So, locations we're happy to
17 share. We break down our locations by population, so
18 we're happy to share that. And then-- I just wanted
19 to acknowledge what you said about the coaches that
20 have called you. We don't want to be displacing any
21 children's athletic leagues or anything like that.
22 As the father of a two-year-old and a four-year-old,
23 I very much understand the importance of organized
24 activities. The reason for Randall's and Creedmoor
25 for that manner, hotels-- we're are doing our very

2 best, but it is very hard to find hotels to support
3 families with children. So when we do find it, we're
4 going to look into the hotel that you offered, but
5 our first priority would be families with children in
6 that hotel to make sure that we can continue. And
7 again, New York City, we should all-- it's worthy of
8 note as Commissioner Castro said. Now families with
9 children have slept on the street in New York City.
10 Few other cities can boast that, which is
11 unacceptable. But in New York City we of course will
12 continue to make that our reality. And so with
13 Randall's and Creedmoor we need those sites to ensure
14 or to best protect against having a line of adults in
15 the future. We wouldn't put families with children
16 in Randall's, but we would put adults there. Would
17 otherwise risk, you know, being a-- potentially
18 forming a line in the future.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Get back to me
20 about the psychiatric hospital, please.

21 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Yes.

22 CHIEF ENGAGEMENT OFFICER MACLEAN: And if
23 I may? I'm just going to talk a little bit about our
24 upstate program, because we've also been as I'm sure
25 you've seen in the news, we've been sending folks

2 upstate to hotels, and that's a combination of
3 singles and families with children. And there are
4 folks that raise their hand and say I want to go
5 upstate. We're able to-- and I think this is one of
6 the things that we'd really like to supercharge. I
7 mean, at this point we only have 1,800--
8 approximately, 1,800 people upstate across six
9 counties. What we're able to do in those counties,
10 though, and I'll kind of call out Erie County in
11 particular, is work closely with community-based
12 organizations to provide social services. So
13 Councilwoman Brewer, to your point about having folks
14 from the neighborhood essentially help provide the
15 casework and navigation services. That's what we're
16 doing in buffalo.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know every
18 single person in Erie County.

19 CHIEF ENGAGEMENT OFFICER MACLEAN: Every
20 single? Then I'm sure I'm talking to all your
21 friends.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And I know more
23 than others.

24 CHIEF ENGAGEMENT OFFICER MACLEAN: So,
25 anyway, so I think and I will say that as we're

2 working with folks update and with local elected, and
3 I'm sure again, you've seen in the news-- not-- in
4 every county it's not going as well as it's going in
5 Erie. Not every county is as welcoming, and that's
6 been a challenge, too. But it is something that we
7 see kind of in the future. I just want to see-- I
8 want to make sure that you guys know that we're not--
9 these are not just kind of one-off decisions that
10 there are-- you know, we understand that all the
11 stuff works kind of in tandem. And so as we're
12 giving 30 and 60-day notices, really trying to expand
13 our reach upstate and making sure that we're
14 providing safe, healthy, places for folks to stay,
15 but also to be integrated into communities is another
16 kind of tactic that we're using. So, just-- year
17 again, I think stuff starts coming out as a one-off,
18 but this is very much kind of a coordinated effort.

19 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: I have just a few
20 more questions, and then promise we'll wrap up. Are
21 there any particularly vulnerable populations, such
22 as people with disabilities, LGBTQ folks, or young
23 adults who are exempted from the 60-day directive?

24 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: I can start.
25 So for people with disabilities, the process right

2 now works such that you-- we, as part of our unified
3 data set or unified questions we ask people at the
4 arrival center, we seek to their identified-- if
5 somebody has a disability. So right after that,
6 we're having somebody with a disability go to an
7 appropriate site to meet their needs. So if we-- for
8 example, one of our humanitarian centers have a
9 person with disability that receives a 60-day notice,
10 we're going to work with them in a concerted way to
11 ensure that their needs up 'til day 60, but beyond
12 day 60 as well are met. In some situations that
13 could mean that that person, it's best for them to
14 stay at that site, because their needs are
15 effectively being met for their identified
16 disability. For others, it might mean that their
17 needs could be met or might be better met at a
18 different site. So we're going to have those
19 conversations and make decisions with them based on
20 what their needs are at this point in the crisis.

21 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Got it. So then at
22 this moment in time, there isn't exemptions?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Not
24 exemptions, but people with an identified disability,
25 we're going to ensure that we're meeting their needs.

2 So the process is going to-- we're going to-- it's
3 going to look different for them than it would for
4 people that do not have an identified disability.

5 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay. And then, can
6 the Administration share the list of the City's needs
7 from the State that a judge ordered the City to
8 submit?

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: I think
10 we'll have to defer to law on that.

11 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Okay. And then I
12 have a recommendation. You know, there used to be
13 briefings that were happening regularly, and I
14 understand the nature of having all of the electeds
15 and all of the agency reps as being sort of an
16 unwieldy situation, but if we could divide it up into
17 boroughs or really smaller cohorts, because it is
18 just absolutely imperative in terms of the continued
19 uptick of welcoming asylum-seekers, the new
20 directives, the various policies that may come about
21 as a result of this directive. It is just imperative
22 for the Council to not only use our chambers and have
23 you under authority-- under oath to share what's
24 going on and learn what's happening, but really be
25 prepared in advance of these hearings. We don't want

2 to have to call oversight hearings for every single
3 policy that gets introduced. We'd like to have these
4 conversations in tandem and really want to extend
5 that partnership here today.

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: We'll pass
7 that back to our IGA team. Good communication would
8 solve 90 percent of the world's problems, and I enjoy
9 these meetings as well.

10 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Thank you. That's
11 all for me.

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I don't have--
13 there's no one else that has any more questions. So
14 thank you so much for coming today, and I hope that
15 if you can, if possible, you have any staff that can,
16 you know, stay. We have a panel of asylum-seekers
17 that will be testifying as well, and I think it would
18 be nice to show some support. Thank you.

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LONG: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah, we're going to
21 take a very quick break, and then we'll be right
22 back.

23 [break]

24 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Alright, we're back.
25

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We will now be
3 hearing testimony from the public. Our first panel
4 will be an in-person panel consisted of Will Watts,
5 Deborah Lee, and Maria Flores. Maria needs
6 interpreter.

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: You may begin.

8 WILL WATTS: Thank you, Deputy Speaker,
9 Chairperson Hanif, and other members of the Council
10 for this opportunity to speak with you today. My
11 name is Will Watts and I am the Deputy Executive
12 Director for Advocacy at the Coalition for the
13 Homeless. For over 40 years, the Coalition has
14 advocated for and defended New York's right to
15 shelter, serving as the court-appointed monitor of
16 the shelter system and operating of our 11 direct
17 service programs for unhoused individuals and
18 families regardless of their immigration status.
19 While we appreciate the challenges this influx has
20 created for all New Yorkers, the Coalition opposes
21 any policy that seeks to curtail the right to
22 shelter, which this policy does by imposing an
23 arbitrary 60-day limit without any guarantee of
24 ongoing placement. Already, notice recipients have
25 contacted us because they are confused and do not

2 appreciate that even if they return to the arrival
3 center within the 60 days or when their 60 days ends,
4 that they may not receive a new placement. Now, we
5 are glad to hear that there's been more case
6 management, but there's still confusion. Such
7 confusion and the message of receiving a notice could
8 result in individuals resorting to sleeping
9 unsheltered and being further displaced from the
10 services they need. Now I've recently relocated here
11 from Los Angeles and I know what mass unsheltered
12 homelessness looks like, and that is not the path
13 that we should be going down. In addition, we at the
14 Coalition and Legal Aid are mindful, as has been
15 acknowledged, that many migrants have endured
16 unimaginable hardships before arriving here in New
17 York. Creating uncertainty about ongoing placement
18 just compounds the trauma they've already
19 experienced. Similarly, from what we have heard just
20 recently, arrivals who have disabilities are not
21 exempt from this policy. So it would be both
22 unconscionable and illegal to require them to return
23 to the arrival center without any guarantee of a new
24 placement that satisfies their accessibility needs.
25 Further, this policy raises a host of other legal

2 concerns about treating single adult migrants housed
3 in non-DSS operated shelters differently from other
4 shelter residents. But even practically speaking,
5 this policy just makes no sense. If the City was
6 unable to handle the volume at the arrival center
7 several weeks ago, will adding individuals for re-
8 processing mean just more individuals sleeping on the
9 sidewalk outside of the Roosevelt Hotel. It's true,
10 we need the Governor and the Federal Government to
11 develop and implement a comprehensive plan to address
12 the situation. But for now, the Mayor should be
13 prioritizing placements into permanent housing for
14 existing shelter residents, not limiting shelter
15 stays to 60 days for certain new arrivals. Thank
16 you.

17 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

18 DEBORAH LEE: My name is Deborah Lee and
19 I'm the Attorney in charge of the Immigration Law
20 Unit of Legal Aid Society. We're jointly testifying
21 here today with the Coalition for the Homeless. We
22 thank City Council for holding this hearing. I'm
23 using my time to highlight short and long-term
24 opportunities for the City to help recent arrivals
25 obtain work permits. While the City focuses on

2 funding pro se legal help to apply for asylum and
3 many advocate rightly so for asylum-based work
4 permits to be issued more quickly, the City could
5 assist in a more comprehensive way by taking action
6 such as one, prioritizing immigration legal services,
7 including at the City's Asylum Application Help
8 Center, based upon date of entry to the U.S. One
9 must file within one year of entry, and many asylum-
10 seekers will lose their opportunity to timely apply
11 if this is not done. Two, screening for humanitarian
12 parole status which provides an immediate pathway to
13 work authorization concurrent to the length of
14 parole. Three, collaborating with workers' rights
15 advocates to screen for labor abuse and trafficking
16 for those who are already working. This will provide
17 another pathway for work authorization. Four,
18 funding immigration legal representation for those on
19 expedited dedicated dockets in Immigration Court
20 proceedings. For asylum applicants, most will not
21 receive their work permit in enough time to benefit
22 from them before their final hearing in immigration
23 court. Full legal representation is the best chance
24 that they have to be granted asylum and become self-
25 sufficient. Five, advocating more with the Federal

2 Government for the re-designation of TPS for
3 Venezuela so that those who entered after the current
4 cut-off date of March 8th, 2021 could also be
5 eligible for accompanying work authorization.

6 Advocating also for TPS equity for black migrants is
7 also critical here, especially for the single adults
8 in shelter. Finally, incorporating immigration legal
9 information and education as part of the intensive
10 case management that was discussed earlier today for
11 those receiving these 60 day notices is also very
12 critical. Legal Aid is committed to all in the
13 shelter system and to fighting to advance immigrant's
14 rights. We thank the committees for their
15 dedication to the issues. Thank you.

16 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: My name is Maria Flores.

18 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

19 TRANSLATOR: I'm from Honduras.

20 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: I am 36 years old.

22 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

23 TRANSLATOR: I want to clarify that what
24 I'll talk is not related to the 60-day rule.

25 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: I live in a shelter in
3 Brooklyn.

4 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: I came from my country with
6 a lot of dreams, purposes, goals.

7 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

8 TRANSLATOR: I came into the US on August
9 3rd.

10 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

11 TRANSLATOR: Of 2022--

12 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: during a raid between Mexico
14 and the US.

15 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

16 TRANSLATOR: Sadly, we had to separate.

17 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

18 TRANSLATOR: I was coming with my four
19 children.

20 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: During the raid, my four
22 children ended in American soil and we ended in
23 Mexican territory.

24 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: But thank God the children's
3 lawyer--

4 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: did a family reunification
6 in order to get together with the children again.

7 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

8 TRANSLATOR: And in that way, I had the
9 opportunity to come into the country.

10 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

11 TRANSLATOR: I was very happy when I came
12 in,--

13 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

14 TRANSLATOR: because I was going to see
15 my children again.

16 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: I think that all the people,
18 all of us who are here--

19 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

20 TRANSLATOR: we come here with a purpose.

21 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

22 TRANSLATOR: And in order to give our
23 children better opportunity.

24 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: I think that nobody leaves
3 their country--

4 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: because they wanted to.

6 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

7 TRANSLATOR: But because of the situation
8 we lived there.

9 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: My children were with a
11 niece of mine.

12 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: And the day that I arrived,
14 my niece asked me to leave, that she couldn't house
15 me and my four children.

16 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: She took me to a--

18 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

19 TRANSLATOR: which is called La Hispanida
20 [sic].

21 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

22 TRANSLATOR: And she told me that from
23 there they could send me to the Path.

24 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

25

2 TRANSLATOR: The Path paid one day of
3 hotel--

4 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: because we're in the
6 streets,--

7 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

8 TRANSLATOR: my four children and I.

9 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: I'm very grateful in New
11 York--

12 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: for having given me a place
14 to live.

15 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

16 TRANSLATOR: Path sent me to Rosa Parks--

17 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

18 TRANSLATOR: which is a shelter where I
19 now live.

20 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: Also I came here pregnant.

22 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

23 TRANSLATOR: So now I have five children.

24 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

25 TRANSLATOR: Very sadly, in the shelter--

2 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: the shelter where we
4 currently live--

5 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: we suffer discrimination.

7 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

8 TRANSLATOR: They always frustrate me--

9 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: with a housing issue.

11 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

12 TRANSLATOR: At the shelter, they want to
13 transfer me to a hotel.

14 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

15 TRANSLATOR: And I don't know the reason
16 why.

17 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

18 TRANSLATOR: No one has explained it to
19 me.

20 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: The service they provide to
22 all migrants is not nice.

23 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

24 TRANSLATOR: When I was pregnant and I
25 was about to give birth,--

2 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: a case worker told me that
4 once I had my baby--

5 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: we would be in better
7 conditions--

8 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: because they gave me an
10 apartment, a one-bedroom apartment.

11 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

12 TRANSLATOR: But in the end, it didn't
13 happen.

14 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

15 TRANSLATOR: My baby had been born 15
16 days prior--

17 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

18 TRANSLATOR: and I got a transfer that I-
19 - active transfer that I had to be evicted to a
20 hotel.

21 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

22 TRANSLATOR: Honestly, I fell into a
23 depression.

24 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

25 TRANSLATOR: I felt confused.

2 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: I have two children, one 10,
4 one 11 years old.

5 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: And emotionally they were
7 not doing well--

8 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: because of what I was going
10 through.

11 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

12 TRANSLATOR: And the baby takes-- a
13 bottle.

14 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

15 TRANSLATOR: I have the little ones, the
16 three little ones.

17 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

18 TRANSLATOR: So I cook for the little
19 ones and I always ask how am I going to handle this?
20 There's no kitchen in the hotel.

21 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

22 TRANSLATOR: What a mother most wants is
23 for her children to be well,--

24 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: and that they have something
3 to eat during the day, right?

4 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: So, the shelter--

6 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

7 TRANSLATOR: The shelter's manager told
8 me he didn't care if I went to the hotel or to the
9 street, but that I had to leave.

10 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

11 TRANSLATOR: For me, that's frustrating.

12 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: It's frustrating for me to
14 come from my country and know that I will be living
15 in practically the same situation I was in.

16 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: I think it's not fair--

18 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

19 TRANSLATOR: that migrants get treated
20 that way,--

21 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

22 TRANSLATOR: because we are all human
23 beings--

24 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

25 TRANSLATOR: and we have the same value.

2 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: I didn't leave.

4 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: So it's been very
6 challenging to face this challenge-- very hard to
7 face to this challenge.

8 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: It's not easy.

10 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

11 TRANSLATOR: Because in the moment that
12 they tell me that I have to leave to hotel without a
13 kitchen, all my children start crying.

14 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

15 TRANSLATOR: And my children tell me,
16 mom, if they throw us to the street, let's just go
17 back to Honduras.

18 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

19 TRANSLATOR: And that hurts.

20 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: That is why I ask to be
22 heard, me and the same people, the people who are
23 living the same situation as us.

24 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

25 TRANSLATOR: I know a case of neighbor.

2 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

3 TRANSLATOR: So, there's this neighbor
4 and I wish that U.S. authorities can clarify if the
5 way she was taken out of the shelter was even okay.

6 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

7 TRANSLATOR: She received a paper today.

8 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: The paper states that she
10 has to leave tomorrow--

11 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

12 TRANSLATOR: to a hotel.

13 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

14 TRANSLATOR: So, this notice, she
15 received the notice--

16 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: and it states that she has
18 to leave tomorrow and she said she couldn't because
19 she has a very young baby.

20 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: Then the moment arrived,
22 though.

23 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

24

25

2 TRANSLATOR: And so she started saying
3 she wouldn't leave, she wouldn't leave. She was
4 doing the similar to me.

5 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: So for her saying no, the
7 police arrived.

8 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: The manager was there as
10 well as the police--

11 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

12 TRANSLATOR: and the lady.

13 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

14 TRANSLATOR: They threatened her that if
15 she didn't leave she would be handcuffed.

16 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

17 TRANSLATOR: And that they would take
18 away her child.

19 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

20 TRANSLATOR: And I think it's not fair
21 this measure that they're implementing because any
22 mother will defend her children in any way she can.

23 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

24

25

2 TRANSLATOR: All of us who are mothers
3 know that our children are the people that we most
4 love in our life.

5 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: And I believe it's not the
7 right way in which they're removing everyone from the
8 shelter--

9 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: and to be treated in this
11 way,--

12 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: because the shelter is full
14 of racism.

15 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

16 TRANSLATOR: The people who work at the
17 shelters treat us as they want.

18 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

19 TRANSLATOR: They don't respect us.

20 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: They don't care if the
22 children are suffering emotionally.

23 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

24

25

2 TRANSLATOR: And so thousands of us
3 migrants are suffering like this and we just want to
4 be heard by you or the authorities.

5 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

6 TRANSLATOR: I'm still at the shelter
7 because I could not leave to the hotel with five
8 children.

9 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

10 TRANSLATOR: I try to be strong. I ask
11 God for wisdom in order to be able to manage--

12 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: something that's not easy.

14 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

15 TRANSLATOR: But I try to be strong for
16 my children.

17 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

18 TRANSLATOR: Because I am grateful to the
19 U.S. and I am grateful to God because I feel that my
20 children will be able to absorb all the opportunities
21 [inaudible]

22 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

23 TRANSLATOR: So I would love if you can
24 help us with this case.

25 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: If you can help us, because
3 what we're living gives us depression.

4 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: So, how can it be that a
6 family who's been here and is already captured and
7 located themselves trying to adapt here, all of a
8 sudden tells them you have to leave? It's like
9 having to start all over again.

10 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

11 TRANSLATOR: With children on top of it,
12 that makes it even harder.

13 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

14 TRANSLATOR: It's not easy.

15 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

16 TRANSLATOR: Thank you for listening to
17 me.

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

19 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

20 TRANSLATOR: Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

22 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

23 TRANSLATOR: I don't know. I'm a little
24 doubtful about the fact maybe there's preferences.

25 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: Because for my five children
3 I'm their mother and father.

4 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: And the neighbor who's next
6 to me had one baby, and automatically she was moved
7 to another floor.

8 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: And me, who has five
10 children, they don't want to move me to another
11 floor. What they want is to remove me.

12 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: It's not fair that some get
14 treated well. Some don't get treated well.

15 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

16 TRANSLATOR: I feel it's racist.

17 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

18 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

20 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: No, not really.

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So, the question I'm
23 asking is, as a resident of that shelter, is she
24 aware of, you know, the process for filing a
25 grievance or how to obtain access to an attorney that

2 can help through the process, help advocate for her,
3 and her response is that she does not know how to do
4 either. She has absolutely no information on either.

5 [speaking Spanish]

6 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

8 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

9 TRANSLATOR: I went to the Path like
10 three times.

11 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

12 TRANSLATOR: Because I felt I couldn't
13 bear the situation any longer.

14 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

15 TRANSLATOR: It affected me mentally. I'm
16 always afraid [sic].

17 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

18 TRANSLATOR: I want to be the best mother
19 to my children, but this situation is not letting me.

20 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

21 TRANSLATOR: So believe me that it hurts
22 me the way that they're removing people from the
23 shelters now.

24 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: I don't think it's the best
3 way.

4 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: And especially in terms of
6 respect for the children.

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish] I
8 wanted to say thank you for coming here. I was
9 expressing that Council Member Hanif is actually a
10 Council Member that represents this specific shelter,
11 and that we will take the-- her information to ensure
12 that we can advocate for her, and if she has the
13 information for the other tenant that was removed
14 that we can do the same for her. And just thanking
15 her for coming to testify because her experience is
16 not just hers, it's also the experience of many
17 migrants. And so-- who may not have the support that
18 they need to come here today and really put a face to
19 this crisis. So I wanted to thank her, because I can
20 understand that this is not easy. [speaking Spanish]

21 MARIA FLORES: Si.

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

23 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

24 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [speaking Spanish]

25 MARIA FLORES: [speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: Thank you for giving me--

3 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [interposing]

4 [speaking Spanish] God bless you.

5 MARIA FLORES: Gracias.

6 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah.

7 TRANSLATOR: Thank you so much.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes, thank you so much.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: And Council Member
10 Hanif just wants to--

11 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: Thank you, Maria for
12 testifying and coming to the Council's Chambers to
13 candidly, courageously, and honestly share what your
14 experience has been like, and from the duration of
15 this hearing, what I was trying to really demonstrate
16 is the opaqueness and the lack of transparency around
17 directives like the 60-day rule which is beginning to
18 get implemented, but we are already seeing
19 displacement of families. And so right now what
20 you've just shared brings to question why asylum-
21 seeker families are being directed to the Path, and
22 that was one of the questions we raised, if for when
23 the 60-day removal is being enforced, if those folks
24 would have to go to the Roosevelt intake center or
25 the Path intake center. And so there was some

2 confusion there. Though the Administration told us
3 that they would not be required to go to the Path,
4 they would be told to go to the Roosevelt intake
5 center. And so right now with what you shared,
6 there's some confusion. For me to just get a better
7 understanding, and I definitely want you to be in
8 touch with our Constituent Services Director, and I
9 see the Gowanus Mutual Aid folks here as well. And
10 as the Council Member who has received-- whose direct
11 communication with our friend at the Gowanus Mutual
12 Aid, many times I directly go to the Commissioner
13 Molly Park to understand the specific case by case
14 conditions, and even then there are tremendous amount
15 of delays on receiving responses as to what is going
16 on. And we have a relationship with the provider of
17 that shelter and want to really investigate as to
18 what is going on and ensure the best possible outcome
19 for you and your five children. But thank you so
20 much for joining us today, and really this is not
21 just being heard by us, but it's going out to the New
22 York City public. And so we want you to know that
23 you are heard and you can continue to come before us
24 to share how you are living in New York City. Thank
25 you.

2 MARIA FLORES: Gracias.

3 TRANSLATOR: Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Our next panel will
5 be a virtual panel. Once your name is called a
6 member of our staff will unmute you, and you may
7 begin your testimony once the Sergeant at Arms sets
8 the clock and gives you the cue. All testimony is
9 limited to three minutes. Remember that there is a
10 few second delay when you are unmuted before we can
11 hear you. The next panel will consist Dara Bibb,
12 followed by Bennett Reinhardt, then Diane Enobabor
13 and then Sergio Uzurin.

14 DARA BIBB: Hello? Can everyone hear me?

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes, you may begin.

16 DARA BIBB: Okay. Thank you Chairperson
17 Hanif and Ayala and the Members of the Committee on
18 Immigration and on General Welfare for the
19 opportunity to testify today. My name is Dara Bibb
20 and I'm the Director of Hotel Housing Operations for
21 Housing Works, responsible for overseeing the hotels
22 we operate to provide emergency and transitional
23 housing for New Yorkers experiencing homelessness,
24 including criminal justice-impacted individuals and
25 asylum-seeking families. Housing Works is a healing

2 community founded in 1990 with the mission to end the
3 dual crisis of homelessness and AIDS, and we
4 continually provide a range of integrated medical
5 behavioral health housing and support services for
6 over 15,000 low-income New Yorkers annually with a
7 focus on the most marginalized and underserved. We
8 are relieved that the asylum-seeking families we
9 serve are not impacted by Mayor Adams' proposed 60-
10 day shelter limit for adult migrants. As you know,
11 our New York State Constitution reflected in over 40
12 years of court orders and Local Law requires that our
13 city and state provide shelter services to all single
14 adults in need. Housing Works is confident that the
15 Adams' Administration deeply troubling attempts to
16 modify the right to shelter legal protections will
17 fail. But we are saddened that these efforts to
18 undue or undermine the fundamental right to shelter
19 to seek, pit new New Yorkers against other residents
20 experiencing homelessness. I am proud to have spent
21 my career involved in New York City's homeless
22 response, managing since 2003 in homeless services as
23 a case manager, a shelter director, and now a
24 managing director of hotel services operated by
25 Housing Works. Our hotel for asylum-seeking family

2 currently houses 340 individuals, including 164
3 children. I can tell you that each household we serve
4 are eager to work, to contribute to the life of New
5 York City while bettering their lives. They have the
6 same hopes and dreams as every group of immigrants
7 that have come to our city and have made it in this
8 rich and diverse place that we love. Indeed the
9 asylum-seekers I've met have a deep culture of
10 working and are eager to gain employment. It is also
11 true, however, that every group of new immigrants
12 that are dealing with legal, language, and cultural
13 challenges. Housing Works believes that as a city we
14 have not only a legal and moral obligation to provide
15 safe shelter for new arrivals, but also the means to
16 address our homeless crisis. In conclusion, Housing
17 Works calls on the Council and the Administration to
18 be bold when it comes to addressing New York City
19 unprecedented crisis of homelessness that drives poor
20 individuals and public health outcomes among New York
21 City's most vulnerable residents. We welcome the
22 Council's oversight of the City's homeless response
23 and call for an increased emphasis on peer and
24 community health workers, a focus on cultural on
25 competency and service delivery, and implementation

2 and rigorous evaluation of new approaches to the
3 crisis of homelessness that drives poor individual
4 and public health outcomes among New York City's most
5 marginalized residents. Thank you for your time and
6 having me speak and testify today. Thank you.

7 BENNETT REINHARDT: Good afternoon. My
8 name is Bennett Reinhardt and I serve as Advocacy
9 Coordinator and Youth Organizer at the Open Hearts
10 Initiative. We're a grassroots organization of
11 neighbors advocating for housing justice in their own
12 back yards, and we have chapters across the City.
13 for the last year and a half, we've been working to
14 welcome our newest neighbors how have the same rights
15 and many of the same needs as long-time New Yorkers
16 experiencing homelessness. The shift in the City's
17 response to our new neighbors over the last several
18 weeks has indeed been troubling in failing to provide
19 immediate shelter for up to, you know, almost 200
20 neighbors for several days at the Roosevelt Hotel in
21 late July and early August. We saw the largest
22 violation of the city's right to shelter mandate in
23 recent memory. While the City claims that, you know,
24 seeking to make changes to the right to shelter, this
25 is we believe a violation to the right to shelter.

2 But that is only until past the expiration of adult
3 asylum-seekers 60-day notice periods when we could
4 see hundreds of thousands more people sleeping on the
5 streets. These notices are harmful measures that
6 could displace our newest neighbors from their
7 community ties, which they've been working hard to
8 establish, and which community organizations have
9 built, while moving them no closer to housing
10 stability and possibly exposing them to tactics like
11 sweeps that have long been executed against our
12 homeless neighbors. Intensified case management
13 cannot manage this, reduced Immigration Court
14 backlogs, work authorization, or access to rental
15 subsidies, and without these people have just as much
16 trouble after 60 days getting into alternative
17 housing as they currently do. While we join calls to
18 the State and Federal Government to provide the
19 additional financial and logistical support to the
20 City, the City cannot at this moment stop meeting
21 people's basic needs. There is much it can do
22 increase shelter capacities, such as [inaudible]
23 expansions to the CityFEPS vouchers that this council
24 passed last month, increasing capacity at the city
25 agencies for processing and renewing CityFEPS

2 vouchers and increasing case management within HERRCs
3 and respite centers without these punitive notices.
4 These notices aren't necessary to provide to people
5 increased case management. Welcoming asylum-seekers
6 also means standing up for them as neighbors when
7 they come to our own backyards which is why we
8 condemn the protests that have been led including by
9 members of this body, including the Council Members,
10 over the last several weeks when the City has
11 announced temporary shelters in and near their
12 districts. Our hundreds of members are ready and will
13 continue to welcome new neighbors in their own
14 backyards, and that's what I hope everyone on the
15 Council and everyone in our neighborhoods will do.
16 Thanks again for your attention to my testimony, and
17 please we urge the Council to do everything possible
18 to stop the 60-day notices. Thank you.

19 DIANE ENOBABOR: Hello everyone. Thank
20 you so much--

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Starting
22 time.

23 DIANE ENOBABOR: for this time today,
24 Representative Ayala, Representative Hanif. Thank
25 you so much for opening this space. I'm Diane. I am

2 a lead organizer with BAMSA, the Black and Arab
3 Migrant Solidarity Alliance. On Thursday, June 29th,
4 2023, about 500 asylum-seekers were suddenly placed
5 in the night into two shelters without running water,
6 shower facilities, toilets, sinks, and basic
7 necessities at Stockton Respite Center. Migrants
8 were giving prison style cots with no bedding or
9 pillows. Myself, a BAMSA organizer and Black Migrant
10 Justice Advocate, and friend of Bushwick City Farms,
11 and lead organizer for the Black Alliance for Just
12 Immigration Melissa Johnson were contacted by
13 Bushwick City Farms in Bushwick, Brooklyn to witness
14 the conditions of the new migrants of African and
15 Arab descent and what they were enduring at the
16 Stockton Respite Center. While there, we noticed
17 that the migrants were not able to shower as I said,
18 had no access to legal representation, translation
19 services, appropriate dietary food and items needed
20 for essential hygiene, and transportation around the
21 City. As an organization, we at BAMSA call on City
22 elected officials and the general community at-large
23 to come to the aid of the asylum-seekers who are
24 stalled [sic] at respite centers. We demand a
25 livable shelter, functioning AC, running water on all

2 floors of the shelter, electricity, bathroom and
3 shower access, cooking access, privacy, and safety,
4 and Wi-Fi. We demand for Bushwick City Farms to be
5 financially alleviated of the negligence of the State
6 to care for new community members. Furthermore, we
7 are organized as a collective to address the
8 specificities of anti-Black and anti-Arab prejudices
9 this community has been vulnerable to while
10 navigating their new home here in New York. We
11 demand for city-employed social workers and
12 culturally appropriate nonprofits to be assigned to
13 respite centers like these to assist with migrant
14 integration. We also call for language justice at
15 these spaces as public services and temporary housing
16 facilities we've noticed have failed to include
17 French and Arabic interpreters and translators. Our
18 brothers come from Mauritania, Senegal, Tunisia,
19 Angola, Morocco, amongst so many other countries in
20 West Africa and Northern Africa, and now we also have
21 met brothers from Sudan, so East Africa. And
22 they're looking to communicate their needs with home
23 folks in Gola, Fulani, Arabic, French, Portuguese,
24 and Spanish. So far, they've described their needs
25 beyond access to basic hygiene to also include SIM

2 cards, bedding and sheets, internet access,
3 backpacks, slippers, religious maps, legal
4 representation, Halal food, and opportunities for
5 employment as they're ready to transition out of
6 these respite centers and be working members toward
7 building our New York--

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Time is
9 expired.

10 DIANE ENOBABOR: into the best city of the
11 world. However, they are a stuck in a liminal status
12 are they are unable to even acquire asylum-seeking
13 granted New York IDs because they do not have
14 residency access as the respite centers. Our
15 infrastructures to support to them within these
16 limits are fraught as community members and mutual
17 aid workers and should not be in the hands of regular
18 community members anyway when there are organizations
19 and the government able to assist with these issues.
20 We have followed up with the Public Advocate's office
21 also to no avail on this issue. We advocate for
22 their right to access all of the resources available
23 to asylum-seekers, irrespective of where they come
24 from or what language they speak. To be clear,
25 respite centers do not provide the necessary status

2 for asylum-seekers to be successful in applying and
3 acquiring New York IDs. We are here today to request
4 the Mayor's Office to reconsider and actually not do
5 the 60-day notice. Currently, this system is not
6 sustainable. We understand and are thankful for the
7 rapid response of workers on the ground, mutual aid,
8 nonprofit workers as well that have been attempting
9 to provide a semblance of an infrastructure to
10 processing asylum-seekers. However, we are almost
11 two months at the Stockton site. That's almost 60
12 days, and they have not received the same attention
13 as folks that have gone into HERRC shelter sites.
14 Their mobility will not be ensured as those that have
15 had that access. They need IDs. They need Medicaid.
16 They need access to public goods just as everyone
17 has, regardless of their working status. That way,
18 they'll be able to succeed. So, instead, we call on
19 the Mayor's Office to set a 60-day timeline or
20 challenge for migrant inclusion. We challenged the
21 Mayor's Office to make sure every asylum-seeker has
22 what they need to be able to work and live in New
23 York and even outside of New York. This looks like
24 first making sure they have accessibility to New York
25 ID, medical services including insurance and livable

2 shelter, including FEPs access, and of course,
3 opportunities for employment. Thank you.

4 SERGIO UZURIN: Yes. I know. I know.
5 Hello? Can you hear me?

6 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: We can.

7 SERGIO UZURIN: Can everybody hear me
8 okay? [inaudible]

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: We can hear you. We
10 can hear you.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: We can hear you, sir.

12 SERGIO UZURIN: Okay, listen. I'm
13 actually at Bushwick City Farms right now. Great.
14 I'm at Bushwick City Farms right now in the pouring
15 rain. I'm actually with a lot of the migrants right
16 now. They're holding up a piece of cardboard to keep
17 us dry in the rain. They're actually hanging out here
18 across from the HERRC at Stockton because they are
19 not allowed to cook their own food. They're abused
20 by the staff. There's no place for personal
21 belongings. This is where the Mutual Aid-- this is
22 where they hang out and cook food and get community
23 and access to services all day. And so the Mutual
24 Aid Collective has been doing this work since August
25 without any reimbursement from the City. I want to

2 point out-- can y'all hear me okay? Let me know if
3 you can hear me?

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: We can hear you.

5 SERGIO UZURIN: Good. The Commissioners
6 earlier at this hearing lied to you about helping the
7 migrants get IDs. These HERRCs, I know Hall Street
8 and JFK for sure, possibly this one at Stockton, do
9 not actually give out residencies. So the migrants
10 can't use the address of the shelter to get ID. And
11 we actually know at least two migrants who have
12 either a son or a brother who's a teenager in custody
13 in other states, who those states won't release
14 custody of their kids to them because they do not
15 have an address at the shelter. And we all know that
16 if the families were reunited, they would be
17 prioritized for placement by New York City. So the
18 City is actually complicit in separating families as
19 much as Trump or Abbott ever have. These men have
20 gotten their 60-day notices. The system is
21 completely messed up. We're about to see a total
22 amount of people lined up at the Roosevelt. We, you
23 know, we've spoken about the situation before. We
24 need to get FEPS vouchers in the hands of these
25 migrants. We also need to stop having the NYPD

2 confiscate mopeds from migrants, because every time
3 that happens, a migrant that has been saving up rent
4 and apartment has to spend that money on a moped.

5 And I want to call out Gale Brewer specifically,

6 because Mr. Germanada [sp?] had mentioned in the

7 newspaper today or yesterday that they set up sweeps

8 by the NYPD. So, right now what we're seeing at

9 these places is warehousing of human beings and

10 police zones, and Mutual Aid volunteers from the City

11 are actually helping the migrants for free, while

12 being criminalized by the NYPD. So we need to be

13 able to walk these migrants as well as every New

14 Yorker through the process of signing up for city

15 services, whether it's NYCIP or FEPs or food stamps,

16 whatever it takes to get these guys on their feet.

17 Right, and the Commissioners are lying about the work

18 they do. We need to take over the luxury housing

19 stock of this town to house every New Yorker, migrant

20 or not. I'm done.

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. Thank you

22 so much for testifying today. this information

23 obviously is really helpful to us and allows us to

24 better not only navigate our com-- you know, the

25 system and our conversations with the Administration,

2 but also gives us a little bit of insight into the
3 experiences of those that are actually going through
4 this. So thank you so much.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Our next panel will
6 be an in-person panel. It will consist of Eric Lee,
7 Deborah Berkman, Dash Yeatts-Lonske, and Catherine
8 Gonzalez.

9 DASH YEATTS-LONSKKE: Good afternoon
10 Deputy Speaker Ayala, Chair Hanif, and members of the
11 Committees. My name is Dash Yeatts-Lonske and I'm an
12 Advocacy Associate at Urban Pathways, a nonprofit
13 homeless service and supportive housing provider
14 serving over 2,000 single adults annually. Thank you
15 for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing.
16 The City shelter system is currently facing a crisis
17 with the influx of asylum-seekers stretching it to
18 maximum capacity. Urban Pathways supports calls by
19 the Administration and members of the City Council
20 for the Federal and the State governments to provide
21 more resources to address the situation. With that
22 said, the City must also do everything in its power
23 to alleviate pressure on the shelter system by
24 getting current shelter residents into permanent
25 housing, and preventing more New Yorkers from needing

2 to enter shelter in the first place. Last month, the
3 City Council passed a historic bill passage that will
4 promote the efficacy of the CityFEPs voucher program.
5 These critical changes will make CityFEPs more usable
6 to obtain permanent housing for people currently
7 experiencing homelessness and prevent households from
8 losing their housing in the first place, ultimately
9 alleviating pressure on the shelter system. We urge
10 the Administration to implement these bills as
11 quickly as possible before the 180-day deadline. The
12 Administration's proposal to require single adults to
13 reapply for shelter after 60 days required more
14 clarity, some of which was provided by this hearing.
15 So thank you. We strongly oppose any reapplication
16 process that forces individuals to leave their
17 shelter or HERRC while reapplying. Many are denied
18 city shelter when they first apply which raises
19 concern. Denying shelter and forcing individuals to
20 leave while they apply will not solve any of the
21 challenges that the City currently faces. It will
22 create a cycle of individuals moving between the
23 shelter and the street, causing greater instability.
24 We also have concerns over the prospect of using DSS
25 staff time to process these shelter applications for

2 asylum-seekers after the 60 days. With DSS extremely
3 understaffed, it seems that reviewing shelter
4 applications for individuals who are already in the
5 system would not be the best use of staff time.

6 Instead, DHS and HRA should be redeploying and hiring
7 more staff to process CityFEPS applications and to
8 make supportive housing placements to move shelter
9 residents into permanent housing as quickly as

10 possible. As the City leans heavily on human service
11 providers to aid in this crisis, it is notable that
12 in the Fiscal Year 24 City budget, 2.5 percent cuts
13 were imposed on DSS service provider contracts

14 including shelters, safe havens, and drop-in centers.
15 While nonprofit providers are struggling to maintain
16 staffing, the 40 million dollar human services
17 workforce investment in the budget equates to an

18 increase of less than two percent for our workforce
19 which is inadequate. If the City needs nonprofit
20 human service providers to increase services, they
21 must adequately fund them and compensate the

22 workforce fairly. Thank you for the opportunity to
23 testify today. We look forward to working with the
24 City Council to best serve our neighbors experiencing
25 homelessness.

2 CATHERINE GONZALEZ: Good afternoon. My
3 name is Catherine Gonzalez. I am a Policy Counsel
4 and Supervising Attorney in the Padilla Unit of the
5 Criminal Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender
6 Services. I thank the City Council Committees on
7 Immigration and General Welfare Chair Ayala and Hanif
8 for the opportunity to testify today. We are also
9 grateful to the Council for your commitment to all
10 immigrant New Yorkers including for your continued
11 support in funding of the NYFUP program, so thank
12 you. Everyone needs shelter, that's part of the
13 conversation today, and the City's priority must be
14 keeping people off the street and stably housed. We
15 can't have a two-tiered shelter system in New York
16 City which is what we have right now. At BDS we are
17 concerned about the impact that this rule is going to
18 have for adult migrants and how this decision is
19 risking pushing a group of very vulnerable people
20 further into the margins of society. Newly-arriving
21 immigrant New Yorkers are living in highly-policed
22 and surveilled situations. Our clients are reporting
23 that ACS and NYPD are present at the shelters every
24 day. Criminal legal system involvement, as we all
25 know, have devastating consequences for non-citizens,

2 especially for asylum-seekers and can lead to
3 deportation, forcing migrants back to the very places
4 that they're seeking sanctuary from here in New York
5 City. Regardless of the reason for the
6 implementation of this rule, we know that it will
7 lead to additional hurdles and burdens to migrants to
8 overcome. To have to reapply for shelter both
9 increased street homelessness and increased risk of
10 incidents with law enforcement and ACS. The City
11 should explore common sense solutions to maximize
12 shelter capacity and make meaningful process on
13 moving people out of shelter and into permanent
14 affordable housing. Freeing up space through
15 successful placements will always be preferable to
16 discharging migrants into the streets. This moment
17 represents an opportunity for the City to safeguard--
18 for New York City to be a safeguard for immigrants,
19 to be a place where we have tools, where giving
20 migrants tools and the ability to survive. A
21 holistic and community-wide coordinated approach to
22 delivering services, housing and programs is needed.
23 Addressing these issues needs to include not just
24 affordable housing initiatives but also full legal
25 representation. Addressing these issues needs to

2 include not just affordable housing initiatives, but
3 also full legal representation on immigration cases,
4 language and job training programs, mental health
5 services, and community networks to help newly-
6 arrived asylum-seekers rebuild their lives and
7 contribute positively to this new community that
8 they're becoming a part of. Thank you so much for
9 the opportunity to testify today.

10 DEBORAH BERKMAN: Deputy Speaker Ayala,
11 Chair Hanif, Council Members, staff, good afternoon.
12 Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak. My
13 name is Deborah Berkman. I'm the founder and the
14 Supervising Attorney of the Shelter Advocacy
15 Initiative at NYLAG, and I've worked extensively with
16 the recently-arrived immigrants and offer this
17 testimony based on my experience. The Mayor's
18 policies relating to recent immigrants in shelter are
19 blatantly discriminatory. New York City is a self-
20 proclaimed Sanctuary City, but ever since immigrants
21 began to arrive in greater numbers in the spring of
22 2022, they've been afforded fewer rights and services
23 than non-recent immigrants and arrivals from other
24 states. Despite the fact that shelter in New York
25 City is legally-mandated to be provided to every

2 person regardless of immigration status, the City has
3 been consistently failing to provide or providing
4 substandard shelter to recent arrivals. New York
5 City has created a new shelter system that recent
6 immigrants that are being funneled into that does not
7 comply with the minimum shelter guidelines mandated
8 in New York City, does not offer the protections and
9 services of DHS shelter, and does not provide its
10 residents with assistance transitioning to permanent
11 housing. These so-called shelters are open in tents,
12 in a cruise terminal, at school gymnasiums, inside an
13 airport, and in other places that can't provide for
14 the basic needs of the residents. These shelters
15 fail to provide residents with adequate food,
16 showers, or areas to bathe, access to medical care or
17 case management. Also, and very troublingly,
18 residents of these non-DHS shelters are not eligible
19 for the housing subsidies that allow people
20 experiencing homelessness to transition into
21 permanent housing, which they may be eligible for if
22 they resided in a DHS shelter, and which is often the
23 primary way for many shelter residents to obtain
24 permanent housing. Initially, New York City took the
25 position that any person can present at intake for

2 DHS shelter at any time if they wanted access to the
3 benefits and services that DHS provides. However,
4 recently, the City has enacted a policy that all
5 recent immigrants and asylum-seekers must present for
6 intake at the arrival center in Roosevelt Hotel in
7 Manhattan, and are not permitted to present for
8 intake at DHS intake sites. Not only are recent
9 immigrants not permitted to present at DHS intake,
10 the arrival center is not able to physically
11 accommodate the number of individuals trying to
12 apply. Thus, recently immigrant shelter applicants
13 had to sleep outside on the sidewalk which we've
14 spoken about much today while waiting in line. Now
15 the City is taking the position that recent
16 immigrants can only stay in shelter for 60 days,
17 while all other people who need shelter can stay for
18 an unlimited amount of time. It appears that the
19 City's taken the position that the rights to shelter
20 does not extend to newly-arrived immigrants.
21 Recently-arrived immigrants are not a legally
22 distinct group and they're not set apart from other
23 migrants or shelter residents due to the immigration
24 status, manner of entry into the United States, or
25 posture of their immigration cases. The Callahan and

2 Boston settlements do not exclude recently-arrived
3 immigrants and the right to shelter extends to all
4 New York City. There's no basis for this disparate
5 treatment. Any curtailment on the right to shelter
6 for recent immigrants is nothing less than blatant
7 discrimination. All people experiencing homelessness
8 in our city are equally deserving of shelter, and as
9 a Sanctuary City, it is our duty to protect
10 immigrants who seek refuge in our city and not turn
11 them out on the street. We thank you for the work
12 you've done.

13 ERIC LEE: Okay, good afternoon. My name
14 is Eric Lee. I'm Director of Policy and Planning for
15 Homeless Services United. Thank you Deputy Speaker
16 Ayala, Chair Hanif, members of the committee and
17 council for holding this shearing today and allowing
18 me to testify. The right to shelter must be upheld
19 in New York City. The City must not allow the
20 humanitarian crisis which we witnessed on the
21 sidewalks in front of the Roosevelt Hotel a couple
22 weeks ago to happen ever again. The 60-day time
23 limit for single adults in HERRCs and DHS' refusal to
24 allow asylum-seekers into DHS shelters without
25 referrals from the HERRCs is unjust. And the 60-day

2 time limit will result in unnecessary destabilization
3 and churning of single adults experiencing
4 homelessness resulting in harm. We know that every
5 forced exit from shelter will be another chance for
6 someone to spiral down and either end up on the
7 streets, hospitalized, or possibly worse. Deputy
8 Speaker Ayala, you raised a very important point
9 which I'm not sure that the Administration answered
10 well in terms of the reasoning behind the 60-day
11 limit. Why are they sending notices to 533 single
12 adult men in a single adult facility at the Jefferson
13 to tell them that they have to leave if there's no
14 plans to actually convert that into some usable space
15 for families? The only thing I could think of is a
16 capacity crunch and possibly not wanting them to come
17 back, and hoping to their point that they find
18 somewhere else to go. The City understandingly needs
19 additional resources from the State and Federal
20 Governments to cope with the demand for shelter, but
21 there are several actions that the City as well as
22 the State can take to remedy the crisis and ensure
23 sufficient shelter capacity for everyone who needs
24 it. This includes prioritizing filling vacancies to
25 expand capacity at HRA for access to public benefits,

2 rental assistance, one-shot deals, because this is
3 really the first bottleneck for anyone trying to
4 apply for rental assistance is usually going to an
5 HRA center for any of those issues. They need to
6 expand funding for eviction prevention resources and
7 legal service providers to help tenants avoid
8 eviction and those that are also unable to pay their
9 rent, because every eviction that we fail to prevent
10 represents another household at risk of entering the
11 shelter system. Likewise, we also need the City to
12 act quickly to implement the laws that you all passed
13 and stood strong against the Mayor to improve
14 CityFEPS. And we need the additional staffing to be
15 able to do that on both the City side, as well as the
16 nonprofit side once the expanded eligibility kicks
17 in. We want to advocate for capital investments for
18 State and Federal Government funding to be able to
19 address the NYCHA repairs backlog. I believe Council
20 Member Restler mentioned the 6,000 vacant units that
21 are sitting there that have taken on average over a
22 year to repair. If we can get those on line, that
23 can help. We should also continue to improve
24 supportive housing referral placements and process to
25 get people out of shelter more quickly. There's

2 currently still 2,000 vacant units of supportive
3 housing. Some providers have had some very
4 innovative ways to get people placed more quickly and
5 we'd love to see more of that from collaboration with
6 DHS and HRA. And finally, we have a couple of
7 recommendations for the City's proposal to the state
8 in response to Justice Edwards ask of the City there.
9 Including-- we recommend that the State remove the
10 arbitrary shelter cap so that the City receive a
11 proportionate amount of funding from the State to
12 cover the actual cost of adult shelter that could
13 free up additional funds then for DHS to use for
14 other parts. We recommend that they enhance
15 staffing at DHS asylum sites as well as H+H shelters
16 or HERRCs to have the same level of staffing as DHS
17 shelters, given the many points that were just raised
18 by Deborah Berkman. The services that are needed,
19 by people in these sites, there should minimally be
20 an equal standard of services across all these
21 shelter systems including housing specialists, 25 to
22 one caseload ratios for case managers, employment
23 specialists, and on. We also ask the City to restore
24 the 2.5 percent PEG or budget cut across the board to
25 all DHS personnel lines for city-contracted

2 nonprofits, because this is undercutting our ability
3 to be able to get more people into housing. We urge
4 the Governor to invoke New York Executive Law 29A to
5 shut down the-- as I believe her words were bigoted
6 policies based on fear and intimidation that
7 localities were passing to try to prevent asylum-
8 seekers from being relocated to their communities.
9 And we would like to see a state-coordinated way to
10 help resettle asylum-seekers throughout different
11 facilities across the state that are working in
12 tandem with the City, because we know the City can't
13 do it alone and we want to really get everyone
14 together to be able to show what New York can and
15 should be doing. Thank you for the opportunity.

16 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: You guys are so
17 great. Thank you so much for coming here and
18 testifying today. I really applaud all of the work,
19 and thank you for the partnership, because obviously,
20 you know, we need it. I have a question regarding
21 the-- on the NYPD part of this. So, does anyone know
22 why-- at what point the NYPD became security?

23 CATHERINE GONZALEZ: I don't know the
24 answer to that question, but I will say that-- one of
25 the questions that we have is like is the staff not

2 trained on like conflict management, right? I think
3 especially like in the congregate housing sort of
4 setting. Like, it's evident that sort of things can-
5 - issues and conflicts can arise. What we're hearing
6 from our clients-- so we provide direct
7 representation to people who are facing ACS cases in
8 Family Court or are coming into the Criminal Court
9 system is that the staff is calling NYPD constantly,
10 to the point where there's just a constant presence
11 of police there. I don't know if it's the sense of
12 security or just like as an automatic response to
13 manage conflict that comes up the shelters.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: That's helpful.

15 That's really helpful. I think I feel like I had
16 another question, but okay. We're going to get to
17 the bottom of this. I know that there's a pending
18 lawsuit, so hopefully we'll get some resolution to
19 all of this, but in the meantime, you know, I really
20 appreciate all of the efforts to really help us get
21 to the root cause of this, and you-- when you were
22 mentioning, you know, Governor Hochul, I was like,
23 that sounds kind of like a policy that we've
24 implemented recently. You know, these-- these are
25 tactics, right, that gov-- that we're using

2 unfortunately to discourage folks from coming to New
3 York City, and it's heart-breaking, and if that's
4 what it is-- and that's what it is and that's what I
5 think it is, that's my opinion and I'm entitled to
6 it, feel like we should just say, you know, say that
7 out loud right? Say what it is that we intend to do,
8 but thank you. I don't know if you have any--

9 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: [interposing] Yeah, I
10 agree with the Deputy Speaker. It's very important
11 to have you all really affirm that the 60-day
12 directive is really one of the ways in which this
13 Administration is showing up-- is showing its
14 xenophobia and really creating divisiveness between
15 unhoused folks or among refugees who may have arrived
16 a certain number of decades ago versus now, and so we
17 need your continued partnership and I want to extend
18 that gratitude. And on the police or the security
19 front, that was what I had witnessed at the Roosevelt
20 Hotel when I visited last week, that there were
21 security present from a company called Mulligan, and
22 there were NYPD officers. so we have not received
23 any confirmation as to how much money is being spent
24 towards these security personnel, but it seems like
25 each of the facilities are very well and over-

2 equipped with security detail, both from this outside
3 contract and the Police Department. And so we--
4 we'll have a future hearing, given as you've heard
5 today, we don't receive a sort of details or
6 briefings in advance to really understand the cost
7 by-- disaggregated cost of this particular issue, and
8 so it is imperative that we know how many millions of
9 dollars being spent in going to the PD or other
10 security for asylum-seekers, and exactly what their
11 work entails outside of being the first call when
12 something arises, and why aren't the existing staff
13 equipped to de-escalate, or what are the issues
14 coming up that entail-- that require a call to the
15 Police Department? But thank you so much for your
16 testimonies and your continued partnership with the
17 Council, and being on the right side of history.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Our next panel will
19 be a virtual panel and it will consist of Melissa
20 Johnson followed by Rosa Cohen-Cruz, followed by
21 Ariadna Phillips, the Meryl Ranzer.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

23 MELISSA JOHNSON: Thank you to the
24 Committee on General Welfare and Committee on
25 Immigration, the committees, for holding this public

2 hearing to address the 60-day shelter limit-- shelter
3 stay limit for adult migrants. My name is Melissa
4 Johnson and I'm the New York Organizer for the Black
5 Alliance for Just Immigration, BAJI, B, A, J, I.

6 BAJI is a black national organizations headquartered
7 in Brooklyn New York with chapters across the US that
8 fights for the rights of black migrants and African-
9 American through organizing, legal advocacy,

10 research, policy, and narrative building to improve
11 the conditions of all black communities by advancing
12 racial justice and migrant rights. Mayor Eric Adams

13 60-day shelter limit-- shelter stay limit for adult
14 migrants will undoubtedly cause increased violence
15 and harm to already precarious, newly-arrived, black
16 migrant asylum-seekers. For the past few months,

17 BAJI has been working on the ground with BAMSA and
18 the Bushwick Community Farm in direct support of
19 hundreds of newly-arrived migrants at the Stockton

20 Street respite center located in District 36 in Bed-
21 Stuy, Brooklyn. Most of the black asylum-seekers
22 there, they're multilingual, do not speak English,

23 or-- do not speak or understand English. The African
24 migrants in particular have little access to legal
25 support or essential services because they mainly

2 speak African indigenous languages not spoken by most
3 providers here in the City such as Gola or Pular.

4 The black migrants at the Stockton Center do not have
5 an income or jobs and won't get work permits in 60

6 days. They can't even get NYC ID cards because the

7 Stockton respite center does not allow them to have a

8 residence address. They are already constant victims

9 of harassment and hostile anti-black and xenophobic

10 treatment by NYPD. Therefore, throwing these

11 vulnerable migrants onto the street via this new rule

12 and further-- will only further abandon them after

13 the 60-days order is initiated which is cruel and

14 inhumane. It is clear from our conversations with

15 black asylum-seekers at the Stockton Center and from

16 what we have witnessed firsthand from our experiences

17 on ground that the City needs to focus on improving

18 and strengthening the shelter systems in our

19 community rather than eroding and restricting them as

20 ordered by the Mayor. There are brave weaknesses in

21 the Mayor's existing asylum-seeker reception and

22 placement practice and policies that highlight the

23 urgent need to create meaningful and responsive

24 mechanisms to protect black migrant New Yorkers from

25 not only the Mayor's Administration abuses, but also

2 the abuses perpetrated by the Office of Emergency
3 Management, OEM, and the NYPD. The Mayor's new rule
4 reflects intentional abandonment and anti-black and
5 xenophobic policy making--

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Time
7 expired.

8 MELISSA JOHNSON: with respect to the
9 right to shelter. Black communities in New York have
10 already long been divested of the benefits of the
11 City's social safety net while investment in police
12 continues to increase. We ask that you do everything
13 in your power to oppose the Mayor's new rule and
14 restore some humanity to the City's shelter policy.
15 Thank you for your time.

16 ROSA COHEN-CRUZ: Chairs Hanif and Ayala
17 and Committee Members, thank you for holding this
18 hearing today to address this critical issue. My name
19 is Rosa Cohen-Cruz and I'm the Director of
20 Immigration Policy for the Bronx Defenders. At the
21 outset, I just want to say we absolutely oppose the
22 60-day rule which flies in the face of our long-held
23 right to shelter. Moreover, displacing respite center
24 asylum-seekers onto the street creates new levels of
25 vulnerability to anti-immigrant and particularly

2 anti-black and police harassment, and at minimum the
3 harm of destabilization for a population that has
4 already experienced unspeakable traumas is horribly
5 cruel. We must find long-term stable housing for
6 existing shelter residents, including recent migrants
7 and in the meantime we must make sure our shelters
8 are safe, meet people's immediate and fundamental
9 housing needs, and most importantly do not themselves
10 become funneled into the detention and deportation
11 machine. You heard testimony already about the
12 police and the family policing system being
13 weaponized against recent migrants. As public
14 defenders, we are deeply concerned with the
15 intersection between the shelters, the respite
16 centers, and the risk of being unhoused to exposure
17 to policing. As a reminder, even an arrest can
18 jeopardize someone's asylum claim and land them in
19 ICE detention. Immigration Judges routinely deny
20 bond to people in ICE detention based on police
21 reports and arrests, even when cases have been
22 dismissed. Like the other immigration practices
23 embedded in public defender offices across New York
24 City, we have seen recent arrival clients who are
25 staying shelters have criminal cases following a call

2 from a shelter worker for a variety of perceived
3 grievances, often arising out of the tensions
4 inherent in congregate living. Many people in
5 shelters are afraid to leave their children for fear
6 that the shelter worker will call the cops, or ACS
7 will take their kids if they leave a child with the
8 babysitter. People are given quick notices to leave
9 the places that they have been living, and then the
10 police are called when they cannot, even as you heard
11 today, for reasons such as caring for a young baby.
12 Policing both through the family policing system and
13 the heavy presence by the NYPD around shelters and
14 respite centers creates real risk of landing in ICE
15 detention, again, even if cases are dismissed. I
16 also want to address one important concern raised by
17 Council Member Hanif and others which has been
18 repeated by other advocates about the need to find
19 stability through the NYCID Act. These respite
20 centers, as you have heard, do not enable asylum-
21 seekers to get letters of residence, and so they are
22 not allowed to apply for NYC ID cards. They're
23 disqualified for applying for them, for applying for
24 public benefits, and that creates a real barrier to
25 moving forward and finding stability. Lastly, I want

2 to note that the heavy police presence and the lack
3 of access to the respite centers along with the
4 conditions inside are looking more and more like de
5 facto detention centers. Respite centers that are
6 privately guarded and guarded by City and State law
7 enforcement that are-- which bar service providers
8 from entering, sometimes they're even being told they
9 would be arrested if they entered, are opaque and are
10 creating conditions that really do look like
11 detention. We can't let this happen. We can't let
12 these respite centers create new mechanisms to detain
13 people, and we need stable long-term--

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Time
15 expired.

16 ROSA COHEN-CRUZ: housing [inaudible]
17 separate from the heavy policing forces that people
18 are currently experiencing. Thank you.

19 ARIADNA PHILLIPS: Good afternoon. My
20 name is Ariadna Phillips. I'm the Founder of South
21 Bronx Mutual Aid, a member of the Wider of New York
22 City Mutual Aid Collective. Volunteers within the
23 New York City Mutual Aid community have been on the
24 ground for over a year every day supporting thousands
25 of arriving asylum-seekers. Regarding the testimony

2 that's been given today by numerous city agencies,
3 those of that are in fact on the ground supporting
4 asylum-seekers are here to fact-check what has been
5 testified to by city agencies. as several advocates
6 have already testified, numerous HERRC and respite
7 center operators such as the contractors at Hall
8 Street, JFK, Stockton, to name a few, are refusing to
9 give asylum-seekers any type of residency
10 documentation. We know that a residency letter is
11 required in order to get IDNYC which is then the
12 gateway to many other services, as well as
13 opportunities to work and of course, move out of
14 these systems. It seems incomprehensible how these
15 operators could be facilitating case management that
16 include IDNYC access of they are in fact refusing to
17 give any type of documentation that's a prerequisite
18 for that. This refusal, it was already mentioned,
19 has prolonged family separations because without
20 proof of residency, family members that are in
21 systems like HERRCs and respite centers that have
22 been separated cannot be reunited with family being
23 held in immigrant detention facilities. It only
24 further exasperates the type of family situations as
25 well as the instability of those simply wishing to

2 move out, seek an apartment, provide for themselves
3 and their families. A second concern, staffers from
4 DocGo and Medrite have been widely documented as
5 being abusive, both by advocates and by the residents
6 of these sites. They're now several reported cases
7 referred to legal services relating to the assault of
8 asylum-seekers by DocGo and Medrite employees at
9 multiple sites, primarily those that have been
10 housing single men. A number of these contractors
11 have bragged about being prison guards, referring to
12 asylum-seekers as animals, using racial epithets,
13 saying to those that are supposed to be residents
14 that they aren't worthy of any service including
15 shelter. So again, it's disingenuous for the
16 agencies to paint these contractors as effectuating
17 any type of case management. You know, these sites
18 have lacked bathroom access. They've lacked shower
19 facilities. In some cases for weeks. So I'm not
20 sure how that constitutes case management. A third
21 issue: We've witnessed families with young children
22 be turned away at the Roosevelt Hotel, including
23 those that were in urgent need of medical care. So
24 families, in fact, have been left on the street in
25 New York City including those with the babies at the

2 steps of the Roosevelt Hotel or upon removal from
3 their existing shelter sites. We've documented these
4 cases to Legal Aid and other legal representatives,
5 as they've been far more frequent than what was
6 admitted to here by city agencies. We've supported
7 the escorts of these families as Roosevelt staff
8 turned them away for both shelter and medical
9 assistance. Once this was documented by local city
10 hospital social workers and flagged again to
11 Roosevelt staff, despite sending it back in writing
12 that these families would be allowed in for shelter,
13 once they were released from the hospital, they were
14 again denied entry. So it wasn't until groups like
15 Legal Aid have flagged these repeatedly for over a
16 day that some of these families were finally admitted
17 for entry.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 ARIADNA PHILLIPS: So it gives
20 appearance, again, without legal observers or further
21 oversight, that right to shelter is being repeatedly
22 violated at the city level, whether for single men,
23 women, couples, or families. Again, as been said,
24 we've seen families being left outside the Roosevelt
25 Hotel for up to seven days and refused assistance.

2 So we do ask again that City Council please provide
3 oversight and accessibility for the number of issues
4 that we are documenting in front of you. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

6 MERYL RANZER: Hi. My name is Meryl
7 Ranzer. I organize with the Mutual Aid Collective.
8 On the day the first buses arrived at Port Authority,
9 Mutual Aid showed up with fresh-cooked meals,
10 clothing and more. I was handing out food at a table
11 when Mayor Adams came and took one of the Mutual Aid
12 meals off of the table and gave it a migrant child
13 for a photo-op. This set the tone for how the Adams'
14 Administration has handled this crisis. It's about
15 optics and getting contracts to companies that
16 donated to both the Adams' and Trump campaigns.
17 Those of us who've been on the ground ere not
18 affiliated with any nonprofit or corporation have
19 witnessed the level of humanity that doesn't justify
20 our title as a Sanctuary City. The patchwork of
21 make-shift shelters known as HERRCs and respite
22 centers have proven to be horrible places to house
23 human beings. In some cases, no showers and very few
24 bathrooms for hundreds of men. Congregate
25 environments with lights on through the night that

2 are then kept intentionally cold sound like the
3 detention centers at the border known as-- forgive my
4 pronunciation-- hieleras. Men were moved from the
5 Watson Hotel where they had felt at home to the
6 Brooklyn Navy Yard, a place that was far from
7 transportation or pretty much anything. Recently we
8 learned that families were moved out and then will
9 move back in. The constant displacement is
10 disruptive and cruel. I want to call out a lie that
11 was also just mentioned that I heard during earlier
12 testimony by one of the city agencies. The Council
13 was told that families with children aren't and won't
14 be out on the street. I personally witnessed a family
15 with five-- of five people with three young children,
16 one who was sick, being told that there was no room
17 for them at the Roosevelt and they were out on the
18 street. I believe no one should be on the street and
19 that single men are also not disposable. The Mayor's
20 60-day policy and attempt to end New York City
21 shelter law will cause so much confusion and pain.
22 It's astonishing to me that this Administration would
23 rather put people out on the street. We heard today
24 that there is no plan B, so we all know this will
25 happen rather than used as an opportunity to create--

2 use this, excuse me, as an opportunity to create
3 permanent housing for all houseless people. There
4 are very few of you here still in the room, and it's
5 always this way by the time we testify. It's so
6 disrespectful. I request that in the future the
7 public testimony is considered as important as those
8 who are flexed [sic] for the New York City Mayor and
9 the Administration. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next
11 panel will be an in-person panel. It will consist of
12 Sarah Sachs, Christopher Leon Johnson, Raul Rivera,
13 Doctor Henry Love, and Klea Hazizaj.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Your mic is off.

15 SARAH SACHS: Thank you. First of all, I
16 would like to thank you all for representing the
17 humanity of New York City and keeping the Adams
18 Administration accountable. I'm Sarah Sachs, and I'm
19 here as a passionate New Yorkers without any
20 affiliation. I have a lot of anger and confusion
21 about the rationale behind the 60-day rule and would
22 advocate to FOIL the memoranda that was used to
23 justify this policy. In particular, I want to testify
24 against the rhetoric from Mayor Eric Adams
25 Administration that New York City is too full. I

2 personally saw the masses of people who are migrating
3 here and seeking asylum, who are given a ticket and
4 told to hurry up and wait as they're processed at the
5 Roosevelt Hotel near Grand Central Station. I heard
6 how folks walking by were aghast quoting how these
7 people shouldn't be here, this is the business
8 district. I spoke with the people endlessly waiting
9 and we gave out water bottles during the sweltering
10 heat wave. We heard from a woman saying how she
11 plans to sleep in Grand Central Station if she didn't
12 get in that day because she has nowhere else for her
13 to go. She arrived two days before and hadn't slept.
14 This is New York City. We have the resources. We
15 can address the need for temporary shelters, support
16 services, and affordable and dignified housing. This
17 is not a resource problem. This is a social and
18 political problem with sophisticated prejudice at its
19 core. We need to diverse the dialogue from community
20 pushback to welcoming our most vulnerable neighbors.
21 Every temporary shelter bed that isn't build due to
22 political pushback is another person waiting and
23 living on the street with nowhere else to go. Our
24 system is so backlogged and bottlenecked that we
25 continue to let these people slip through the cracks

2 and this is a costly mistake. The 60-day rule is
3 offensive and makes the situation far more worse.
4 The claim that we shouldn't underestimate people in
5 their care, and how 60 days is enough time is
6 offensive as well. If all it took was working hard
7 and picking yourself up by your bootstraps, the
8 people migrating here would already be millionaires.
9 They're some of the most hardest working people and
10 most resilient that I've seen. Where else are these
11 men and women supposed to go? We will end up paying
12 the cost one way or another, and I simply don't
13 understand how the Mayor can say New York City is too
14 full, when I look around and all I see is more luxury
15 housing being built and left vacant. We need top-
16 down reprioritization from our government and
17 community leaders. We need collective action to
18 systematically fix our housing development failures,
19 and this takes political and social willpower to say
20 yes to building more affordable housing, say yes to
21 investing in more temporary shelters, and say yes to
22 welcoming communities so that we can be proud to call
23 ourselves New Yorkers. Thank you.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: Ready? Hey. First of all,
25 Shahana, thank you for giving me a call back about

2 the situation in my district about the migrants being
3 out there, because I don't want them to get hit by a
4 car in Eastern Parkway, but thank you for giving me a
5 call back about that. I want [inaudible] right now. I
6 am opposed to the 60-day rule. I think the rule is
7 stupid. I don't what was Eric Adams thinking. I
8 think he lost his mind with that. but I want to
9 [inaudible] right now, is I really want to know like
10 why did the-- why did the Mayor allow a medical
11 company-- two medical companies to run the shelter
12 system, the migrant shelter system. That's kind of
13 like unheard of. Usually you let Housing Works run
14 that or Women in Need, or Help USA run the migrant
15 situation, the migrant shelters. It's just kind of
16 like real suspect. And I really want to really show
17 my anger about the whole thing about like whose
18 contracting the security companies to stifle on free
19 speech with press members, because it happened at the
20 Roosevelt Hotel. I mean, I think that's crazy to have
21 members-- like security companies who have no real
22 powers like police powers to stifle down free speech.
23 You know, Shahana, I think that, you know, you should
24 push it more and start getting answers from the
25 Mayor's Office about like why is DocGo having their

2 guards from Mulligan and Arrow abusing the migrants.

3 You got to remember this, they're human beings just

4 like we are. Just because, like, I know you get this

5 from a lot of clowns on the internet, a lot of

6 reactions on internet saying that they're not

7 supposed to be here. Like, they're already here.

8 First off, they're human beings. There's no such

9 thing as illegal human being. And you know, like I

10 said, Shahana, you have a lot of power. You have a

11 lot of influence. You should be able to call the

12 Mayor's Office and ask them like, why are they

13 allowing this to happen. They shouldn't be having

14 this happen at all. You have-- and these nonprofits

15 should be behind us, too. That's my opinion. Like

16 Make the Road New York and Urban Justice Center,

17 Workers Justice Project, NYSA [sic] Workers, Lo

18 Comena [sic], the NYIC, they should be behind this,

19 too, with you Shahana. They shouldn't be silent.

20 And you know, it shouldn't be happening like this.

21 This is crazy, using-- like I said, whatever they're

22 doing, the Mayor's Office doing, this is out of

23 control. You know, like I said, they already here.

24 You can't just kick them out of America. You can't.

25 You know, they're already here. There's nothing you

2 can really do. You keep on coming in. It is what it
3 is. You just go to-- you got to help them out,
4 because they're just legal as we are. You know,
5 they're already here. So, you know, and one more
6 thing, Shahana, like I said about that bill that you
7 introduced recently this week with the NYIC. I spoke
8 to MIRAD [sic] yesterday, I mean on Monday, and I
9 spoke to the people from Lo Comena [sp?], and I'm
10 going to say this right now-- I know about the-- in
11 three minutes. You need to introduce a bill to the
12 City Council with Marjorie Velázquez and Julie Menin
13 to make it criminally and civically illegal to start
14 soliciting services. Because like I said, it doesn't
15 matter if you put like 20 million dollars, like 50
16 million dollars in resources to educate the new
17 migrants about the immigration lawyers, but if you
18 still have these scumbags on the street push-- trying
19 to recruit these people inside the offices, it's not
20 going to do anything. So like I said, you need to
21 introduce a bill for that, that's my opinion. But
22 that it's. My [inaudible]. Thank you. Thank you.
23 No problem.

24 KLEA HAZIZAJ: Hi, my name is Klea
25 Hazizaj and I'm a New Yorker. The 60-day rule is

2 unconscionable. It's basically-- it's going to force
3 migrants onto the streets, which of course, it's
4 going to do. We've had literally human rights crisis
5 happening in New York for the past few weeks.

6 Migrants were outside of the Roosevelt Hotel in
7 unbearable heat. They had barely any food and water.
8 They were having cameras shoved into their faces
9 every five seconds. The NYPD wouldn't defend them.

10 I've heard stories of people saying that they said I
11 don't want to be filmed. The NYPD said this is a
12 public space, you have right to be filmed. There
13 were mothers nursing their babies on the street

14 outside the Roosevelt Hotel, having camera shoved in
15 face, not having food, not having water, not having
16 access to basic personal hygiene. It's literally

17 human rights violations, and we are now-- the
18 Administration is now trying to enforce a rule that's
19 going to force migrants out onto the streets in 60

20 days. Even single adults, they are still human
21 beings. They have suffered so much to come here to

22 come to America only to be slapped in the face and to
23 be thrown out onto the streets which is utterly
24 ridiculous. And as others have said, they keep
25 claiming there's no space in New York City. How is

2 there no space in New York City? There is space and
3 we can make due and we should be making due instead
4 of pushing xenophobic rhetoric by this Administration
5 and racist rhetoric forcing people to struggle and
6 putting them in worse situations than they already
7 were. We've heard other testimonies, even here
8 today, from people saying that their kids are begging
9 them I want to go back to Honduras, and I want to go
10 back to my country. It's worse here. We're
11 literally having people suffer. Like, this is one of
12 the most hottest summers in human history and we're
13 literally letting people out onto the streets. Like,
14 single adults or families-- like, we're even hearing
15 families being kicked out. It is ridiculous. It is
16 unconscionable and we cannot let this 60-day rule
17 take effect, because we are going to force people
18 homelessness, and those people are honestly-- they're
19 probably going to die. They're probably going to be
20 out there, and they're going to die, and they die
21 trying to come here to New York City which is
22 supposed to be a Sanctuary City which is supposed to
23 offer people services and not violate human rights,
24 and supposedly a country based on freedom and a city
25 based on freedom. Well, where is that for people?

2 Who is it for? Because honestly it's not being
3 provided to migrants. It's not being provided to
4 many people and it is ridiculous. The right to
5 shelter has been in place for decades, and Mayor
6 Adams is single-handedly trying to eradicate that for
7 a whole group of people. It is ridiculous. It is
8 unacceptable. We cannot let that stand.

9 DOCTOR HENRY LOVE: Excuse me. Thank
10 you, Chair Hanif and Chair Ayala, for this
11 opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Doctor
12 Henry Love. I'm the Vice President of Policy and
13 Planning at Women in Need. We're the largest
14 provider of family homelessness services in the
15 country and in the City. WIN's response has always
16 been to welcome migrants into our shelter regardless
17 of folks' immigration status, and we're really
18 committed to ensuring a safe place for folks to rest
19 and heal. And I want to just point something out
20 that I found interesting from the testimony earlier
21 by the Administration, is that this isn't new.
22 Migrants have been coming to New York for decades,
23 for centuries, and into our shelters, and we know
24 what's going to happen. We've seen folks who have
25 been in our shelters who are migrants and who are

2 undocumented, don't have the resources to be able to
3 move out. So we know what's going to happen. We
4 know we're going to have tons of folks without the
5 possibility of moving out. This whole notion of the
6 60-day rule that is, you know, targeted towards the
7 adult system, we see it as something that's going to
8 eventually impact the family system. There was a
9 recent report that came out that's estimating about
10 5,000 additional individuals will be arriving in the
11 City, and most of these are families and children.
12 And if anything is an indicator of what we saw last
13 week, we can expect the same thing that happened for
14 families with children. I also want to emphasize
15 that this is a racial justices, and we've heard that
16 from a few colleagues earlier today, and if these
17 folks were not primarily black and brown, we wouldn't
18 be seeing the same sorts of ways that they're being
19 treated. And the fact that this is a global problem.
20 I think part of the issue has been that the
21 Administration has thought of this as a New York
22 problem or a national problem. This is a global
23 phenomenon. I recently talked to colleagues in
24 Europe, and what they're seeing on the ground in
25 Greece, in Spain is absolutely ridiculous. There's

2 recently been ships off the coast of the United
3 Kingdom, and with continued-- ships of the coast of
4 the United Kingdom that have been taking on asylum-
5 seekers there. And with climate change, we can only
6 expect that this in conjunction with global political
7 instability will only expand mass migration flows
8 across the globe. I recently also spoke to a
9 colleague in El Paso who cried and thanked us for
10 allowing migrants to come to our city. She's one of
11 the folks that buys plane tickets for a few folks and
12 was hoping folks get to the airports to come here.
13 And it's quite simple, because of what-- exactly what
14 you said, because the reality on the ground in El
15 Paso is that people are on the streets and they're
16 dying. We're having the hottest summer in human
17 history. Not only are we having the hottest summer,
18 there's also-- we're itching closer and closer
19 towards winter, and we're proposing that folks
20 possibly will be out on the street. Unless-- there's
21 a few questions that I have for the Administration
22 and for you all is which families can go through the
23 shelter intake at Path, and which families are sent
24 to the Roosevelt? What childcare and educational
25 supports are available to asylum-seekers, families

2 with children in those facilities? What is the
3 City's plan for the many households who haven't or
4 won't have applied for legal status by the one-year
5 deadline after arrival? And what are permanent and
6 affordable housing options due these families have?
7 And I'll stop there.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. You guys
9 are our last panel. Oh, we have-- we have person
10 left, but I wanted to say thank you. again, it's a
11 really challenging time, and we understand that there
12 are-- you know, it-- there are complexities that get
13 in the way, right, the way that we deliver services,
14 but I think that, you know, we should be really
15 capitalizing off of each other and our individual
16 resources. Instead of, it feels like almost act--
17 the Administration is acting in a bubble, right, and
18 making dictions for the rest of us, and we're not at
19 the table. So thank you so much for representing so
20 many of these New Yorkers in need. Your advocacy is
21 greatly appreciated.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We have now heard
23 from everyone who has signed up to testify. If we
24 inadvertently missed anyone who'd like to testify

2 virtually, please us the raise hand function in Zoom,
3 and when you are unmuted please state your name.

4 CHRISTY: Hello. My name is Christy. I
5 know the name under my profile says Diane, but this
6 is Christy speaking. I just want to speak to
7 something that one of the Mayor's representatives
8 said that was a gross misrepresentation of the legal
9 assistance that is being provided for migrants and
10 people arriving at the Roosevelt Hotel. Essentially,
11 the representative implied that everyone that was
12 coming in through any of these intake centers is
13 being given what is essentially a web address to
14 start their application for asylum. That's a
15 laughable excuse for what it actually means for the
16 folks that are coming in to apply to an intensely
17 complicated bureaucratic system for which they need
18 actual legal help and assistance. And then, on top
19 of that, the fact that they're looking-- you know,
20 need food. A lot of the foods, once they're actually
21 assigned to shelters, a lot of the foods at those
22 shelters is spoiled, like it's inedible food. It is
23 not healthy. People have been medicalized [sic]
24 because-- or hospitalized because the food isn't
25 edible. So adding onto the fact that they are

2 looking for edible food, there is no adequate showers
3 at a lot of the respite centers which I know we're--
4 it's complicated because we're using the words
5 shelter and respite centers interchangeably, but a
6 lot of the places people are being moved to including
7 the Stockton respite center do not have showers. So,
8 in addition to trying to like take care of yourself,
9 and you know, basic hygiene, food necessities, the
10 fact that there's no reliable Wi-Fi, it is-- I'm at a
11 loss for words for the-- disrespected as to imply
12 that it is enough to give someone a web address when
13 they have a language barrier in addition to
14 everything, and assume that that is enough for them
15 to apply for asylum, period. So, I just wanted to
16 call that out. And just, you know, I am a neighbor.
17 I'm not affiliated to any type of organization. I
18 took-- you know, I happen to speak French and I've
19 spoken to a few of the people who have been moved to
20 these shelters. We also know that some of the folks
21 at shelters are being moved randomly. So again, add
22 to the fact that people are being woken up at 2:00
23 a.m., are being told that they're going to be
24 relocated to a completely different shelter without
25 being told when, where, or why in addition to the 60-

2 day notification that we're hearing about is just
3 incredibly inhumane and it doesn't make any sense. I
4 mean, it makes, I guess-- whatever. It's completely
5 inhumane and it's-- yeah. It's incredibly
6 disrespectful. So I'm just asking the Council
7 Members and the people who are still at this meeting,
8 because again, like-- I guess the Mayor's
9 representatives are gone. Just like to stop the 60-
10 day limit on how long people are able to stay,
11 because it's just another, like, indignity on this
12 whole process, and that's all I have to say. Thank
13 you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please state your
15 name.

16 AGGAMA BA: Hello. I apologize. My name
17 is Aggama Ba [sp?]. I am one of the advocates that
18 are on the ground greeting asylum-seekers that are
19 arriving to New York City. At Port Authority we're
20 still facing challenges from the City. They actually
21 brought back the buses. We don't know if it's
22 returning permanently. We do have city employees
23 that come back just to count [sic] and then leave.
24 But I want to talk about the 60-day rule that the
25 Mayor's Office is trying to adopt. It is not

2 feasible. It does not make sense. It makes our work
3 harder. When the Roosevelt first opened up, what we
4 saw is a huge wave of families being discharged out
5 of their shelters and being sent to the Roosevelt to
6 be re-entered into the system, which didn't make
7 sense to us because we're in the middle of the
8 crisis. It's something that they do to unhoused
9 community. This is unfair. The 60-day rule
10 challenge makes it harder for us to triage people and
11 send them to where they need to be. The reality of--
12 yes, there are 90,000 asylum-seekers that are coming
13 to the City, but not all of them are staying. People
14 are legal once they get the proper documentation and
15 report [sic]. They're relocating around the country,
16 and if we continue to do that and support them in
17 that, we would not be in the middle of the crisis,
18 but the Mayor's Office refuses to work with people
19 that are on the ground that actually know how to
20 handle this crisis. This causes division between
21 communities, between organizations, and it needs to
22 end. We need to figure out a solution together, not
23 a division. Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. When you
25 are unmuted, please state your name.

2 RONNA: Hello. I know that my Zoom box
3 says Diane, but name is actually Ronna [sp?], and I
4 am a voter in the district, a concerned citizen. I
5 have been curious about the situation and have
6 received a lot of antagonism, violence, violent
7 language, violent behavior from the guards of the
8 respite center in my district, and I'm extremely
9 confused because I see all of the newly-arrived
10 migrants as new neighbors. I think it's really
11 exciting to have new neighbors. It's very important
12 to welcome new neighbors and make sure that they're
13 all comfortable, but it seems like the guards who I
14 believe one of the companies' names is Arrow
15 Security. I'm forgetting the second badge name that I
16 saw. And some of the guards doing security also have
17 Medrite badge-- have just been nothing but hostile
18 towards community members, and I've been starting to
19 like really understand. The migrants that have
20 arrived that are at these respite centers are not
21 really there by choice. They would like to start
22 their lives in this country, contribute to work. A
23 lot of them hold degrees. A lot of them hold a lot
24 of work experience. They are excited about finding
25 places to live, to move out, but it seems like the

2 way they're being treated is really keeping them from
3 doing all those things. Also, respite centers do not
4 have residency addresses, so that's keeping them from
5 getting IDs, and we all know that identification is
6 one of the first things that you need to really even
7 find any sort of paperwork to even get into a club,
8 to get into a bar, or even sign up for housing, apply
9 for work. And on my commute to work today, I saw
10 actually two cops that had pulled aside, two
11 migrants, brothers, and I saw pink slips in their
12 hands. They gave them tickets. I wasn't really sure
13 what the tickets were for, and I saw that one of the
14 cops was struggling to communicate. So it seemed
15 like he pulled up a translation app on his phone. I
16 actually walked up, and you know, I had a couple
17 minutes before my next meeting, and I said, hey, do
18 you need translation help? I would love to help
19 translate if there's a language barrier here and make
20 this a little bit better, you know, an easier
21 situation. And all he kept saying is it's fine, it's
22 fine. In an effort to shoo me away, and I was really
23 confused how somebody who doesn't even have a shared
24 language could ticket somebody else, not even telling
25 them what they did wrong or what they think they did

2 wrong. It seemed like a completely unfair situation,
3 and I just-- I've been thinking about that all day.
4 It's been-- it made me really sad.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Seeing no
6 one else. I would like to note that written
7 testimony which will be reviewed in full by Committee
8 Staff may be submitted to the record to 72 hours
9 after the close of this hearing by emailing it to
10 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Deputy Speaker Ayala, we
11 have concluded public testimony for this hearing.

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I just want to once
13 again thank my colleague, Council Member Hanif, who's
14 wonderful and I couldn't ask for a better partner in
15 this process. And I want to thank all of the
16 advocates that came here today. I thought it was an
17 important hearing to have, and I thought that it was
18 important to have it as soon as possible so that we
19 could kind of get a grasp on what was happening and
20 why. And I think that we learned a lot today, but I
21 think that, you know, we also have more questions
22 than we probably came in here with today. So, I--
23 this is the first of what I, you know, I'm sure will
24 be a really long conversation and several more
25 hearings to come. But I wanted to say thank you to

2 all-- all of you who showed up today and who stayed,
3 for your-- thank you for your patience as well.

4 Council Member Hanif, did you want to close out?

5 CHAIRPERSON HANIF: No, I just deeply
6 appreciate your partnership and leadership, and to be
7 able to tag-team in holding this Administration
8 accountable, demanding more transparency, and really
9 showing for the public what the dynamic has been like
10 from the beginning of when asylum-seekers started
11 arriving to our city to a year+ in. And so I deeply
12 appreciate everybody who testified, who joined our
13 hearing. We learned a lot, but as you mentioned,
14 we've got many more questions, and hope that the
15 Administration will extend a partnership so that we
16 are not needing to bring these folks into our
17 chambers for answers. I want to extend all my love
18 and compassion to every single asylum-seeker, and
19 know that this council will continue to affirm that
20 this is a city built on sanctuary values and will
21 remain a sanctuary. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. And with
23 that this hearing is-- it's concluded. Thank you.

24 [gavel]

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1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE WITH COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION 227

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date August 26, 2023