



Human Resources  
Administration  
Department of  
Homeless Services

**Testimony of Steven Banks, Commissioner  
New York City Department of Social Services**

**Oversight Hearing regarding HPD's Coordination with HRA/DHS to Address the  
Homelessness Crisis before the Committee on Housing and Buildings jointly with the  
Committee on General Welfare**

**November 20, 2017**

Good afternoon. Thank you Chairman Williams and members of the Committee on Housing and Buildings and Chairman Levin and the members of the General Welfare Committee for giving us the opportunity to testify today. My name is Steven Banks and I am the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Social Services, overseeing the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS). I am joined by the Commissioner for Housing Preservation and Development, Maria Torres-Springer, and I want to thank the Commissioner for her support and partnership. I also want to thank the Council for your support as we continue to implement our reforms.

As you know, I have testified before the General Welfare Committee at a number of hearings about the challenges of homelessness faced by many New York City families and individuals, and the new and expanded initiatives this Administration has implemented to prevent and alleviate homelessness.

The Administration has made unprecedented investments to address the economic insecurity experienced by low-income New Yorkers, many of whom rely on HRA and DHS benefits, programs, and services. Many of the Administration's achievements squarely benefit New Yorkers who seek our assistance and services, including: a rent freeze and low rent increases for rent regulated apartments, wage increases for city workers, universal Pre-K, expanded Paid Sick Leave, the IDNYC identification card, and universal access to legal services for New Yorkers facing eviction.

**The Challenge of Homelessness**

To begin with, I want to talk about the rise in homelessness in New York City, over the last two decades. The average monthly census of DHS shelters increased 115 percent during that time — rising from 23,868 men, women, and children in January 1994, to 31,009 in January 2002, and reaching 51,470 in January 2014. Had this Administration not stopped this trajectory, the DHS

shelter census would have likely reached nearly 70,000 this year, rather than the 60,000 level it has been at<sup>1</sup>.

As we described in the Mayor's *Turning the Tide* plan released earlier this year to reform the city's approach to homelessness, there are many factors that have contributed to the steady upward trajectory of the shelter census over the past nearly four decades:

- Stagnant wages resulting in an increasing gap between wages and rent – between 2005 and 2015, the median New York City household income increased by just 4.8 percent in real dollars, while the median rent increased by 18.3 percent in real dollars<sup>2</sup>;
- A net loss of about 150,000 affordable or rent stabilized apartments between 1994 and 2012<sup>3</sup>;
- Systematic reductions by the federal government to multiple anti-poverty tools such as cash assistance, food stamps and Medicaid;
- Insufficient support and resources to address barriers to housing facing New Yorkers with mental health and substance use disorders, including long periods of institutionalization or incarceration;
- And the abrupt end of the Advantage rental assistance program by the State and City, which offered subsidies for people in shelters if they took part in job training – between April 2011, when the Advantage program ended, and 2014, when this Administration reinstated rental assistance and rehousing programs, the DHS census grew by an extraordinary 38 percent – some 14,000 people<sup>4</sup>.

Combined, these and other trends mean that by 2015 the city had only half the housing it needs for about three million low-income New Yorkers<sup>5</sup>.

As a result, these New Yorkers end up sacrificing a great deal to stay in their homes and maintain their connections to their communities. Some 360,000 New York City households pay more than 50 percent of their income on rent and utilities. Another 140,000 households pay more than the 30 percent. This means a total of a half a million New York City households are paying an unaffordable amount of their income for housing<sup>6</sup>. Many people who face these rent burdens cycle in and out of poverty, living just one personal crisis away from homelessness. In fact, an ongoing longitudinal study suggests that nearly half of all New Yorkers lived in poverty at some point between 2012 and 2014 (the three-year period studied)<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Turning the Tide on Homelessness in New York City*, pg 3. Retrieved from [http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/news/publications/Turning\\_the\\_Tide\\_on\\_Homelessness.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/news/publications/Turning_the_Tide_on_Homelessness.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, v.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

As a result of these economic factors, 70 percent of the shelter system census now consists of families, and 34 percent of the families with children have an adult who is working<sup>8</sup>.

At the same time, domestic violence is a major driver of homelessness, with some 30 percent of the families with children in the DHS shelter system having a history of domestic violence<sup>9</sup>.

Homelessness in New York City and jurisdictions across the country is the very real result of decades of changes in our economy and past choices made in New York City, Albany, and Washington. The devastating impacts of economic inequality and past inaction from prior administrations led to the homeless crisis we face today, but the initiatives of both HRA and DHS are beginning to reverse the trend. A recent Furman Center study, for example, found that the year over year shelter census growth from calendar year 2015 to calendar year 2016 was the lowest increase since 2011 before the Advantage program ended. And the shelter census has remained roughly flat year over year for the first time in more than a decade.

### **Breaking the Trajectory**

Breaking the trajectory of exponential shelter system growth is the result of significant policy reforms implemented by this Administration.

Since coming into office, the Administration restored the City's rental assistance programs and directed unprecedented resources toward a new comprehensive and holistic approach to fighting homelessness focused on prevention, street homeless outreach, expanded transitional housing options, averted shelter entry, expanded civil legal services, and more robust rehousing and aftercare services.

The City's prevention first strategy includes an array of tools, which recognizes that the path to homelessness is not linear and therefore our approach cannot be a one-size fits all approach.

Since FY14 we have enhanced our services and assistance, including these initiatives:

- **Creating and implementing rental assistance programs and restoring Section 8 and New York City Housing Authority priorities** which though last month have helped 71,596 children and adults move out of, or avert entry into shelter, through this commitment of permanent housing resources;
- **Provided emergency rental assistance to 217,000 households through FY17**, helping rent-burdened New Yorkers at risk of eviction stay in their homes;
- **Launched the largest municipal commitment ever to build and expand supportive housing** by committing to developing 15,000 new units in 15 years;
- **Aggressively expanded free legal assistance for New Yorkers in danger of illegal eviction** by increasing funding for legal services for tenants to \$62 million by FY16 – a

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., iii.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 5.

more than tenfold increase. At the same time, evictions dropped by 24 percent and more than 40,000 New Yorkers were able to stay in their homes in 2015 and 2016;

- **Began implementation, over the next five years, to provide access to legal services** for all New York City tenants facing eviction in Housing Court, which at full implementation will serve 400,000 New Yorkers;
- **Implemented 46 systematic and management reforms** to streamline how we address homelessness as a result of the 90-day review of homeless services last year;
- **Closed, as of last month, more than 1,000 cluster units**, which is nearly a 30% reduction in the 17-year cluster apartment shelter program, which had 3,658 active cluster site units in January 2016 when the closure plan was first announced.
- Through HRA's Source of Income (SOI) discrimination unit, **taking action to prevent and prosecute housing discrimination based on source of income** – and fighting SOI discrimination, through the City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) filing of five complaints against large landlords and brokerage firms that together control about 20,000 units citywide. (In 2015 CCHR quadrupled the number of investigations into SOI discrimination and in 2016 it filed more than 120 SOI discrimination investigations—the highest number in its history);
- And created the **Homelessness Prevention Administration** housed within HRA to oversee prevention programs to improve program management and effectiveness.

We are moving forward in the implementation phase for these substantial changes in the four-decades-old homeless services system – but, as we regularly acknowledge, we are addressing systemic problems that built up over decades. As such, while many clients have already benefited from our reforms, others have not yet felt the full impact of these systemic changes that are underway.

### **Prevention and Averting Shelter Entry**

The City's portfolio of prevention tools is more extensive than ever before; it includes historic investments in the agency's Homebase program, expanded payment of emergency grants, legal services, and rental assistance.

### **Homebase**

Since 2014, we expanded the Homebase program from 14 locations in FY15 to 24 locations that exist today. We encourage families facing potential homelessness to seek help first at one of our Homebase offices in all five boroughs. As of FY18, a total of nearly \$59 million annually supports an enhanced HomeBase program that provides coordinated preventive, aftercare, and community support services, including benefits advocacy, budgeting, employment, short-term financial assistance, and assistance with housing relocation. As a result of the increased investment in Homebase, we reached 27,607 households in FY17, a 131% increase in

households served compared to FY14. Over 90% of these households remain in the community and have not entered shelter within one year of receiving services.

### **Payment of Emergency Grants**

Helping New Yorkers at risk of eviction remains a crucial priority for this Administration. Clients facing eviction or other emergency situations can apply for an Emergency Cash Assistance grant, also called a One-shot Deal, at their local HRA Job Center. Eligibility for such a grant depends on household size, income, resources, ability to meet future rent obligations, and other factors. And some grants are issued as loans which require repayment.

By providing emergency assistance, we have helped more than 300,000 New Yorkers remain in their homes while saving taxpayers' money because rental assistance is much less expensive than the cost of a homeless shelter. In calendar year 2016, HRA provided rent arrears to 58,100 households at a cost of \$214 million, and between January 2014 and December 2016 a total of more than 161,000 household received assistance, representing a 24% increase in cases compared to 2013. The increase in spending resulted from increased monthly rents families and individuals have to pay, additional households being found eligible due to the increasing gap between rents and income, and enhanced targeting of these services to prevent homelessness through partnerships with community-based organizations.

### **Legal Services**

With the enactment of Local Law 136 of 2017, New York City became the first city in the nation to make the commitment that anyone facing an eviction case can access legal assistance. Last February, we added an additional \$93 million to our \$62 million investment for tenant legal services, at full implementation in five years, for a comprehensive program to provide access to legal representation to all low-income tenants facing eviction proceedings in Housing Court earning up to 200% of the federal poverty line – about \$50,000 for a family of four – and brief legal assistance for all tenants facing eviction in court whose income is above that level. In five years, at full implementation, the City will spend \$155 million annually to cover the costs of this critical program keeping New Yorkers in their homes and communities.

As noted earlier, as a result of all of the Administration's prevention initiatives, evictions by Marshals have decreased 24% and some 40,000 New Yorkers have been able to remain in their homes in 2015 and 2016.

Tenants are encouraged to call 311 if they are facing an eviction and/or visit HRA offices located in the Housing Courts.

## **Move-Outs and Aftercare**

In 2011, the State and City cut the Advantage rental assistance program, which had devastating impacts on the number of New Yorkers in need of shelter and the DHS shelter census. In order to reverse course, beginning in 2014, the Administration implemented the City's LINC rental assistance programs to help families and individuals move from temporary, emergency shelter back to the community by paying a portion of their rent. In 2015, the Administration implemented the CityFEPS and SEPS programs to expand rental assistance to both prevent homelessness and promote shelter move outs. In addition to rental assistance, the Administration reinstated New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and Section 8 priority referrals for clients in the HRA or DHS shelter systems.

In total, these initiatives have enabled 71,596 individuals in 26,356 households to avert entry into or move out of shelter through September 2017.

In addition to rental assistance, Homebase's aftercare services are available to all households leaving shelter through a rental assistance program, as early as possible in their tenancy, followed by a thorough assessment, the development of an individualized service plan, and intensive services for the most at-risk households. Services include long-term support as well as engagement with households in the midst of short-term housing crises.

HRA workers are also onsite at Homebase to assist with the tenants' public benefits issues and emergency rent arrears grant applications. Homebase also offers regular workshops for at-risk community members, including former shelter residents, and provides information on affordable housing, subsidies, employment, work supports, and financial empowerment.

Many people do not reach out for help before they lose their homes – in part because they never knew help was available. Homebase staff also conducts outreach by going directly into the city's neighborhoods to engage people in public spaces – outside supermarkets, check cashing businesses, and nail salons or at buildings with many eviction notices. They attend community events, speak at places of worship, and build close referral relationships with neighborhood schools. Together, Homebase's efforts are a powerful component of the City's strategy to reduce the number of families and individuals in shelters.

## **Responding to Introductions**

With respect to the two bills relating to HRA and DHS before the Committee today, we look forward to working with the sponsors to address some concerns that we have with the proposed legislation.

## **Proposed Int. No. 1524**

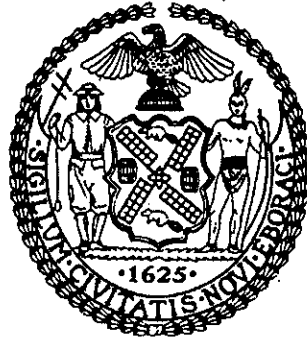
Int. No. 1524 would amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to radiator inspections in homeless shelters. We would like to work with the sponsor to align the

language in the proposed legislation with State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) requirements relating to shelter conditions and inspections so that what is required in the legislation is consistent with the OTDA requirements to address health and safety in shelters.

**Proposed Int. No. 1529**

Int. No. 1529 would amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the phase-out of existing cluster sites and would require the department to develop and submit to the Council a plan on the phase out of the use of clusters. The agency currently reports to the Comptroller of New York City on our progress on the phase out of the use of cluster locations. Legislation providing the level of information on the phase out that we are providing in these reports would be feasible and address the underlying concerns reflected in the introduction. In contrast, various provisions in the proposed legislation would require reporting on data that we do not have access to and information that is dependent on the actions of private parties. We stand ready to work with the Council as we always do to craft legislation that is both helpful and operationally feasible.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify. After the conclusion of our testimony today, I look forward to any questions about HRA and DHS programs and our work with HPD that you may have.



**Testimony of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development to the New York City Council Committees on Housing and Buildings and General Welfare regarding HPD's Coordination with the Department of Homeless Services and the Human Resources Administration to Address the Homelessness Crisis  
Monday, November 20, 2017**

Good morning Chair Williams, Chair Levin, and members of the Housing and Buildings and General Welfare Committees. I am Maria Torres Springer, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the different tools and programs that HPD uses to address homelessness. I'd also like to thank Commissioner Banks for his testimony on all of the important work that the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and the Human Resources Administration (HRA) does to confront homelessness.

Last night, more than 60,000 New Yorkers slept in one of the many homeless shelters throughout our city. This number is a grave reminder of the severity of the affordability crisis we face. The many individuals and families currently residing in our shelter system come from neighborhoods across each of the five boroughs—they live, work, and attend school among us—they were our neighbors until they fell on hard times and now lack a stable place to call home. Homelessness tears communities apart, uprooting families from their neighborhoods and forcing children to commute long distances to school.

One of the main underlying reasons for homelessness is the mismatch in the city's housing market. The tremendous demand for housing continues to exceed the supply available, and the changing composition of New York City households does not match the existing housing stock. The last two decades in New York City are a case study of these trends. While the population increased more in the first six years of this decade than in the entire previous decade, we added only half the number of new homes during that six-year period than we did during the prior decade. For these reasons, it is critical that we increase the overall housing supply. New housing, both affordable and market rate, is on the way: There were twice as many housing completions in 2016 as there were in 2014, and completions in 2017 are on pace to exceed 25,000 new apartments and homes—a pace which, if sustained can better enable us to keep up with population growth.

Stable housing is a determinant of so many crucial social outcomes, including education, health, and economic advancement. Homelessness moves us further from achieving equity in all of these realms, underscoring the importance of the work HPD is doing to address this crisis. I am here today to describe these efforts in more detail and to renew our request to all of you for your continued support.



Commissioner Banks has already testified to what DHS and HRA are doing as part the Turning the Tide on Homelessness Plan, the administration's comprehensive approach to combatting homelessness. A core underlying philosophy in this approach is that we have to keep people in their homes and increase housing opportunities.

HPD is a critical part of the effort to help solve homelessness by keeping people in their homes and neighborhoods so that they hopefully never face the threat of losing their homes. We work tirelessly to expand housing opportunities, and to provide people with services to ensure that they are not harassed out of their homes. It is because of this commitment that we have been able to build affordable housing at rates New York has not seen in 30 years. This is why last week, we announced *Housing New York 2.0*, through which we are accelerating and expanding our preservation and construction of affordable apartments to reach 300,000 homes by 2026.

### **Increasing the Supply of Housing**

Increasing the availability of new apartments is a key component in the administration's comprehensive strategy to combat homelessness. HPD utilizes affordable housing financing programs to prioritize the development of affordable housing on public land and to expand the amount of housing available to the lowest income New Yorkers.

A portion of the new homes HPD builds constitutes supportive housing apartments that are specifically for formerly homeless households. Of all of the tools at HPD's disposal, supportive housing is the best and most tested for meaningfully addressing the homelessness crisis. Supportive housing is a proven solution for people with long histories of homelessness and related challenges, including mental illness, addiction, or HIV/AIDS. The production of supportive housing enables the City to move people out of the Shelter system and into permanent, rent stabilized homes with access to on-site social services that help tenants maintain their housing for the long term.

I would like to thank the Council for holding January's Hearing on Supportive Housing in the Schermerhorn, a 217-apartment supportive housing project in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn. I specifically want to thank Chair Levin, whose district covers the Schermerhorn, for his leadership in making that hearing happen. As many of you witnessed then, the building blends into the neighborhood and is a community asset. The building was created when the developer of the market rate townhouses on the same site approached Breaking Ground about a partnership. Even years after the Schermerhorn opened, passersby still mistake this supportive housing building for market-rate condos!

This building is not an outlier; it is emblematic of the high quality planning and design that is the standard for all of our supportive housing projects. Supportive housing projects are not "facilities" or "institutions" – they are affordable apartment buildings that provide tenants with rent stabilized leases and all of the same rights and responsibilities as any other tenant in a rental apartment in New York City. Supportive housing projects provide amenities such as community spaces and computer rooms, all while incorporating innovative design elements that make these buildings vibrant places to live. A typical supportive housing project includes a 60/40 split between supportive housing apartments and other affordable apartments available to any household that income qualifies. This ensures that the projects are integrated and serve a range of your constituents. I invite you and your constituents to tour other supportive housing projects so you can see the many ways these buildings enrich their neighborhoods. When you visit one of our supportive housing projects, you can hear personal stories of tenants who previously lived in shelter, often for many years, but who are now reconnecting with family, addressing their health needs, and finding employment.

Supportive housing is also a cost-effective solution for addressing the homelessness crisis. Peer-reviewed research found that for every supportive apartment, taxpayers save more than \$10,000 per year in public resources that would otherwise be spent on shelters, emergency rooms, jails, and psychiatric facilities. In fact, research has even shown that contrary to popular belief, supportive housing projects increase property values in the areas surrounding them.

In 2015, the Mayor announced a major commitment of \$1 billion in City capital over 15 years that will fund 15,000 supportive housing apartments. Approximately half of these apartments will be new construction, supported through HPD financing. This increased funding has allowed us to ensure that a wide range of people who need supportive housing have access to it. HPD's Supportive Housing Loan Program (SHLP) has long been the primary financing tool for the City's supportive housing production. I am proud to say that since the beginning of Housing New York (Jan 1, 2014), we have financed the construction or preservation of more than 2,600 supportive housing apartments through this program.

Of course, supportive housing is not the only tool we have for bringing people out of the shelter system. We are working to increase the number of set-aside apartments in HPD programs, which can be used to house homeless households with fewer social service needs than those who might be better suited to supportive housing. As part of our efforts to expand homeless housing production while also ensuring that homeless housing apartments continue to be distributed in every neighborhood in which HPD is doing business, we recently re-tooled our most popular term sheets to require homeless set-asides. The ELLA (Extremely Low & Low-Income Affordability) and Mix and Match (mixed income) programs now both include 10% homeless set-asides. While supportive housing is our best tool for serving homeless individuals, these set asides are particularly useful for creating housing for homeless families. These new set-asides, along with the 30% set-aside in the Senior Affordable Rental Apartments (SARA) program, and 60% SHLP set-aside, have enabled us to more than double the rate of our homeless housing production since the onset of *Housing New York*. During the second half of FY 2014, we were producing homeless apartments at a rate of about 1000 homes annually. In FY 2017, we closed on more than 2,500 homeless apartments. In total, we have created and preserved over 6,500 apartments for formerly homeless households since January of 2014, as a part of the overall *Housing New York plan*.

To sustain this rate of homeless housing production, HPD is strategically utilizing a number of limited funding resources. Project-based Section 8 vouchers are our most important rental subsidy for homeless apartments, but the supply is finite, and its continued availability is currently threatened at the Federal level. To reduce the pressure on our Section 8 pipeline, we recently launched the NYC 15/15 Rental Assistance Program, a City-funded rental subsidy that will enable us to meet our goal of creating 15,000 supportive housing apartments over 15 years, in partnership with DSS. We are also creatively using other federal programs, such as the Continuum of Care, HOME Tenant-based rental assistance, and the Rental-Assistance Demonstration program (RAD) to maximize the use of scarce rental subsidy funds for homeless housing production.

### **Preserving the Supply of Housing**

HPD uses tax incentives, loans, and engagement with building owners to finance and safeguard affordability, which is a crucial way to prevent families on the verge of homelessness from becoming homeless. We keep this housing safe and healthy through enforcing the housing maintenance code and working with partners to survey distressed properties. We also leverage our preservation programs specifically to provide housing for homeless households. We recently revised the guidelines for all of our preservation programs to require that 10-20% of the apartments are set aside for homeless households when there is turnover in occupancy. Between January 2014 and June 30, 2017, we closed on about 3,500 apartments designated for formerly homeless households through this new requirement.

## **Legal Assistance and Anti-harassment Efforts**

Another important way of keeping people in homes they can afford is giving them the support they need if they are ever faced with harassment by a landlord seeking to displace them. HPD is very active in combatting harassment through enforcement of the NYC Housing Maintenance Code. HPD's Housing Litigation Division brings cases in Housing Court against owners who do not comply with outstanding violations and, when necessary, seek findings of contempt and jail against recalcitrant landlords. HPD also actively participates in two Anti-harassment task forces. The Tenant Harassment Prevention Taskforce is a collaborative effort between the Office of the NYS Attorney General, NYS DHCR and City agencies, and has already led to two major indictments of landlords, one in Brooklyn and the other more recently in Manhattan. The City Agency Taskforce on Tenant Harassment consists of a joint inspection team including HPD, DOB, DOHMH, FDNY and DHCR Inspectors.

## **The HPD- DHS Partnership**

HPD, the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), and the Human Resources Administration (HRA) communicate daily in order to coordinate our response to the homelessness crisis; one of the major avenues for which is through our efforts to refer homeless households out of shelters and into permanent housing. For non-supportive apartments, DHS identifies a household for referral based on qualifications that they have determined. They then assist that household in completing an HPD-specific application, which includes information such as household size, income, and location preference. We then take that application and use the various data points to match them with a development that we think would be appropriate. It is then the role of the developer to accept applicants from our referrals. HPD updates DHS frequently throughout the process to keep them informed of the status of the application and placement.

For supportive housing apartments, HPD and DHS conduct periodic meetings so that DHS knows when specific HPD buildings will be completing construction and when apartments will become available. DHS also attends marketing and lease-up kick-off meetings with HPD and the project development teams so that they are aware of construction and marketing timelines. When an apartment is available, DHS refers three suitable shelter clients to the apartment through a similar process as detailed previously, and the landlord makes their decision. Again, communication between our agencies occurs at several points during the referral and placement. Our agencies will continue to seek ways to streamline the supportive and homeless housing referral process and ensure that the shelter system's most vulnerable clients receive the housing they so desperately need.

HPD and DHS are also building on our partnerships through joint initiatives already under way. For example, working closely with DHS, HPD and HDC launched the HomeStretch program, which leverages shelter financing to provide cost-effective, purpose-built shelter along with affordable housing for the formerly homeless on the same site, creating pathways from shelters to permanently affordable housing. The first site to use this innovative model is the Landing Road Residence in Council Member Cabrera's district in the Bronx.

Working to solve homelessness also requires partnerships with the City's excellent nonprofit organizations. For example, the City is working with Enterprise Community Partners on Come Home NYC, a program that helps building owners lease apartments to homeless clients; provides the owners with financial protection against rent arrears, physical damage to the apartment, and legal costs; and connects homeless families with services to help them remain housed. The program provides hands-on assistance to ensure a smooth referral and placement process. We have also partnered with the Robin Hood Foundation on our Moving On initiative to provide Housing Choice Vouchers to supportive housing tenants who have achieved stability and may wish to move into another setting. In our last cohort, we were able to help 80 tenants move. This effort helps provide greater options for formerly homeless

tenants, while also freeing up existing supportive housing apartments for households who need them the most. Additionally, HPD and HDC are launching a new Neighborhood Pillars program as a part of *Housing New York 2.0* to finance the acquisition and rehabilitation of existing rent-regulated buildings by community organizations to protect current tenants and stabilize communities.

### **How the Council Can Help**

Given all of these efforts, and all of the homeless apartments that they have produced, the question remains: should HPD continue to find ways to do more to address the homelessness crisis? The answer, of course, is yes: There are still 60,000 New Yorkers in our shelters, and even as a substantial number of them benefit from HPD's programs each year, we are committed to continually finding new ways to deepen our work in service of homeless New Yorkers. . So I must now turn to all of you to ask for your and your colleagues' help. To make any dent in the staggering shelter census, we must continue this progress and create even more supportive housing, and the Council is a critical partner in helping us build more of it. HPD is extremely grateful to the Council Members here today for helping us educate New Yorkers about the benefits of supportive housing and for welcoming a number of wonderful supportive housing developments throughout the neighborhoods you represent.

In addition to Chair Levin and his support for The Schermerhorn, which I mentioned previously, many other Council Members are already great partners to HPD in helping us bring new supportive housing developments to their respective neighborhoods. In Chair Williams's district, we have Crystal Towers, a \$57.5 million, permanent supportive housing project with 123 apartments that was made possible through a joint partnership between The Doe Fund and Crystal Ball, LLC. Council Member Mendez has been a long-time supporter of the Breaking Ground projects in her district, the Lee, a supportive housing project in the Lower East Side with 262 apartments, and The Prince George, a supportive housing project in Grammercy with 416 apartments. Council Member Torres has been a strong ally in providing capital funding the Crotona Senior Residences, an 84-apartment senior housing project with a 30% homeless set-aside that will focus on the needs of LGBTQ seniors. And Council member Cornegy has been a great supporter the Woodhull Community Residence, a supportive housing development planned for part of Woodhull Hospital's parking lot in Brooklyn. These are just a few examples of the partnerships we have received from the Council throughout the last few years to build more and better supportive housing projects. But we can always use more help.

When proposing a new supportive housing project, we often hear unfounded assumptions about how the project will impact the surrounding neighborhood, or questions about how we chose a specific site and whether we are building supportive housing exclusively in low income communities. We need your help to address these neighborhood concerns and shatter any myths that supportive housing is bad for communities or concentrated in certain neighborhoods.

Many of our largest and oldest supportive housing projects, such as the Times Square Hotel and the Christopher, both in Councilmember Johnson's district, have operated in high value neighborhoods for decades, proving that supportive housing projects are successful components of their neighborhoods' urban fabrics. The high concentration of supportive housing apartments in southern Manhattan is also an important tool for affirmatively furthering fair housing across the city. More than three fourths of DHS shelter entrants lived in the outer boroughs before they became homeless. Upon exiting the shelter system, many will be provided with the opportunity to live in one of the numerous supportive housing apartments located in high value Manhattan neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, the reality is that the homelessness crisis disproportionately affects people of color and their children. The persistence of racism and racial inequality in our country has created structural inequities that subject people of color to greater vulnerabilities that can threaten their housing. Income, health, and educational disparities both contribute to homelessness among people of color and are intensified by it, creating a negative feedback loop that allows racial inequality to persist in our city. Greater production of supportive and homeless housing can help bring an end to this cycle. We need your support for the creation of homeless housing as a means of engendering racial justice. We have the capital resources, we have the term sheets, and we have the production teams needed to tackle this crisis, but we need your support and influence in your communities to ensure that all of our projects that serve homeless households can become a reality.

We are often forced to reduce or eliminate homeless set-asides to garner support for our projects, which minimizes our ability to make inroads into ending homelessness in our city. As you engage in public and private discussions on this issue in your communities and with fellow elected officials, we need your help in combating the misperceptions associated with homeless housing. I'll describe five concrete ways you can help:

1. Explain that homeless individuals and families are fellow New Yorkers who have fallen on hard times and who need our genuine support the most.
2. Illustrate that the very ELI and VLI constituents we are all so fervently seeking to support are the same individuals and families who cycle in and out of the shelter system and who will benefit the most from increased homeless and supportive housing production.
3. Communicate to communities that they cannot both be opposed to the siting of homeless shelters and to the siting of permanent homeless and supportive housing that would ultimately reduce the need for shelters. One is a key solution to the other, and opposing them both gets us nowhere.
4. Explain that homelessness disproportionately affects people of color. Fear of homeless housing is too often rooted in racism and presents a barrier to its creation in more neighborhoods throughout the city. We need your help in unmasking this opposition so that more homeless and supportive housing apartments can ultimately serve the city's communities of color.
5. Dispel the myths about supportive housing and homelessness and spread the facts that will enable us to tackle this crisis.

We are all in this together, so I will be leaning on all of you to do what you can to ensure that we continue to create new opportunities for homeless New Yorkers. We should build on the example set just last week when we worked collaboratively with the Council to successfully overcome challenges in the Edwin's Place project. With the Council's vote of support, we will be bringing 125 affordable apartments, including 78 supportive housing apartments, to Brownsville.

I extend my sincerest gratitude to all of you for your ongoing help defending City, State, and especially Federal resources that are used to create homeless housing. I look forward to building on our successes together with our many partners both in the Council and in the Administration so that we can begin to turn the tide on homelessness once and for all.

Thank you for your time and attention.

## **Testimony of Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. before the NYC Council Committees on Housing and Buildings and General Welfare regarding Intros. 1524 and 1529**

Good afternoon,

*I, Victoria Reing, am here to testify on behalf of Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. on the topic of addressing the homelessness crisis.*

I am here this afternoon to testify in favor of Intro 1524, introduced by Council Member Rafael Salamanca and Intro 1529, introduced by Council Member James Vacca. Both of these bills were introduced at Borough President Diaz's request.

It is a known fact that New York City is in the midst of a homelessness crisis, and that innovative and comprehensive solutions to this crisis are needed. Today, we are hearing two bills that seek to make temporary housing safer and to better facilitate the elimination of cluster sites, which the Administration has acknowledged must be its goal. Both of these bills seek to promote the health and safety of New York City's most vulnerable residents.

The first, Intro 1524, requires that during any inspection conducted or overseen by the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) related to health, safety, or the physical conditions of a shelter, defined as "temporary emergency housing," the radiators must also be inspected.

This safety measure must be mandated because malfunctioning radiators can cause severe bodily harm or even death. This was clearly demonstrated in the tragedy in December 2016 when a faulty radiator killed two small children in their temporary cluster-site housing in The Bronx. The radiator in this apartment was reported broken in 2015 by the previous tenant, yet no action by the landlord was taken. If the inspection of the radiators was part of the regular inspection process, perhaps this tragedy could have been avoided.

This risk should be immediately eliminated, and we must do everything we can to be sure the people who access temporary housing are safe. This measure should therefore be implemented immediately.

The second bill, Intro 1529, seeks to regulate and to ensure the reduction and eventual elimination of the cluster site system, which is widely considered to be an important safety and public health goal. The legislation creates an obligation to report to the City Council on the plan for the phase-out of each cluster site, progress made towards the elimination of cluster sites, and on inspections and repairs as well as any new cluster site contracts.

The legislation also requires that the City produce a plan to eliminate cluster sites that utilizes metrics to determine whether the sites should be converted for use as permanent housing for the homeless family residing in the cluster site or for another homeless family, be converted to a

stand-alone shelter for homeless families, or no longer be used by the department as shelter or as permanent housing for a homeless family.

The legislation requires that the following metrics be utilized in the plan: first, the condition of the cluster site; second, whether the owner of the building and the provider under contract or similar agreement with the department to operate the cluster sites within the building have cooperated with the department in maintaining the cluster sites; third, whether the cluster site is rent regulated; and fourth, whether the homeless families residing in the cluster sites have expressed an interest in remaining in the cluster site as tenants.

Efforts should be made to only contract with landlords that cooperate to maintain safe premises. Efforts should also be made to promote the availability of rent-regulated housing.

We believe that the reporting mechanisms outlined in the bill would provide the public with the necessary information to monitor the progress that DHS is making on phasing out cluster sites. We believe that this bill will also provide much needed transparency when DHS enters into new contracts to provide homeless services in a cluster site. We applaud the city's goal of phasing out these cluster sites for sheltering homeless families. However, there presently is no way for the public to monitor and follow the progress made towards this goal. This legislation would provide a necessary tool to monitor this progress.

Finally, the data demonstrate that HPD violations are endemic to cluster sites, and we need to provide safer, better temporary housing options. The City has recognized this in the "Turning the Tide" plan, and this legislation introduced at my request moves the needle in the right direction. On behalf of Borough President Diaz, I urge the City Council to approve these two important pieces of legislation.

Thank you.





FOR THE RECORD

**Testimony of Cathy Kim  
Program Director  
Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.**

**To the New York City Council  
Joint Committee Meeting with  
General Welfare and Housing and Buildings  
On the Homelessness Crisis**

**November 20, 2017**

My name is Cathy Kim and I lead the Vulnerable Populations program for Enterprise Community Partners, a non-profit affordable housing organization that has worked to create and preserve affordable housing here and nationwide for over 30 years. On behalf of Enterprise, thank you Chair Levin, Chair Williams, Commissioner Torres-Springer and Commissioner Banks, along with the City Council Committees on General Welfare and Housing and Buildings for all the work you have done to address homelessness in our city.

We would like to first acknowledge the significant resources that both the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development and the New York City Human Resources Administration have invested in combatting homelessness. Thank you to HPD for advancing *Housing New York: A Five Borough Ten Year Plan*, an ambitious plan to build and preserve 300,000 units over twelve years, and ensuring that there is a carve out of homeless set-aside units across its production programs. We also commend HPD for creating the Our Space housing and services program and Home Stretch, both of which specifically target homeless families. This is complemented well by the mayor's plan to address homelessness, *Turning the Tide on Homelessness*, along with HRA's rental subsidies and the expansion of Homebase to include both prevention and aftercare services. We also want to thank the city council for passing universal access to counsel earlier this year, a major step in preventing homelessness for countless New Yorkers. These actions demonstrate the city's commitment to addressing the homelessness crisis in our city.

At Enterprise, we greatly value the stabilizing force of home and we also have a deep appreciation for the complexities that lead to homelessness, which in New York City, overwhelmingly afflicts families. Over 23,000 children, coming from nearly 13,000 families, are in the DHS system, representing nearly three quarters of the total DHS shelter system population, with at least another 4,000 children in homeless shelters operated by HPD, HRA and DYCD. The average length of stay for these families is now over a year and only half of these children and their families live in Tier II shelters with the other half living in commercial hotels or cluster sites where they do not have access to kitchens, laundry or recreational space. This experience of homelessness is



traumatic for children and their families and can have long-term negative impacts on children's physical and mental health, educational outcomes and ultimately their likelihood of being a homeless adult. This is why Enterprise partnered with Citizens' Committee for Children and New Destiny Housing to co-convene a Family Homelessness Task Force. Together with 40 organizations, we generated a body of recommendations to help prevent family homelessness and ensure the well being and aftercare of children and families in shelter and after they exit the shelter system.

Enterprise recognizes that the responsibility of addressing family homelessness does not fall on the shoulders of any one agency, but instead, requires a coordinated, comprehensive interagency collaboration across many city agencies. As such, we are encouraged to see HRA and HPD come together today to discuss their vital partnership in addressing our family homelessness crisis. Both *Turning the Tide* and *Housing New York* will be vital to the lives of countless New Yorkers. But these plans separate the solutions for addressing housing and homelessness. We strongly urge the city to create one plan that closely integrates the production of affordable housing with solutions, including services that are specifically tailored to the needs of homeless families with children. Specifically, we recommend the following:

- Ensure the well-being of families with children once they move into permanent affordable housing. We commend the recent collaboration between HRA and HPD to ensure that homeless families who were connected to a 421-a unit are also intentionally connected to HomeBase for aftercare services. It is our hope that the two agencies can apply this kind of collaboration across all housing placements to include those families who are placed in HPD's homeless set-aside units.
- Increase the allocation of supportive housing units to families with children. In addition, we urge the city to reconsider how families are assessed for supportive housing to go beyond the head of household and include other family members, including children.
- Develop a 15-year rental subsidy that is both project- and tenant-based.
- Strengthen efforts to prevent family homelessness, with a specific focus on survivors/victims of domestic violence. While we understand that prevention services are administered by HRA, there needs to be a more intentional interagency collaboration so that residents of HPD-financed buildings have information about and can more systematically be connected to HRA's services, beyond HomeBase, that can not only help prevent homelessness but also support financial security. And we strongly urge HPD and HRA to collaborate on alternatives to shelter for families who are fleeing domestic violence.

I would like to stress that any comprehensive, interagency coordination to address family homelessness must also include other city agencies like the Department of Education, Administration of Children's Services and the Department of Mental Health and Hygiene. This

level of coordination, along with the support of the larger New York City community, can help ensure educational continuity for school-aged children, increase the enrollment of small children in early education and early intervention programs, and address the mental health needs of young mothers while infusing a trauma-informed lens throughout all of these efforts. It is this type of coordination that will help ensure the well being of children and their families.

Finally, Enterprise supports both Intro 1524 and Intro 1529 presented here today, which will help ensure greater safety and well being for homeless families. Regarding Intro 1529, as noted above, most cluster sites and hotels do not come with a kitchen, laundry facilities or recreational space, which creates additional hardship for homeless households. As DHS works to phase out cluster sites and hotels/motels, Enterprise strongly recommends:

- Minimizing the number of children and their families placed in cluster sites and hotels, especially given that many of these cluster sites are located in buildings that are poorly maintained with many building violations.
- Ensuring all cluster sites have regular access to social service staff who are trained in trauma-informed care and able to assist with housing, benefits, education (transportation/enrollment), early education, access to services (health, behavioral health, child welfare preventive, etc.), and employment training and assistance.

On behalf of Enterprise, we know the depth and complexity of family homelessness and that the city has put forth a tremendous amount of resources and thought into addressing this challenge. We strongly urge the city to build off this work with a comprehensive, coordinated interagency collaboration across many city agencies while it draws support from the larger NYC community, including us at Enterprise. We thank you for the opportunity to testify on these important priorities and we look forward to working with you to help meet the needs of homeless children and their families.

Testimony of  
Coalition for the Homeless  
And  
The Legal Aid Society

On

Oversight: HPD's Coordination with DHS/HRA to Address the Homelessness Crisis

Presented before

New York City Council  
Committee on General Welfare  
Committee on Housing and Buildings

Giselle Routhier  
Policy Director  
Coalition for the Homeless

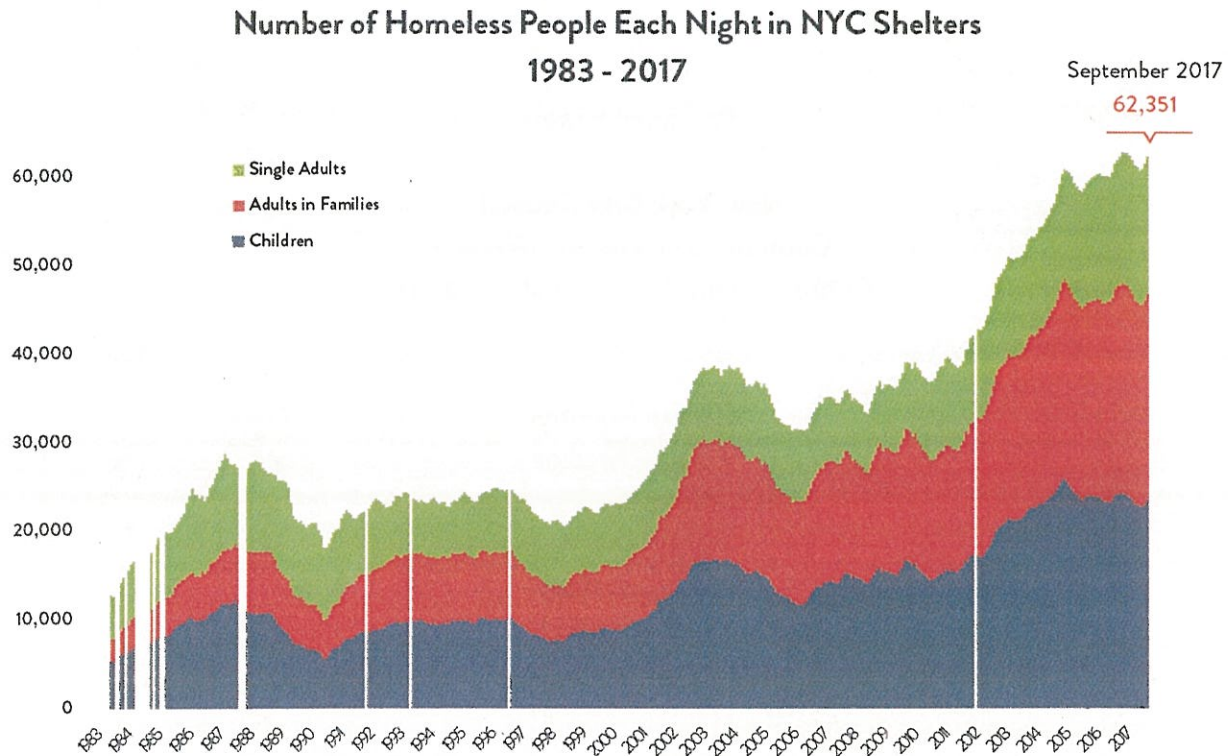
Josh Goldfein  
Staff Attorney  
The Legal Aid Society

November 20, 2017

The Coalition for the Homeless and The Legal Aid Society welcome this opportunity to testify before the New York City Council Committees on General Welfare and Housing and Buildings regarding HPD’s role in addressing homelessness in New York City.

**Record Homelessness in NYC**

New York City is facing an unprecedented homelessness crisis: Currently over 62,000 men, women, and children sleep each night in the City’s municipal shelter system, including over 23,000 children. Over the course of fiscal year 2017, a record 129,803 unique individuals spent some time in a shelter, including over 45,000 children. The emergency continues to be fueled by a chronic shortage of affordable housing – a result of the potent combination of rising rents, stagnating wages, and insufficient responses from all levels of government.



Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services and Human Resource Administration; LL37 Reports  
 Data include individuals in veteran’s shelters, Safe Havens, stabilization beds, and HPD emergency shelter.

**The Inadequacy of Mayor de Blasio’s Updated Housing Plan**

Mayor de Blasio’s record on homelessness has been muddled and in some instances wholly inadequate. He has taken positive steps: Significant new resources to prevent homelessness through a first-in-the-nation guarantee of legal assistance to low-income tenants facing eviction, an array of new rent subsidies to prevent homelessness and to assist individuals and families move out of shelters, increased investments in street outreach and low-threshold shelters, and the creation of 15,000 units of much-needed supportive

housing over the next 15 years. All of these commitments are critically important, but the Mayor's overall plan for reducing record homelessness is unambitious, lacks sufficient resources, and plainly fails to solve the underlying problem. His *Turning the Tide on Homelessness* plan projects a decrease of just 2,500 people in shelters over the next five years. Yet, he simultaneously touts an affordable housing plan to create and preserve an unprecedented 300,000 units of housing by 2026. These vastly mismatched goals highlight the conspicuously separate tracks the Mayor has laid for dealing with homelessness and creating housing, when the two are of course deeply interconnected. Homelessness cannot be substantially reduced without the adequate creation of deeply subsidized affordable housing targeted specifically to house homeless households.

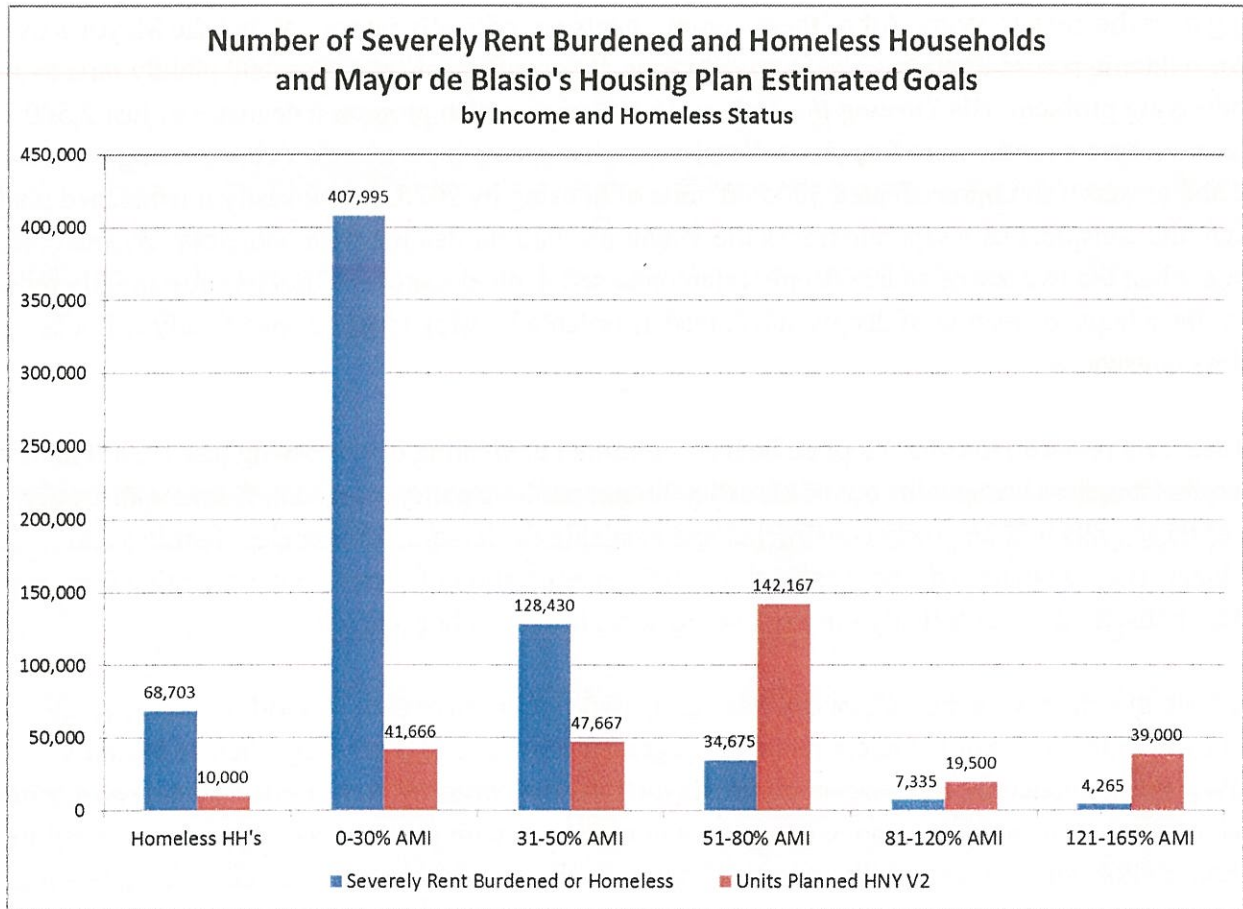
In the Mayor's revised *Housing NY* plan, he has committed to creating or preserving just 10,000 units of housing for homeless households out of his 300,000-unit goal – a paltry 3 percent. Additionally, only 4,000 of these units will be newly constructed and available for lease-up to homeless families and individuals. The remainder will be created through the preservation of occupied units serving formerly homeless households or eventually turning over to serve homeless households.

By contrast, at a time when homelessness was nearly two-thirds lower than it is today, Mayor Koch created over 15,000 units of homeless housing – a greater number and percentage than de Blasio's. Moreover, the estimated income targets in the Mayor's revised Housing New York Plan expose a serious mismatch between the housing production goals and real need, with two-thirds of all units expected to serve households who are far less likely to be struggling with severe rent burdens and/or homelessness.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Estimated production by income band is based on current production rates.





### **The Path Forward**

Mayor de Blasio must immediately align his housing goals with the reality of record homelessness and his touted progressive values. Specifically, he must build 10,000 new units of housing for homeless individuals and families over the next five years -- a first and achievable step given the scale of his housing plan and more importantly, the scale of the need. To succeed in truly turning the tide, the Mayor must continue this level of homeless housing production throughout the life of his housing plan. Additionally, HPD should be utilizing its network of developers to streamline the availability of rental units to shelter residents with City-initiated vouchers in hand. Currently, thousands of voucher holding families are languishing in shelters, while HPD is managing a wide portfolio of potentially suitable units for these families. This mismatch in priorities should be rectified immediately.

Another driver of the extremely limited supply of affordable apartments for people with very low incomes is the City's cluster site shelter program, which keeps thousands of rent regulated apartments off the market while they are used as shelter placements. We commend the Mayor's proposal in his *Turning the Tide* plan to phase out the use of clusters, but we are concerned that without affirmative steps to protect the affordability of these units, many will be lost from rent regulation as they come out of the program. We support Int. No. 1529, which would require the City to document its reduction in use of cluster sites, but recommend that the bill be amended to include provisions that would protect the rent

regulatory status of the units. One way to do this would be to require landlords to provide notice to tenants that the apartment was formerly a cluster site apartment and is rent regulated. The Council could also require HPD to exercise oversight of these transitions. We are happy to work with you to amend the bill to ensure it protects this valuable affordable housing resource.

These steps, taken in conjunction with doubling the number of NYCHA placements for homeless households, will have an immediate impact on record homelessness by achieving the twin goals of providing stable permanent affordable homes for homeless families and individuals and reducing the City's reliance on expensive emergency shelters.

Only with stable, affordable housing can New York help families get out of the shelter system and remain stably housed. The Mayor has the tools to reduce homelessness substantially for the first time in over a decade. We implore him to use them.

We'd like to thank the Council and Committees for the opportunity to testify today and look forward to working together to implement effective solutions to homelessness.

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## About Coalition for the Homeless and The Legal Aid Society

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

The Coalition operates 11 direct-services programs that offer vital services to homeless, at-risk, and low-income New Yorkers. These programs also demonstrate effective, long-term solutions and include: Supportive housing for families and individuals living with AIDS; job-training for homeless and formerly-homeless women; and permanent housing for formerly-homeless families and individuals. Our summer sleep-away camp and after-school program help hundreds of homeless children each year. The Coalition's mobile soup kitchen distributes over 900 nutritious hot meals each night to homeless and hungry New Yorkers on the streets of Manhattan and the Bronx. Finally, our Crisis Intervention Department assists more than 1,000 homeless and at-risk households each month with eviction prevention, individual advocacy, referrals for shelter and emergency food programs, and assistance with public benefits as well as basic necessities such as diapers, formula, work uniforms, and money for medications and groceries.

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

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

The Legal Aid Society has performed this role in City, State and federal courts since 1876. It does so by capitalizing on the diverse expertise, experience, and capabilities of more than 1,100 lawyers, working with some 800 social workers, investigators, paralegals and support and administrative staff. Through a network of borough, neighborhood, and courthouse offices in 26 locations in New York City, the Society provides comprehensive legal services in all five boroughs of New York City for clients who cannot afford to pay for private counsel.



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

The Legal Aid Society's unique value is an ability to go beyond any one case to create more equitable outcomes for individuals and broader, more powerful systemic change for society as a whole. In addition to the annual caseload of 300,000 individual cases and legal matters, the Society's law reform representation for clients benefits more than 1.7 million low-income families and individuals in New York City and the landmark rulings in many of these cases have a State-wide and national impact.

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



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**FOR THE RECORD**

**Testimony of New Destiny Housing Corporation  
Oversight – HPD’s Coordination with DHS/HRA to Address the Homelessness Crisis  
Hearing by Committee on General Welfare  
November 20, 2017**

**Presented by Carol Corden, Executive Director, New Destiny Housing Corporation**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today at this General Welfare Oversight Committee Hearing. My name is Carol Corden and I am the Executive Director of New Destiny Housing, a 23-year old not-for-profit dedicated to ending the cycle of domestic violence and homelessness by connecting families to safe, permanent housing and services. New Destiny currently operates 7 service-enriched affordable housing projects where at least half of the apartments are for domestic violence survivors and their children leaving HRA homeless shelters.

No one doubts the commitment of this Administration to addressing homelessness. In its first four years, Mayor de Blasio has made ending homelessness and improving the existing homeless system priorities. LINC and CityFEPS speak to the Administration’s willingness to commit City resources, in the absence of both State and federal support, to help homeless individuals and families move to permanent housing. And, *Turning the Tide* represents the Administration’s plan for reducing homelessness while improving the existing shelter system. These are just two of many examples that illustrate the Administration’s concern about and focus on the homeless problem.

Moreover, the underlying causes of homelessness—growing income inequality in our society, the shift to low-paid service jobs, the lack of truly affordable housing in the market, and racism—are difficult for any Mayor to address.

**However, New York State remains the center of family homelessness in the U.S. with almost 25% of the nation’s homeless families. Most of those homeless families live in New York City. Almost 70% of shelter users are families with children. If we look at all of the City’s homeless systems, 25,000 plus children are currently living in some form of shelter.**

And, in the largest homeless system operated by DHS, we know that the average length of stay for families in shelters, cluster sites, and hotels now exceeds one year. No one believes that young children should spend such a long portion of their short lives in such circumstances.

So, we need to ask ourselves: Are we as a City doing enough to mitigate the worst effects of homelessness especially for those 25,000 plus children who are impacted? And, how can improved coordination between HRA and HPD help to achieve this.

New Destiny suggests four ways that improved coordination between HRA, the agency responsible for responding to the homeless crisis, and HPD, the agency responsible for implementing the Mayor's affordable housing plan, could help to reduce family homelessness:

- (1) Provide the HRA specialized domestic violence system with a proportional share of HPD homeless housing resources**
- (2) Increase the number of units for homeless families in HPD-funded preservation and new construction projects**
- (3) Strengthen post-shelter services for developers serving homeless families**
- (4) Streamline the processing of rental subsidy programs and prioritize applications for homeless families with children**

## **1. PROVIDE A PROPORTIONAL SHARE OF HPD HOMELESS RESOURCES FOR THE HRA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER SYSTEM**

Because New Destiny serves domestic violence survivors coming from the specialized HRA homeless system, we have long been aware of the limited access residents of that system have to the City's homeless housing resources.

HPD's Administrative Plan states that homeless shelter residents from systems besides DHS shelter are eligible for HPD's homeless housing resources. In actual practice, however, the City's largest shelter system, operated by DHS, has almost exclusive access to HPD's homeless resources – housing subsidies and homeless set-aside units.

This dominance has particular relevance for the City's second largest homeless shelter system – the domestic violence emergency and transitional shelter system operated by HRA. In the course of a year, the domestic violence system serves between 9,000 and 11,000 adults and children, most of them families. In the 2016 HUD Point In Time Count, domestic violence victims were tied for third place as the largest homeless subpopulation in New York City. But, despite the size of this population, its share of HPD resources is far from proportional.

Moreover, when resources are offered to the HRA domestic violence shelter system, they are not made available in a predictable or reliable way over the course of a fiscal year, making it difficult to plan or to rationally distribute and target resources.

The trauma of domestic violence and homelessness can have long term impacts on victims that increase their likelihood of future victimization, hamper their ability to perform daily activities, and increase the use of multiple systems--including emergency rooms and hospitals, police and the criminal justice system, homeless shelters, and child welfare.

**The HRA DV system should have a proportional share of the homeless resources held by HPD and the likely size of that share should be shared with HRA at the beginning of the fiscal year to facilitate planning and better targeting of resources.**

## 2. PROVIDE MORE PERMANENT HOUSING FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

HPD includes some units for homeless individuals and families—largely through minimum set-asides in HPD-funded preserved and newly constructed housing and its Supportive Housing Loan Program. Mayor de Blasio’s recently announced plan to develop or preserve an additional 100,000 units of affordable housing will bring the number of units produced up to 300,000. As part of the plan’s retooling, HPD has increased the number of units for very low-income households.

However, the number of units for homeless individuals and families could decline in number as a result of the Administration’s attempt to provide more units—up to 25% of the total units produced—for extremely low and very low income households who are at risk of homelessness but not yet using shelter. This is a worthy goal – preventing individuals and families from becoming homeless—but it does not address the needs of those who are currently homeless.

Most of the new program sheets recently developed by HPD reduce the percentage of apartments set aside for the homeless to a minimum of 10% while increasing the number of low income households from the general population to be served. Although there is a modest financial incentive to house more homeless households, it is not sufficient—given the lack of support services—to overcome the reluctance of many for-profit developers to serve more than the required minimum.

The main HPD program addressing homelessness is the Supportive Housing Loan Program. While it has provided funding for homeless families, its main focus has been and remains homeless individuals who benefit from permanent housing with on-site support services.

Homeless *families*, by contrast, have been served through the set-asides required by the programs intended for use by developers creating affordable housing without on-site services and by subsidies for use in the private market.

**We would urge HPD and the Administration to respond more aggressively to the homeless crisis – and particularly the plight of homeless families with children—by further shifting the targeted income goals to include more housing for homeless families.** This can only be done, we understand, by increasing the subsidy for extremely low income families—thus reducing the total number of units that can be produced.

## 3. STRENGTHEN POST-SHELTER SERVICES TO PROMOTE HOUSING STABILITY

One of the for-profit development community’s concern about housing homeless families in HPD-funded preservation and new construction projects is the concern that the families housed require services that they are not equipped to provide. Previously homeless families may have never lived on their own, do not understand the requirements of their subsidies, and are often

overwhelmed by other pressures and problems. The many issues faced by the formerly homeless families and individuals can lead to housing instability if there are no on-site services or linkages to services. Landlords meanwhile lose rent and must pay for legal costs.

As part of the revision of its term sheets, HPD has sought to address this issue by requiring that developers using Our Space funding to capitalize a “social service reserve” in projects with homeless set-asides. However, many housing developers do not know how to identify and link with social service providers.

To facilitate the matching of appropriate service providers to HPD-funded projects containing homeless units, HPD and HRA should issue a RFQ for nonprofit service providers interested in offering services to homeless families at permanent housing and create a list of qualified providers with their expertise and experience. HRA and HPD could work together to match qualified service providers with HPD-funded projects containing homeless set-asides. The service provider would determine the level and duration of services to be provided depending upon the presenting needs of the homeless families to be housed.

**Cooperation between HRA and HPD in identifying and supporting potential service providers for projects with homeless set-asides could help incentivize more for-profit developers to include a larger percentage of homeless families in their projects.**

#### **4. STREAMLINE PROCESSING OF RENTAL SUBSIDY PROGRAMS AND PRIORITIZE THE APPLICATIONS OF HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN**

The six LINC subsidies, in addition, to FHEPS, Section 8, and other rental subsidy programs for special needs populations, are administered by different agencies and governed by the requirements of different funding sources. The array of subsidies and their differing requirements can be confusing, for recipients and landlords alike.

HRA and HPD, two of the main agencies administering NYC rental subsidies, should align their requirements and procedures, making them more transparent to recipients and more user-friendly to landlords by:

- 1) Using cross-systems information about homeless families in the shelter databases to target available subsidies and/or homeless resources (e.g., NYCHA public housing units and HPD homeless set-aside units) more appropriately.**

Cross-agency cooperation and data-sharing between HRA and HPD, or the centralization of homeless housing resources, as is anticipated under the Coordinated Assessment and Placement System (CAPS) that is being developed, would help to ensure that homeless families are being assigned the most appropriate subsidy or housing option given the situation of that household.

- 2) Standardizing HPD and HRA inspection and application standards across rental subsidy programs.**

The differing inspection and application requirements as well as rent payment levels are often confusing for landlords and applicants. The rigorous inspection requirements for some programs versus others lengthen the period that units remain vacant and result in rental income losses for housing operators—a frequent cause of frustration with subsidy programs among developers and property managers. Different inspection requirements also create competition among the rental subsidy programs resulting in landlord and developer preferences for some programs over others. Homeless families with certain subsidies may have greater difficulty finding landlords willing to accept their rental vouchers because of concerns about the timing and stringency of the inspection process.

**3) Working together to prioritize and fast-track the application review process and the inspection of units intended for homeless families with children.**

To the extent possible, HPD and HRA should prioritize the inspection of units intended for homeless families with children with one agency taking the lead for all inspections. The review of rental subsidy applications for homeless applicants should be streamlined to facilitate the movement of families with shelter as quickly as possible from shelter to permanent housing to reduce the negative impact of homelessness particularly on children.

This hearing has focused on coordination between two key government agencies, HRA and HPD. However, all of us must work together to find ways of reducing homelessness if we do not want to see those 25,000 plus children in shelter return to shelter in the future with their children. It's imperative that we focus on the plight of homeless children and start addressing their needs now.

We thank the Council for the opportunity to speak today and welcome any questions you may have.

**Contact Information:**  
**Carol Corden, Executive Director**  
**New Destiny Housing**  
**646-472-0262 ext. 11**  
**Ccorden@newdestinyhousing.org**

My name is Nathylin Flowers Adesegun. I am a member of VOCAL-NY. We are a grassroots organization, working to end AIDS, mass incarceration, the drug war, and homelessness. On behalf of VOCAL-NY, I want to thank the General Welfare Committee Chair Stephen Levin, the Housing Committee Chair Jumaane Williams, and the other members of this committee for the opportunity to provide testimony, and for calling this important hearing today.

I am from Brooklyn. For 34 and a half years, I lived just a block away from Loews Kings Theater in Flatbush.

After years of living in my building, my apartment was destabilized, and my rent skyrocketed from \$475 a month to \$1319.16. There was no way I could pay that amount, so eventually, I was evicted. I am now homeless. I have been living at a woman's shelter for two years and eight months. Despite having family, social ties, memories, my church, and support networks in Flatbush, I don't know if I'll ever live there again. There are thousands more like me who have been displaced from their neighborhoods and are not able to return. This is wrong.

For years, I've watched my neighborhood—Flatbush—transform. New buildings have been constructed, and new people have moved in. Just down the street from where I lived in Flatbush, a 24-story building was constructed at 626 Flatbush Avenue in 2015. Check out the webpage and you'll see how big and beautiful the building is, how it overlooks Prospect Park and has views of Manhattan. How many units of housing do you think were set aside in that building, for the homeless? None.

Mayor De Blasio's affordable housing plan is not for the homeless. We know this because we are largely left out of it. The little housing that has been created for homeless people through the Housing NY plan, simply does not meet the demand and scale of the crisis.

In the last few weeks, the Mayor unveiled new pieces of the Housing NY plan. One major piece was a promise to build 300,000 units of housing by 2026. On October 24th, he announced his plan, but there was no mention of how an additional 100,000 units of housing would be used to solve homelessness. I'm not surprised by this, but I think it highlights the problem:

Mayor de Blasio's Housing NY plan is not being used as a tool to reduce the homeless crisis, even though it has the potential to do so. And that means, the 60,000 New Yorkers who are homeless, are not a priority in the plan. Even worse yet, that means that the 25,000 children who sleep in shelters every night are not a priority either! Imagine what that means for generations of young people: not only do they lack housing, but they also struggle to get to school and succeed academically. I think of what that means for children and young people from my neighborhood in Flatbush, and my heart breaks. This doesn't have to be this way! Aren't we the richest city, with the most resources, and the most brilliant people in New York? Why can't we come up with

a better plan?

So we—our community, our City Council—have to ask, what needs to happen before city agencies unite, to work on solving homelessness together?

HRA has taken some necessary steps to provide the homeless with new rental assistance programs like SEPS and LINC. I have the LINC voucher and have had it renewed every 3 months for over a year. To date, I haven't found a landlord willing to rent me a one bedroom apartment or studio. One reason I can't seem to find housing with my voucher, is rampant source of income discrimination across the city. Landlords and brokers simply don't want to rent to poor people, and very little is stopping them from keeping us out.

We need the city to do more on this issue. One way to do more, is by focusing on the developers and landlords who are most invested in the Mayor's affordable housing plan. How many vouchers are in use at their buildings? How is HPD ensuring that these developers and landlords are following the law? And lastly, why aren't they mandated to house more people with vouchers if they are the first to be awarded big projects by the city? If these developers benefit from city tax-payer dollars, they must be required to do their part to solve the worst homeless crisis our city has ever seen.

If there is any chance that I'll ever return and live in permanent housing in the neighborhood that was once mine—and if we want to avoid creating future generations of struggling young people—then it's imperative that HPD do more to address homelessness.

We have yet to hear a meaningful proposal outlining how the Housing NY plan will help to **significantly** reduce the homeless population. Mayor de Blasio must make clear commitments to the homeless community detailing how the Housing NY plan will reduce homelessness, not by the hundreds, but by the tens-of-thousands.

We are waiting to hear what these commitments are, and we won't applaud any affordable housing plan until it includes all of us in a more significant way.

Thank you.



**Sam Winfrey, November 20, 2017**

**Good Afternoon.**

**Thanks you for allowing me to address you today.**

**My name is Sam Winfrey .**

**I am a soon to be 60 year old homeless man currently being housed by DHS in the Bronx.**

**I have been homeless since May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017.**

**I had been living in Europe for over 30 years.**

**I took a medical retirement in France in December 2014.**

**Due to the death of my Life Partner of over 26 years and issues with the Estate, I find myself homeless in New York City.**

**I am very grateful for the help that DHS and New York had provided to me but dealing with my recent Bereavement as well being homeless without outside resources is very Stressful!**

**Adding to that stress is Housing.**

**I have been looking for housing for several months now and I find the apparent disconnect between DHS and HPD even more stressful.**

**I have yet to receive any vouchers nor been offered any other options.**

**I have applied; on my own, to NYCHA as well as actively looking for housing options.**

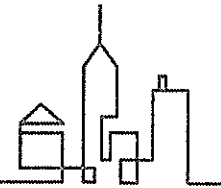
**I find the limited option on NYCHA very puzzling as an example: I found an offer in October of studios and one bedrooms in Manhattan at Columbus Circle with a minimum income for the studio of almost \$90,000.00!!!**

**That is not affordable housing in any circle.**

**There does not seem to be an abundance of affordable housing available from HPD and a lack of information about that existing housing that they do have!**

**The Only Way to reduce homelessness is to provide amply and truly affordable housing and information to the public.**

**Thank You,**



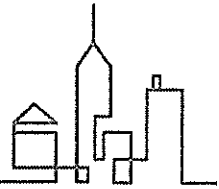
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**Testimony to the New York City Council  
General Welfare and Housing and Buildings Committees  
Submitted by Laura Mascuch, Supportive Housing Network of New York  
November 20, 2017**

My name is Laura Mascuch and I am the Executive Director of The Supportive Housing Network of New York, a membership organization of approximately 200 nonprofit developers, owners, and providers of supportive housing statewide. Collectively, there are 50,000 units of supportive housing in the state and 32,000 in New York City. Supportive housing represents a critical tool to end homelessness, offering permanent housing solutions with wraparound social services for homeless individuals and families with special needs. As you know, we are currently experiencing the worst crisis of homelessness that New York City has ever seen. Over 60,000 vulnerable New Yorkers are currently sleeping in City shelters, because these individuals and families cannot secure a permanent home.

In order to combat this crisis, as well as to help other New Yorkers facing similar housing insecurity, the Administration has made a historic commitment to invest in 15,000 units of permanent supportive housing over 15 years. This initiative, NYC 15/15, is funding a proven solution to homelessness, and for that we are extremely grateful to the City.

HPD's new Rental Assistance Program, a key aspect of the NYC 15/15 plan, is truly historic. This marks the first time that New York City is directly providing operating subsidy to enable housing providers to peg rent at 30% of residents' income, thereby ensuring that no tenant is rent-burdened or housing insecure in these 15,000 new units. Additionally, the service contracts awarded through HRA are appropriately funded to acknowledge the true cost of providing services to chronically homeless individuals and families suffering from serious disabilities and life challenges. We were pleased to see

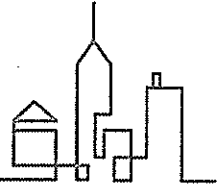


\$48.6 million in the FY18 budget for rental assistance and social services, scaling up to \$108.3 million in FY20, figures that can get the program off to a strong start.

Along with HRA, HPD has been an invaluable advocate for supportive housing development. HPD has pioneered the integration of supportive housing into existing city housing programs such as the Extremely Low & Low-Income Affordability program, ELLA, and the Mixed Income Program: Mix & Match, by enabling homeless set-asides to be met with supportive housing.

Despite the unprecedented level of support from the current administration, our members still face significant challenges in creating supportive housing in New York City. On the federal level, on top of the constant looming threat that HUD will end important housing programs, there is also the threat of Republican-led tax reform. The House bill that passed last week eliminates all Private Activity Bonds, which generate 4% Low-income Housing Tax Credits, and lowers the corporate tax rate to 20%, which will greatly decrease the value of the 9% Housing Credit. These federal programs provide equity for virtually all new affordable and supportive housing residences in New York City. At the same time, developers of supportive housing face rising labor, construction, and land costs. These high costs place a heavy burden on nonprofit developers who are already trying to compete with for-profit developers who have greater access to private equity. In light of the significant investment the City has made in supportive housing, it is essential that the city government ensure mission-driven nonprofit organizations are able to get the guidance and tools they need to gain access to the market.

Rolling out a new program often comes with some bumps in the road, and NYC 15/15 has had its challenges. But throughout this process, HPD has remained patient and committed to ensuring that these deals come together, even in difficult circumstances, and for that we are enormously grateful. Success in such an ambitious goal as NYC 15/15 requires interagency collaboration to accomplish. We at



The Network are deeply invested in facilitating cooperation between agencies at all levels of government and aim to act as a resource throughout this collaboration. In cooperation with the City, the Network has hosted multiple panels on NYC 15/15 to get the word out to providers and help them connect with HRA, HPD, and DOHMH. Additionally, through our website and funding guide, we communicate current and valuable information from the City to our members and the public. We look forward to continuing to play this role as facilitator and convener and to working with the Council and Administration on implementation of this ambitious supportive housing plan.

The Council especially plays an invaluable role in helping our providers engage with communities. One of our deepest concerns about the City's ability to live up to its commitment of 15,000 units is the fracturing of communities that often occurs as bitter debates emerge around the construction of new supportive housing residences. All too often, only a vocal few in a community are able to voice their opinion on a project and thus, despite the unspoken support of many others, a supportive housing project is halted due to fears of loss of property value or a decline in their communities. In reality, communities have actually benefitted from supportive housing in their neighborhood: a 2008 study found that the values of properties within 500 feet of supportive housing showed steady growth relative to other properties in the area. Additionally, study after study has demonstrated the significant cost savings supportive housing yields for taxpayers by reducing the populations of shelters, prisons, and institutions. And while these savings are great, the human benefit is truly immeasurable. Thousands of lives have been improved and saved through supportive housing.

We need to rally around proven solutions to tackle the homelessness crisis, and for that, we need the Council's help to engage with their communities. We need to work together -- the administration, the

# the Network

Supportive Housing Network of NY



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Council, providers, and the community -- to create solution-oriented housing that works not only for neighborhoods, but the City as a whole.



# SAFETY NET ACTIVISTS

Supported by the Safety Net Project at the Urban Justice Center

**NEW YORK CITY HEARING OVERSIGHT  
GENERAL WELFARE & HOUSING & BUILDINGS COMMITTEES  
HPD'S COORDINATION WITH DHS/HRA TO ADDRESS THE HOMELESS CRISIS  
11/20/17**

My name is Wendy O'Shields I am testifying as a New York City Homeless Rights Advocate and a member of the Urban Justice Safety Net Activists.

The City of New York has an epidemic of Homeless citizens sleeping in the Department of Homeless Services shelters and in the New York City Streets! Accountability of the City of New York's agencies primarily the Housing Preservation and Development HPD, Department of Homeless Services DHS, and the Human Resource Administration HRA is paramount!

Our New York City Homeless crisis should be measured weekly to track HPD, DHS, HRA and the DHS contracted Street Outreach Teams for their inactivity or their successful independent or supportive housing placements.

The City of New York with the oversight of the Comptroller office should adopt a zero tolerance policy of HPD, DHS, and HRA for their clear emphasis on not HUD rapid re-housing Homeless citizens and instead warehousing or ignoring their growing numbers.

The Mayor and City Council should require HPD to report weekly how many DHS Shelter and Street Homeless Single Adults they housed. The Single Adult Homeless are the most neglected.

HPD controls tens of thousands of affordable apartments Citywide and they should drastically increase the amount for Homeless New Yorkers especially those earning less than \$25,000.00 per year.

In New York Housing Connect, there should be a high priority status for DHS Shelter Homeless residents to check. There is currently no option to indicate who is Shelter or Street Homeless. Housing Homeless is not a priority for HPD. HPD should be fined a TBD daily amount for not housing Homeless New Yorkers.

The City of New York's Comptroller's office should chargeback the Department of Homeless Services a \$1000.00 per day for each DHS Shelter Homeless resident without a completed New York State Housing Plan. See EXHIBIT A. If DHS staff fraudulently subtracts or adds information to the residents Housing Plan, they should be swiftly terminated and prosecuted by New York State.

HRA Housing vouchers should expire yearly with additional yearly renewal if income eligible and no time limits. HRA housing vouchers should be in the recipients NYC HRA Access online account. Often the DHS caseworker, housing specialist, or other staff withholds the housing voucher from the apartment seeker.

I thank you for considering my suggestions to assist HPD, DHS, and HRA with their accountability in the City of New York's Homeless crisis.

11-20-17

Exhibit A

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Shelter's Name)

**HOUSING PLAN**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Housing Specialist)

<b>Resident Name:</b>	<b>Rm #:</b>	<b>Admission Date:</b>
<b>Telephone:</b>		<b>Caseworker:</b>
<b>I.M./LDSS:</b>		<b>Boro/County:</b>
<b>P.A. Caseworker:</b>		<b>Telephone:</b>
<b>Social Security #:</b>		<b>P.A. Identification #:</b>
<b>Date you became homeless:</b>		<b>Reason for homelessness:</b>
<b>Marital Status:</b>		

List the head of household's last four places of residence:

Address	<u>County/Borough</u>	Date moved in	Date moved out	Reason for move
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

List all persons who live with the family in the shelter:

Name	Relationship	Age	Citizenship	Income Amount	List School Attending
1.	HOH				
2.					
3.					
4.					



1. Does the family have any children in foster care? Yes  No

Explain the need for foster care: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Does the family anticipate additional individuals residing with them in permanent housing? If yes, please list below.

NAME	AGE	SEX	RELATIONSHIP	FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLANS:

**General Health:**

Parent(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Child(ren): \_\_\_\_\_

Special problems: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

1. Is any member of the family pregnant? Yes  No   
 If yes, when is the baby expected? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Is any member of the family disabled? Yes  No   
 If yes, enter the name and disability \_\_\_\_\_

3. Are any family members currently involved in a special program? Yes  No

Who: \_\_\_\_\_

Substance Abuse: \_\_\_\_\_ Alcoholism Counseling: \_\_\_\_\_ Mental Health: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Explain any reason why the family may be disqualified for permanent housing: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Has any member of the family been convicted of a crime? Yes  No  Who? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Has any member of the family ever been on probation or parole? Yes  No  Who? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

**INCOME:**

Current Sources of Income (all that apply)	Monthly
Public Assistance/Family Assistance Safety Net Assistance	\$
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	\$
Social Security	\$
Employment	\$
Other (please specify):	\$

Entitlement	Mandated?	Amount Mandated	Amount Currently Received
WIC	Yes ( ) No ( )		
Home Emergency	Yes ( ) No ( )		
Food Stamps	Yes ( ) No ( )		
Car fare (apt. search)	Yes ( ) No ( )		
Car fare (school)	Yes ( ) No ( )		
Pregnancy	Yes ( ) No ( )		
Other (Specify):	Yes ( ) No ( )		

1. Are any family members currently enrolled in a training program or attending school? Yes  No

2. Name and address of program or school: \_\_\_\_\_

Date started: \_\_\_\_\_ Expected date of completion: \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many bedrooms needed? \_\_\_\_\_

4. List other housing applications filed?

a. \_\_\_\_\_ Date Applied: \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_ Date Applied: \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_ Date Applied: \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_ Date Applied: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Does the family have furniture? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Date placed in storage. \_\_\_\_\_

Housing Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Survey: \_\_\_\_\_



# SAFETY NET ACTIVISTS

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**NEW YORK CITY HEARING OVERSIGHT  
GENERAL WELFARE & HOUSING & BUILDINGS COMMITTEES  
HPD'S COORDINATION WITH DHS/HRA TO ADDRESS THE HOMELESS CRISIS  
11/20/17**

My name is Peter Malvan I am Street Homeless since 2011, a Safety Net Activist, a CoChair of the CoC Consumer Committee, disabled, age 59, and I have worked in social services since 1989 in New York City.

My testimony attests to lack of coordination between HPD, DHS and HRA. I have SEPS voucher which has been updated, then renewed on basis that I won lottery for Maestro West Chelsea. Processing began for Maestro 9/02/2016. The voucher was renewed 9/15/2017 and I was informed that it would not be renewed if I did not have apartment by 12/15/2017.

Over a week ago Wavecrest management tax credit assistant screener for Maestro a project in HPD's NYC Housing Connect informed me a unit was available, but unfortunately their search must continue since this unit is for hearing impaired person. I am mobility impaired with progressive ophthalmology impairment. I have been in contact with MOC and BRC outreach since 2011 trying to become permanently housed.

It seems that documentation from outreach would make me eligible for SEPS voucher according to evidence guidelines yet somehow this has never been told to SEPS eligibility personnel. Wavecrest indicated it may be extended period before I am contacted again for a unit. This was reported to SOID as possible gimmick to avert taking voucher and is clearly discrimination.

The fact that HPD, HRA, and DHS are major participants in CoC and supportive of my efforts to get housing makes a clear case for lack of coordination and even a clearer picture of how management companies contracted to screen HPD projects discriminate with immunity and how "**Street Homeless**" are left out of access to housing despite being technically most vulnerable.

Contact Information  
Peter Malvan  
jhh\_pmalvan@hotmail.com

Griffin Kinard  
November 20<sup>th</sup> 2017

We the people of homelessness are not being cared for properly. The workers you employ are not able to accommodate us with the care we need, leaving us to fend for ourselves when they are supposed to assist us. We come looking for help and get next to nothing and everyone seems to be fine with that. You make it seem like because we are in a shelter we are fine and/or happy with where we live; and that is as far from the truth as the earth is from the moon.

I have been in the shelter system for five years now and I can tell you it is no one's fault but my own, but the hell that I've experience within this system is not fair and something need to be done about it. All throughout my life I was told to be the change I want to see, but the same problem I am having with this statement is the same problem I am having with the shelter system. The people in the position to help me make a difference are the same people that seem not to care for change. Since being here I have lost my son because his mother got tired of waiting for me to get my own so she up and left to another state making it next to impossible for me to even be with my boy. This is no one fault but the system itself.

Within five years I have hand two different housing package and have had no housing as of yet. Why, because people in the position to assist me did and/or not doing nothing. If I do everything that I am told to do and I leave the rest to you or whomever and they do nothing, then my half or my part is useless and will remain useless; and that is unfair and unjust. As I look for a job today and the days that will follow. I cannot, not do my job and expect to still have a job at the end of the day, but these workers that sit around and judge and allow their personal to feelings get in the way still do. It would seem that the only ones that do, do their job are the homeless. We do what we have to do and are lead astray with false pretenses, empty words and sloth like actions.

The newspaper parades homelessness as people without home not of the struggle that goes on within the shelter system. It is believed, that just because you give us a rundown place to call home temporarily all is well; but it is not. We need more help and should be given it but most of us are satisfied; but all of us are not and for those that are not content should be first priority when these housing opportunities arise.

Question: why is that when people in need ask for help, help is never given to them?

This county is a system and/or is build on one and can do everything for everyone around the world but the home front is left without ad. This befuddles me fully and I know it to be wrong. Veterans, the mentally ill and the physical disable, it would seem are all thrown in a pot with a lid placed on it and forgotten about. Why? Why, do I feel like this; because it is true. My eyes don't deceive me and if they do, then those I talk to; the veterans, mentally ill and the physical disable don't.

I have many questions for my leaders but this one has manifested within my mind for your years and now that I have the opportunity to say something I think it time that I speak on it. Why are we being recycled improperly and information not dispensed properly into home or other system better fit for our needs? Why are these workers ill-equipped to deal with the mentally ill? Why are these workers not trained to deal us the clinic that they are servicing? Do you care to answer these questions or will you leave them unanswered?

I speak for all when I say that this is a broken system and will remain this way if the higher ups don't do something about this growing ongoing problem. The use of these words dispensed and recycle are not out of content. If anything, we are not being recycled properly. Our story can shed light on a topic and an issue that is a growing problem. I can bring a horse to the water; but I can't force it to drink. Also, we too are Americans and we fight the war of everyday struggles and need our leaders help, to give us what it is we can get on our own. Housing, proper medical treatment, better day to day care and so much more

### **Key Words**

**Dispense-** distribute or provide (a service or information)

**Recycle-** convert (waste) into reusable material

### **Key Philosophies**

Be the change you want to see

You can bring a horse to the water but you can't force it to drink.

Thank you

Griffin T Kinard

Charmaine Gayle

20 November, 2017

Oversight: HPD's Coordination with DHS/HRA to Address the Homelessness Crisis

The New York City Council

Committees on General Welfare and Housing and Buildings

My name is Charmaine Gayle. I'm 45 years old and I lived in a domestic violence shelter from 2008 until 2010. Now I live in an Adult Family shelter with my domestic partner since 2013.

1. My first issue is with the discrimination that clients with vouchers face while looking for apartments and dealing with brokers. We experience Source of Income Discrimination; we are asked questions, charged fees and still cannot find apartments.
2. DHS needs to update their apartment website at least monthly.
3. The travel allowance budget is not enough for clients with not enough income.
4. I was injured in my shelter one day before the Callahan inspection on 22 June, 2017.
5. We need cleaner, safer drinking water.

We are back to the old way of doing things and it is just not enough. Stop the cycle of homelessness in New York City.

The \$1268.00 Voucher limit can only afford  
to rent in the Bronx only

11/20/17

My name is Diann Mitchell residing at Van Siclen Samaritan Village women's shelter in Brooklyn. I've been in shelter for 2 years, 4 months and 21 days.

I received the LINC 4 voucher on October 19, 2015. I was assigned a housing specialist by the name Mr. T who was of no help. In February 2016 I found a one bedroom in Queens and waited 4 months before it passed the inspection in June 2016. After I had done all the work, Mr. T then lied to me and gave the apartment to a favored client because that way he could claim the bonus for supposedly doing the groundwork to find the apartment.

I have had 4 housing specialists and not one has helped me. There are 200 women at Van Siclen and each of the three housing specialists have more than a 50 client case load.

I've done housing searches on Housing Connect, made phone calls to brokers, kept a housing log and spoke to landlords but I get nothing.

Landlords say once a lease is signed, DHS is taking 2 months to cut the checks which is too long. Some say the voucher money is not enough. Brokers say landlords don't want to deal with government programs.

I am 61 years old and would like a chance to live in my community in Queens. DHS can do a better job matching clients with desired neighborhoods because many times those that get housing interviews are not satisfied with the neighborhood placements they get.

I've had an application on file with NYCHA since October 15, 2014 and have kept renewing it but I have heard nothing from them.

Mr. Mayor, please help me. I cannot afford the rent without government assistance, and the current programs are misplaced. Please fix your voucher systems and housing programs so that brokers and landlords can accept them. Additionally, please fix the staffing issues to get us competent housing specialists.

My name is Madge Philantrope.

I came here when I was 5 with my mom and stepdad.

I became a citizen and started working at 16. *I Am 32 now*

I am of Afro-European decent, born of the Island Hispaniola, a Haitian Latina.

In completion, I've been poor since 8yrs. Old. Ironically enough, I have earned a Master's degree in Social Work from Stony Brook University of Long Island and have plenty of unpaid debt (like anyone else who's gone to school), and have been street homeless (in and out of shelters since then, CLASS OF '09). *I was 23 then.*

POVERTY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE follows you, even when you've literally gone out of your way to do everything accordingly in trying to avoid all sorts of adversity and stereotypes...

There are no vouchers, nor programs allotted to "PEOPLE LIKE US," since it's ever so seemingly "easy to move upward" in America, "YES WE CAN!"

And yet, it's been difficult to keep a job in consequence, however.

By the time I'm allotted to partake in lottery "affordable Housing," I'M OUT OF A JOB AGAIN! With certain employers, when you are well engaged, you nearly get there, "I'M ALMOST THERE!" But, you never quite arrive.

We need programs catering to common sense.

Vouchers that are allotted for AMERICA based on PERSONAL NEED and time spent in the system.

I've spent nearly nine years at this juncture meandering the city impoverished.

I've been so poor and have worked so hard in vain, that I haven't been able to even DREAM of creating my VERY own family. And yet I HOLD FAST. I AM STILL HERE!

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.



Dinick Martinez  
20 November, 2017

Oversight: HPD's Coordination with DHS/HRA to Address the Homelessness Crisis  
The New York City Council  
Committees on General Welfare and Housing and Buildings

Good afternoon. Thank for your time today. My name is Dinick Martinez. I am a transgender student. I am observing Transgender day of Remembrance. I have been in the shelter system for over 2 years.

Finding housing is very difficult, even if you have a Voucher. I had a LINC voucher and was quite excited. However, finding housing that was affordable was not possible. Having people repeatedly tell me that the Voucher does not guarantee payment. Finding any apartment that will accept my Voucher is almost impossible.

In addition to the limited housing options available, when I do find a listing; the agents and landlords build barriers on accepting the Voucher or demanding conditions that the homeless individuals cannot fulfill like a good credit score, working only or application fees which is usually 65 dollars and up.

HPD needs to provide affordable housing without barriers. This is the only solution for the homeless in New York City.



## PICTURE THE HOMELESS

### Testimony of Scott Andrew Hutchins Oversight – HPD’s Coordination with DHS/HRA to Address the Homelessness Crisis.

November 20, 2017

My name is Scott Andrew Hutchins, and I have been living in the shelter system for five and a half years in spite of a master’s degree from CUNY, my most recent jobs paying at or near the minimum wage. I am here representing Picture the Homeless in support of the Housing Not Warehousing Act.

In 2012, Picture the Homeless found enough vacant property in only a third of the city to house three times the current shelter population. Bill de Blasio called for a count of vacant property in his Housing New York plan, but he has just won a second term without making any strides toward implementing it. Picture the Homeless proved that this can be done, and now it needs to be done citywide.

As a resident of the shelter system, I fervently oppose the mayor’s plan to build ninety new homeless shelters while failing to create sufficient low income housing. We cannot even truly address the homeless crisis until we find out how much available housing stock there is, and that is exactly the purpose of the Housing not Warehousing Act. As long as we depend on different city departments to make their own vacant property lists, we will continue to find their counts wildly inaccurate and inconsistent.

The Bedford-Union Armory has been a divisive city issue, particularly for those like me who live in the district. Intro 1039, part of the Housing not Warehousing Act, would prevent such disastrous uses of public land for private gain in the midst of a housing crisis, by creating recommendations for “affordable” housing whenever possible. We need bills like Intro 1039 for a level of transparency and honesty that we are not currently getting.

Finally, we can punish the personal gain at public expense through the use of Intro 1034, which requires landlords to register their vacant property, and penalizes them for failure to register. Landlords should not have a right to profit at the expense of taxpayers as the shelter population skyrockets. With steep enough fines, landlords will be encouraged to either relinquish their property, which is often old enough to fall into rent stabilization, or begin renting to tenants at the current value of their apartments rather than waiting on tenants for higher income, thus significantly alleviating the housing crisis.

Picture the Homeless believes that this is an essential first step towards solving the city’s homelessness crisis, and one part of the solution.



## PICTURE THE HOMELESS

Testimony of Jose Rodriguez,  
Oversight – HPD's Coordination with DHS/HRA to Address the Homelessness Crisis.

November 20, 2017

My name is Jose Rodriguez and I am a proud member of Picture the Homeless and Banana Kelly Resident's Council. While the city's homeless population continues to rise, the city continues to lose extremely low income apartments at record levels each year. There is a visible increase of new buildings being built throughout the city. However the City is building for those who have more housing opportunities than people with less opportunity. The City's poorest of the poor, with AMI under 30%, have just 15% of apartment units being set aside from the mayor's now 300,000 unit housing plan. Most of the units are for people with 50% AMI and higher. But that isn't where the need is. Vouchers have had some success housing extremely low income people however the issue remains the same. The need for truly extremely low income housing still exists.

Existing term sheets set aside very few units for people most at risk of homelessness. And many homeless people do not qualify for supportive housing, which makes up the majority of units built for households below 30% AMI since 2014. The city continues to build housing that doesn't address the need of the city's poor. The city is spending money on new shelters, and not spending enough money on making housing more affordable to extremely low income households. But there is a solution.

Experts say that it costs an extra \$40-45,000 dollars of additional money to reduce the AMI by 10%, or to get housing at the affordability we need. This is the same amount that it costs the city to house a homeless household, on average, for one year. P.T.H. recommends that DHS and HPD utilize money accumulated by city tax payers to invest in truly low income affordable housing instead of warehousing human beings for years in demoralizing conditions.

People in shelters are unable to achieve their dreams and desires that most of us take for granted due to the inhumanity of the system. My experience living in the shelter made me at times be placed in debilitating situations.

There is a real feeling of being humiliated due to being stigmatized or even criminalized being in the shelter system. Having housing makes you feel confident, and allows people to pursue the things in life that make all New Yorkers unique and special. It is important that the city create housing for people with extremely low incomes because all people deserve a roof over their heads no matter the income they generate to the state. Not only does providing housing (not shelters) cost less, it is the right thing to do morally. P.T.H is asking the council to use the powers they have to help the tens of thousands of truly low income New Yorkers that are in shelters, on the street, living in there cares, or on the verge of losing their homes and community ties. Gentrification affects everyone in the community.

P.T.H. is recommending HPD/DHS to use city tax levy funds and all the buildings being built to put more units aside for people who are homeless with AMI 30% and lower. New York City has the highest rate of homelessness in any city in the country. I always hear that New York is a sanctuary city, if this is the case P.T.H. is asking the city council, HPD and HUD to provide sanctuary to the thousands of truly extremely low income and minimum wage earning new Yorkers in the form of truly extremely low income housing units. But I like to call these apartment units homes.



## PICTURE THE HOMELESS

Testimony of Douglas G.

Oversight – HPD's Coordination with DHS/HRA to Address the Homelessness Crisis.

November 20, 2017

Good afternoon,

My name is Douglas G., and I'm currently a member of Picture the Homeless. I am also a resident in a DHS shelter. The reason I became a member of Picture the Homeless is because I feel like DHS (Department of Homeless Services) is not going far enough to better help homeless individuals like myself who have a housing voucher to find housing. More than half of the residents in my shelter do not have a housing specialist, and if they do, they do not have the resources to help us find housing. Every housing specialist should have the resources they need – whether that is a list of landlords from HPD or something else – to help house residents. And when we do find an open apartment, the rent is way too high to afford or landlords refuse to accept my voucher. There was one time where I went to look at an apartment which I researched beforehand, so I pretty much knew what they had and what they didn't have. When I went there I told them about my housing voucher before I got to look at the apartment. Then they said to me the apartment is no longer vacant, but the website said otherwise. Both HPD and DSS need to work very closely to crack down on source of income discrimination. And for repeat offenders, there should be a harsher penalty considering the crisis we see today.

We are aware that HPD set a requirement for any developer who receives certain HPD subsidies to set aside 10% of their units for low income people. This does not go far enough. We recommend expanding that to at least 15%, and sectioning off a good portion of those apartments for voucher holders who are languishing in shelters and in other dangerous temporary housing. This would open the door wider for homeless people and start emptying the shelters.

We also have enough vacant property in New York City to build affordable housing for homeless people, for people like myself, who have a housing voucher but can't afford or find permanent housing. And for this reason we need to pass the Housing Not Warehousing Act, which would count every piece of vacant property in New York City, but also hold speculators accountable who are sitting on vacant property for years, only to make a profit. I see vacant property everywhere, and it seems like nothing is being done with them.

Hello. Good afternoon. Thank you for allowing me the chance to speak here today. My name is Angela Hernandez. I'm shelter homeless right now living in a single women's shelter. I was granted the LINC program four months ago but unfortunately I have had no success at all in finding affordable housing, moreover, just finding a landlord who will accept any housing assistance programs is a major hurdle in itself.

The only housing that seems to be available to us are these dilapidated buildings offering a slummy closet size room likely having a mice or roach infestation problem that we are supposed to just "accept" and be content with.

Another problem is the availability. In one day I probably called over 40 realty offices. The collective response was always to either "call back next week" or "they don't take vouchers." Out of all my efforts I've put into searching, I have only come across two businesses that accepts housing programs however, they require for you to have a 650 or higher credit score. I do not know where they come up with that number when most people on government assistance have little or no credit at all.

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Baldwin

Address: Homeless 40

I represent: Homeless Youth

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

Please complete **THE COUNCIL** Sergeant-at-Arms  
**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/20/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sarah Mallory

Address: 110 Cold St.

I represent: HIPD

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

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**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Erin M. Drinkwater

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

I represent: DSS

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



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 in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/20/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Margaret Brown

Address: 100 Gold St

I represent: 100 Gold St HPD

Address: 1

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/20/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Molly Park

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

I represent: HPD

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

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Charmaine Foyke

Address: 980 Prospect Ave Bronx NY 10459 Apt 515

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARGIE PHILANTROPE

Address: 1424 Herkimer St. Bk, N.Y. 1233

I represent: Coalition for the Homeless

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

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rhonda Jackson

Address: 55 W 110 ST

I represent: Self

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

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 11-20-17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Diann Mitchell

Address: 710 Hendrix St

I represent: My self

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

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARK GREEN

Address: 40 ANN ST (168-10 127<sup>th</sup> Ave Queens)

I represent: Coalition For The Homeless

Address: 40 ANN ST. NY NY 10038

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**THE COUNCIL  
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Appearance Card

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

in favor  in opposition

Date: November 20<sup>th</sup> 2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Griffin Kinard

Address: 2402 Atlantic Avenue Brooklyn NY

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dinick Martinez

Address: 1424 Merckimer St.

I represent: Coalition for the Homeless

Address: Brooklyn NY 11233

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Steven Banks, Commissioner

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

I represent: Department of Social Services

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

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 11-20-17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Wendy O'Shields

Address: 123 William Street PM, NY 10038

I represent: Self/Safety Net Activists

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

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Laura Maschuh

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

I represent: Supportive Housing Network of NY

Address: 247 W. 37<sup>th</sup> St, NY, NY

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in favor  in opposition

Date: Nov. 20, 2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: NATHYKIN FLOWERS ADESEGUN

Address: PAM'S PLACE - Women's Shelter

I represent: VOCAL - New York

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

Please complete THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/20/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: U. Peter Malvan

Address: 40 Ann Street NY NY 10038

I represent: SafetyNet NYC CCOE Consumer Advocate

Address: 40 Ann St NY NY 10039

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1524 + 1529 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Victoria Reing

Address: Office: 851 Grand Concourse Bx, NY

I represent: Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

Address: 851 Grand Concourse Bx, NY

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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

in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARY CROSBY

Address: 101 W 23 ST #198 mail address

I represent: Picture the Homeless

Address: Shelton - 1921 Jerome Ave

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**THE COUNCIL  
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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JOSE LUIS RODRIGUEZ

Address: 580 SOUTHAVEN BLVD 1A BRONX 10455

I represent: PICTURE THE HOMELESS

Address: 104 E 126TH ST N.Y.

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Scott Hutchins

Address: 452 W 50TH ST / W NYC

I represent: Picture the Homeless

Address: 104 E 126TH ST

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CAROL CORBEN - NEW DESTINY HOUSING

Address: 72' 12 W. 374 - 77

I represent: NEW DESTINY HOUSING

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

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/20/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maria Torres Springer

Address: 100 Gold

I represent: HPD

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

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sam Winfrey

Address: 40 Ann Street 10028

I represent: CETH

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

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 11.20.17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Angela Hernandez

Address: 40-03 29th St.

I represent: CE

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

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Giselle Rothman and Josh Goldfein

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

I represent: Coalition for the Homeless - Legal Aid

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

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JENNIFER BACHCO

Address: 64 SWING WAY (at) Loop 10 2094

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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