

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY JOINTLY WITH
2 THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY 1

3 CITY COUNCIL
4 CITY OF NEW YORK

5 ----- X

6 TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

7 Of the

8 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY
9 JOINTLY WITH THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC
10 SAFETY

11 ----- X

12 May 1, 2020

13 Start: 1:05 p.m.

14 Recess: 5:45 p.m.

15 HELD AT: Remote Hearing

16 B E F O R E: Helen K Rosenthal,
17 Chairperson for Committee on Women
18 and Gender Equity

19 Donovan J. Richards,
20 Chairperson for Committee on
21 Public Safety

22 COUNCIL MEMBERS:

23 Speaker Corey Johnson

24 Keith Powers

25 Rory Lancman

Andrew Cohen

Paul Vallone

Carlos Menchaca

Brad Lander

Diana Ayala

Adrienne Adams

Fernando Cabrera

Justin Brannan

Kalman Yeger

Laurie Cumbo

Ben Kallos

Venessa Gibson

Chaim Deutsch

A P P E A R A N C E S

Commissioner Cecile Noel
Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based
Violence ENDGBV

Elizabeth Dank
Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel
Mayor's Office of Domestic and Gender-Based
Violence ENDGBV

Deputy Chief Kathleen White
NYPD

Oleg Chernyavsky
Assistant Deputy Commissioner of Legal Affairs
NYPD

Erin Drinkwater
Deputy Commissioner for Intergovernmental and
Legislative Affairs, DSS

Rahnum Tasnuva
Womankind

Niketa Sheth
Womankind

Brian Dworkin
Legal Services NYC

Jae Young Kim
Legal Services NYC

Honorary Judy Harris Kluger

Kelly Coyne
Safe Horizon

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Jeehae Fisher
Executive Director at the Korean American Family
Service Center

Amy Barasch
Executive Director of Her Justice

Margarita Guzman
Executive Director of the Violence Intervention
Program VIP

Tuozhi Lorna Zhen
Supervising Attorney at the New York Legal
Assistance Groups Domestic Violence Law Center

Melina Sfakianaki
Legal Aid Society

Julie Taylor
Director of Community Impact and Youth
Initiatives at the Center for Court Innovation

Nathaniel Fields
CEO for Urban Resource Institute, URI

Alyssa Keil
Director of Housing Link at New Destiny Housing
Corporation

Raquel Singh
Executive Director of the Voices of Women

Quadira Coles
Policy Manager at Girls for Gender Equity

Morgan Siegel
Assistant Director for Case Coordination at
Northern Manhattan Improvement Cooperation

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)
Enrique Jerves
Legal Victim Assistance Program Director at HANAC

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UNIDENTIFIED: Sergeant please start.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Hello, good afternoon and welcome to the Committee on Women and Gender Equity and Public Safety. Hello, Council Members and Council Staff. Cellphones and electronic devices to vibrate and you may send us your testimony at testimony@council.nyc.gov. That is testimony at testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you Chair and Mr. Speaker, we are ready when you are.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Chair, hold on. Chair Richards and Rosenthal, am I starting? Yes, I am starting okay.

Good afternoon, I'm Corey Johnson, Speaker of the New York Council. My pronouns are he, him and his. I want to thank Chairs Rosenthal and Richards for holding this really important hearing today. It's a critically important issue. I'm grateful to see all of you but I'm especially grateful to Chair Rosenthal who has been talking about this issue literally every single day with me, with the Council. she has been a constant siren on this in the best way. So, thank you Helen for your leadership.

This crisis that we are in has impacted the entire world. No one has been spared from the

1
2 economic and social impacts of this pandemic and
3 those of us in New York City have felt these
4 consequences even more acutely. We all know someone
5 who have been effected by the coronavirus, maybe we
6 have a family member who is serving on the frontlines
7 of this battle as a first responder, a grocery store
8 worker, a hospital worker. We may know someone who
9 has been sick or tragically someone who we lost and
10 they were not able to recover but there are certain
11 individuals for whom this pandemic brings unique
12 challenges that is separate from the virus itself can
13 be harmful or even deadly. And this includes those
14 who are survivors of domestic violence.

15 New Yorkers have come together during this
16 unprecedented time as we always have and done what we
17 can to help our neighbors by working on the
18 frontlines, maintaining social distance in parks and
19 on streets to the best of our ability. Helping our
20 children continue their schooling remotely and for
21 those of us who can, staying home.

22 But we are recognizing by holding this hearing
23 today is that staying home is not always a safe
24 option. For New Yorkers who are living with an
25 abuser, it can be dangerous. We must do what we can

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2 to amplify the voices of those whose dangerous living
3 circumstances are exacerbated by isolation. We must
4 recognize that abuse can take place in many forms.
5 It can be physical, verbal, emotional, financial, or
6 even digital. Each harmful in many ways and we must
7 ensure that individuals know that help is available.
8 Domestic violence advocates and service providers in
9 New York City are among the hero's of this pandemic.
10 They are working tirelessly to make sure survivors
11 have support. Services are still being provided
12 remotely, and domestic violence shelters are open and
13 operating.

14 I want to announce that today the City Council
15 will be launching a social media campaign called,
16 Hashtag Being Safe Can't Wait. To spread awareness
17 about the unique challenges and dangers that DV
18 survivors face during this pandemic and to promote
19 available resources.

20 Over the course of the next several days, we
21 will be sharing a tool kit of information for both
22 survivors and bystanders what different types of
23 abuse looks like. Signs of possible abuse, why
24 shelters are a safe option and organizations and
25 services that are open and available across the five

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2 boroughs even during the pandemic. We must ensure
3 that individuals have this knowledge and access to
4 resources now because Hashtag Being Safe Can't Wait.

5 I want to thank the NYPD and the Mayor's Office
6 to end domestic and gender based violence, as well as
7 the many advocacy organizations and service providers
8 who are joining us at this hearing today. I also
9 want to personally thank those brave survivors who
10 are joining us to testify today. We hear you and we
11 are with you.

12 And with that, I want to turn it over to Chairs
13 Rosenthal or Richards to begin this hearing. Thank
14 you both so much for your leadership on this and I
15 look forward to participating in the question and
16 answer period as well.

17 Thank you very much. Forward to Chair Richard.

18 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Next we'll move to
19 Chair Rosenthal.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Give us one second, these
21 remote hearings are not the easiest. Chair
22 Rosenthal, are you there? I think Chair Rosenthal is
23 muted, if someone could unmute her. Give us one
24 moment. Can one of the Sergeants try to unmute Chair
25 Rosenthal?

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes sir, we are working on
3 it. It appears we may have lost our connection.

4 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Alrighty, well thank you
5 Speaker Johnson and to Chair Rosenthal and good
6 afternoon to everyone. I am Donovan Richards from
7 the 31st District in Queens and I am the Chair of the
8 Committee on Public Safety.

9 Since this is the first virtual hearing I have
10 Chaired since the COVID outbreak, I want to start out
11 by recognizing the first responders, including
12 police, fire fighters, EMT's and all frontline
13 medical workers who are confronting this crisis head
14 on. Many of those folks have put themselves at risk
15 in order to keep us safe and many have gotten sick
16 and some have even lost their lives. So, I want to
17 take a moment to recognize the folks on the front
18 lines and to say thank you for your service. If we
19 can do that for at least 30 seconds. Thank you.

20 I also want to wish everyone in attendance good
21 health and hope you are all staying safe with your
22 family and loved ones. For me, its been a blessing
23 to spend extra time with my wife and son, most of the
24 time anyway outside of these Zoom calls. But the
25 truth is, it's hard for all of us to be confined like

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2 this. It's wonderful to see my son growing and
3 learning day by day but it's hard to, right. To be
4 right on top of one another and to struggle to find
5 an outlet, sometime alone to decompress. I have had
6 a stable job and a wonderful healthy family and I am
7 blessed and it's still hard.

8 So, I'm trying to imagine and I want all of us
9 to now to just imagine what this confinement means
10 for a victim of intimate partner violence. For a
11 child who is witnessing an abusive relationship. For
12 a child who is being abused. Take every moment of
13 stress you feel throughout these days that all seem
14 the same.

15 Every doubt about financial security, about the
16 health and wellbeing of your parents and your kids,
17 every concern about the future and what kind of world
18 we will return to when this is all over. And now,
19 add the fear of what someone you live with might do
20 to you if all of it becomes too much.

21 Because even before all these things, things
22 weren't good and now what happens if there is another
23 incident, do you call the police? Where will they
24 take him? Will he be exposed to COVID at the
25 precinct, at Central Bookings, at Rikers. Will he

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2 come back after and hurt you again or she? Or get
3 you sick, get the kids sick, get your elderly mom
4 sick? Where else could he or she even go? How are
5 you going to pay rent, buy food, take care of the
6 kids on your own? Can you even imagine it? I'm no
7 expert on domestic violence and I don't pretend to
8 have the answers for those women and men who are
9 suffering now.

10 My role here is simply to make sure the NYPD is
11 doing all they can under these challenging
12 circumstances. But if there are victims and
13 survivors listening, I want you to know that we are
14 here and that many other people are out there looking
15 for ways to help you.

16 Today, we want answers from the Administration
17 but we also want them to have the opportunity to
18 remind everyone that you can help. Services continue
19 to be available. Officers are still on call and they
20 will be there if you need them. Just because we are
21 physically disconnected, doesn't mean we have
22 forgotten about you. It doesn't mean that you have
23 no where to turn.

24 I am looking forward to learning from the
25 Administration, witnesses what they are seeing on the

1
2 ground and what we need to do as policy makers to
3 ensure that victims and survivors of domestic
4 violence are able to seek help and get what they need
5 to stay safe.

6 Specifically, I want to know just what is going
7 on with text to 911. We had a hearing on this in
8 November. It should have been rolled out years ago
9 and now, we're in the middle of a crisis where it
10 sure looks like victims might not be comfortable
11 picking up the phone to report a crime.

12 So, I want to know when we're getting that done
13 and what we're going to do until then to make up for
14 the fact that a technology as simple as text messages
15 can't be used to get emergency help. So, I'm
16 expecting some answers on that.

17 With that, I will turn over to the Speaker or to
18 Chair Rosenthal and I look forward to hearing from
19 the Administration. Thank you all.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair Richards. Do
21 we have Chair Rosenthal back?

22 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: I think she's having
23 some technical difficulties.

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: There she is.
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: So, I'm back and I want
3 to thank you for your patience and thank you Speaker.
4 I just want to check on some technical things because
5 my computer chose the moment to crash as just when we
6 started.

7 So, has anyone gaveled us in?

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes, Chair Rosenthal, I gave
9 an opening statement. I called on you but you were
10 dealing with the issue, so then Donovan went and so
11 now it's time for your opening statement and then
12 we'll hear from the Administration.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much
14 Speaker. I do want to first start by thanking the
15 ASL Interpreter, I see her hard at work on the Zoom
16 screen.

17 So, I'm Helen Rosenthal, Chair of the Committee
18 on Women and Gender Equity. My pronouns are she and
19 her and I really want to thank the Speaker and Chair
20 Richards of the Committee on Public Safety for
21 joining us for this critical hearing on this special
22 day. Today is May Day, which honors the struggle of
23 working people around the world.

24 The COVID-19 crisis has had a devastating and
25 incredibly far reaching impact on our city. One of

1
2 the most sinister aspects of the crisis is how to put
3 the most vulnerable people in our society, they are
4 now [INAUDIBLE 14:02] especially applies to survivors
5 of domestic violence, many of whom are now trapped
6 with their abusers 24/7. Access to the normal
7 physical outlets for help or even just temporary
8 respite while a partner goes to work has vanished
9 almost overnight. The lockdown has intensified the
10 abuse of power and control which is at the heart of
11 DV.

12 The dire situation is only compounded by the
13 overall stress and financial instability that the
14 pandemic has caused and I want to add here that while
15 we focus on domestic violence today, this is not
16 separate and apart from child abuse, elder abuse and
17 other forms of violence that have also been
18 exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis.

19 Globally, domestic violence has surged since the
20 COVID-19 outbreak began.

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I think we've lost Chair
22 Rosenthal for a moment.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Oh, you're kidding me.

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Helen, are you there?

25 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I am.

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2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I can see you but we can't
3 hear you.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Oh, my goodness. I can
5 see and hear you.

6 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Hold on, I'm going to try to
7 mute you and unmute you, hold on. Try speaking now.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, can you hear me
9 now?

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: No.

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Oh, that's weird.

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And this is such a great
13 opening statement from you.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Helen, why don't you quickly
16 log out and log back in and hopefully that works and
17 we'll just pause this meeting for a second, because I
18 really want to hear your opening statement.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you Speaker.

20 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Speaker Johnson.

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you everyone for being
22 patient with us, we really appreciate it.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I'm unmuted, okay, can
24 you all hear me now?
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2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Can people hear Helen? I
3 can't hear her but can other people hear her? Okay,
4 then it's my issue not yours. Go ahead Helen keep
5 going.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I'm going to log out and log
8 back in.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, thank you so much
10 Speaker, I really appreciate you. So, let's see,
11 globally, this is where we were, I think. Domestic
12 violence has surged since the COVID-19 outbreak
13 began. With cities and countries reporting a 30
14 percent spike in domestic violence. What we know so
15 far in New York City is extremely troubling. In New
16 York City, we know that calls to all the DV hotlines
17 were initially down, way down in March. But we're
18 starting to see a slight increase in April and I
19 think that this tells us, is not that abuse is not
20 happening, but that victims and survivors are not
21 able to call for help in the ways that they have
22 before.

23 This is all the chilling, because we know that
24 domestic violence during a crisis is more severe and
25 more likely to result in death. The World Health

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2 Organization has identified that intimate partner
3 violence, child abuse and sexual violence are highly
4 prevalent during and after a disaster. And advocates
5 stress that the real surge in numbers and demand for
6 [INAUDIBLE 18:07-18:11] once pause restrictions lift,
7 many survivors who cannot leave now are making their
8 plans for when the lockdown is lifted. The stakes
9 couldn't be higher, time is ticking away. We have to
10 show up for our survivors.

11 Based on conversations with providers so far, we
12 believe that a continuous robust messaging campaign
13 is critical to ensure that every New Yorker is aware
14 of available resources and the fact that DV victims
15 and survivors can get help now. We should plaster
16 the DV hotline phone numbers on buses, grocery
17 stores, bus shelters, pharmacies, on the link
18 stations. It should be well known that even in times
19 of pandemic, resources are available to all
20 communities. Whether you are a person who is
21 undocumented, a transwoman of color, or a senior
22 citizen, you can get help now.

23 Many community based providers are already
24 finding innovative ways to connect with survivors.
25 The Hellenic American Neighborhood Action Committee

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2 devised a radio station and podcast. The Arab
3 American Family Support Center created a confidential
4 tele counseling platform and Women Kind and other
5 providers have initiated online chat services.

6 As the city continues to develop its responses
7 to the pandemic in our communities, we need to look
8 no further than these culturally competent
9 organizations to provide the robust and meaningful
10 messaging that survivors need.

11 The central goals of today's hearing are to
12 learn as much as possible about the current landscape
13 of domestic violence in New York City. [INAUDIBLE
14 20:06-20:12] they are now, especially the most
15 vulnerable survivors, the undocumented, non-Native
16 English speakers, transgender and LGBTQ plus New
17 Yorkers.

18 We have to highlight services that are available
19 now for survivors and strategize how to increase
20 public awareness and access. This includes
21 messaging, alerting survivors about service changes
22 and reinforcing that they can always reach out for
23 help. We have to ring the alarm about what needs to
24 be done now to prepare for the surge in DV cases that
25 is anticipated when pause restrictions are lifted and

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2 we have to understand how the city, the City Council,
3 and each of us as community members can best respond
4 to and support New Yorkers in danger.

5 We are grateful to the Mayor's Office to end
6 domestic and gender based violence and the NYPD and
7 HRA for joining us today and we thank many advocacy
8 organizations and service providers who will be
9 testifying. You've been working so hard over the
10 past six weeks. We know you are beyond busy, so we
11 really want to thank you for taking the time to
12 participate.

13 I would also like to thank my Chief of Staff,
14 Marisa Maack, my Legislative Director Madhuri Shukla,
15 my Communications Director Sarah Crean, as well as
16 the Committee Staff for their work in preparing for
17 this hearing. Brenda McKinney, the General Counsel,
18 Chloe Rivera Senior Legislative Policy Analyst,
19 Monica Pepple Financial Analyst, Elizabeth Arts from
20 Community Engagement and finally, let's see, I'm just
21 going to note or have you already done this, which
22 other Council Members are present here?

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: We have not done that, so
24 happy to have you do it.

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, I see on my screen
3 Council Member Powers, of course Chair Richards,
4 Council Member Lancman, Council Member Cohen, Council
5 Member Vallone. Apologies for this taking a minute,
6 Council Member Menchaca, I saw Council Member Lander,
7 Council Member Ayala, Council Member Adams, Council
8 Member Cabrera. Thank you all for joining. I don't
9 see anyone else, if there is someone else, Council
10 Member Brannan is here.

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I believe Council Member Yeger
12 is here as well.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Oh, yes, Council Member
14 Yeger, thank you so much.

15 Now, I'm going to turn it over to our [INAUDIBLE
16 23:07-23:11] items. Thank you again.

17 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you Chair
18 Rosenthal. I am Brenda McKinney, Counsel to the
19 Committee on Women and Gender Equity at the New York
20 City Council.

21 Before we move forward, I want to remind
22 everyone that you will be on mute until you are
23 called on to testify when you will be unmuted by the
24 host. I will be calling on panelists to testify.
25 Please listen for your name to be called. I will be

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2 periodically announcing who the next panelist will
3 be.

4 We will begin with testimony from the
5 Administration today. The first panelist will be
6 Commissioner Cecile Noel and Deputy Commissioner and
7 General Counsel Elizabeth Dank from the Mayor's
8 Office of Gender, sorry, of Domestic and Gender-Based
9 Violence followed by Deputy Chief Kathleen White and
10 Assistant Deputy Commissioner of Legal Affairs Oleg
11 Chernyavsky from the NYPD.

12 I will call on you when it is your turn to
13 speak. During the hearing, if Council Members would
14 like to ask a question, please use the Zoom raise
15 hand function and I will call on you in the order
16 that you raise your hands. We will be limiting
17 Council Member questions to five minutes including
18 answers. We will be putting a three minute clock on
19 all other witnesses.

20 Please also note that for the ease of this
21 virtual hearing, we will not be allowing or we will
22 be using a second round of questioning. Thank you.

23 Chair, if there are no other questions, I will
24 move to calling on members of the Administration to
25 testify and the oath.

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SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes, please do that.

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COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: I will now call on
members of the Administration to testify. Testimony
will begin with representatives from the Mayor's
Office to end domestic and gender based violence
followed by representatives from the New York City
Police Department or NYPD.

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We will begin with Council Member questions
after all Administration testimony. Members of the
Administration, I will read the names of all
witnesses first then ask you to raise your right
hand, read the oath and read your names individually
for you to respond to the oath.

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Today, we will be hearing testimony from
Commissioner Cecile Noel from the Mayor's Office to
End Domestic and Gender Based Violence or ENDGBV.
Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel Elizabeth
Dank, also from ENDGBV, Deputy Chief Kathleen White
from NYPD, Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Legal
Affairs, Oleg Chernyavsky from NYPD and Deputy
Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Legislative
Affairs, Erin Drinkwater from DSS.

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2 If you can please raise your right hand for the
3 camera, I will deliver the oath and then name you
4 individually.

5 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth
6 and nothing but the truth before this Committee and
7 to respond honestly to Council Member questions?
8 Commissioner Noel?

9 CECILE NOEL: Yes, I do.

10 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Deputy Commissioner
11 Elizabeth Dank?

12 ELIZABETH DANK: I do.

13 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Deputy Chief White
14 from the NYPD, Kathleen White?

15 KATHLEEN WHITE: I do.

16 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Okay, thank you.
17 Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Legal Affairs, Oleg
18 Chernyavsky from the NYPD?

19 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: Yes, I do.

20 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: And Deputy
21 Commissioner Erin Drinkwater from DSS?

22 ERIN DRINKWATER: I do.

23 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you and if we
24 are ready, we will begin with testimony. [INAUDIBLE
25 26:52].

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CECILE NOEL: We can't hear you.

COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: When you are ready, we will begin with testimony and Commissioner Noel, if you can begin.

CECILE NOEL: Okay, thank you for that. Good afternoon Chair Richards, Chair Rosenthal, and Members of the Committees on Women and Gender Equity and Public Safety. I am Cecile Noel, Commissioner of the Mayor's office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence. My pronouns are she, her, hers.

I am joined by Deputy Commissioner, General Counsel Elizabeth Dank. I am pleased to also be here with Deputy Chief Kathleen White, Commanding Officer of NYPD's Domestic Violence unit. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about the impact of coronavirus or COVID-19 on domestic violence in New York City.

COVID-19 puts into sharp focus the vulnerabilities that many people in our city face every day, especially domestic and gender-based violence survivors, and highlights the barriers and challenges that we know keep people from seeking help and finding safety. Domestic violence is historically underreported and this is heightened by

1 the pandemic, resulted in what we anticipated, a
2 decrease in survivor engagement with service
3 providers and with law enforcement since mid-March.
4 While the stay at home order our city is under is
5 critical to respond to COVID-19, we understand that
6 home is not always a safe place. Survivors need us
7 now more than ever in these extraordinary times and
8 our top priority remains to ensure the continuity of
9 services, access to resources and unwavering support.
10 During this unprecedented challenge facing New York
11 City and the world, ENDGBV has taken a variety of
12 steps to provide services to survivors, engage with
13 providers, collaborate across city agencies, and
14 publicly share information about resources.
15

16 The New York City Family Justice Centers or
17 FJCS, which are operated by ENDGBV, temporarily
18 closed their walk-in locations on March 18, 2020 in
19 response to COVID-19. The FJCs immediately
20 transitioned to a remote model answering phone lines
21 Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The
22 phone lines are answered by ENDGBV' staff and our
23 front line city contracted staff from Safe Horizon
24 and they are able to directly link clients across all
25 five boroughs with critical crisis support and

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2 advocacy by connecting survivors to the FJC and
3 community based providers for immediate safety
4 planning, shelter assistance, mental health services,
5 children's counseling, legal consultations and more.
6 Since the FJCs began operating remotely on March
7 18th, we've served an average of 74 clients a day,
8 including an average of 23 new clients a day. We are
9 encouraged to see that new clients are able to
10 identify resources and reach out safely for
11 assistance.

12 FJCs are working closely with us to ensure that
13 all FJC partners are working closely with us to
14 ensure that all FJC services are provided remotely.
15 While it is more challenging to provide services
16 remotely to survivors who may be isolated at home
17 with their abusive partners, our FJCs and community-
18 based service providers continue to do this through
19 using creative engagement approaches that are
20 developed with the survivor and grounded in survivor
21 safety and minimizing risk. When initially reaching
22 out to survivors, our FJCs and providers first assess
23 their ability to have safe conversation at that time
24 and suggest ways to make that happen.

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2 For example, during this pandemic, providers are
3 continuing to work with their clients to develop a
4 code word or phrase that a survivor can use to let
5 the provider know if it has become unsafe to continue
6 the conversation. This is a safety planning best
7 practice that we have always shared in our trainings
8 for FJC and community-based partner organizations,
9 but it has become an even more important tool to
10 utilize during this health pandemic. Law enforcement
11 can also use this strategy when reaching out to
12 survivors remotely and best practices like these, are
13 pivotal in that effort.

14 We have also adapted our service delivery model
15 in light of COVID. For example, we are connecting
16 survivors directly to our legal service partners so
17 that they can support survivors in drafting initial
18 family offense petition requesting orders of
19 protection in the virtual Family Court parts.

20 Through each FJC, ENDGBV staff convenes FJC partners
21 on a weekly basis to discuss virtual operations,
22 share best practices for safety planning and risk
23 assessment and provide virtual training on a variety
24 of topics. Trainings include how to survivors file
25 family court orders for protection remotely, updates

1
2 on criminal court operations during COVID, and
3 training on how to support survivors with safety
4 planning.

5 We have also recognized that emergency funds are
6 critical to survivors during this pandemic and are
7 thrilled to receive a grant from the Rihanna Clara
8 Lionel Foundation, in collaboration with Twitter and
9 Square CEO Jack Dorsey, and JAY-Z'S Shawn Carter
10 Foundation which was secured by the Mayor's Fund to
11 Advance New York to support unconditional micro-
12 grants for domestic and gender-based violence
13 survivors to ensure their safety and stability during
14 COVID.

15 In addition to ensuring continuity of FJC
16 services, ENDGBV has been working to creatively
17 connect with survivors via mobile devices and online
18 resources. On April 6th, New York City Emergency
19 Management released the first domestic violence
20 related text message through COVID text 19 692-692
21 text system. As a direct impact of the text message,
22 we identified an immediate increase in visits to our
23 NYC Hope website and calls to the New York City
24 Domestic Violence Hotline. On average, 3,200 visits
25 to NYC Hope were received within 60 minutes of each

1
2 of the four alerts that have going out so far. These
3 texts are scheduled to be released regularly right
4 now and we have seen continued direct impacts to both
5 NYC Hope and the hotline.

6 ENDGBV has also partnered with First Lady
7 Chirlane McCray to release a public service
8 announcement on April 15th to let survivors know that
9 help is available and connect them to resources.
10 Prior to the release of the PSAs, all City agencies
11 were given our social media toolkit and were asked to
12 help amplify our social media campaign. In addition
13 to the social media toolkit, has been sent out to
14 Council Members as well, and we will re-share the
15 toolkit again immediately following the hearing.

16 We are also regularly posting and re-posting
17 resource information on our Twitter, Facebook and
18 Instagram pages and have advertisements running on
19 Facebook and Google Search. Since the social media
20 campaign launched on April 1st, individuals accessing
21 NYC Hope from Google and Facebook have quadrupled
22 from 350 prior to the campaign to 1,300 now since the
23 campaign launched.

24 Further, we have partnered with Shared Value
25 Media to work with 17 community-based partners to

1
2 amplify ENDGBV's We Understand campaign on their own
3 social media platforms with targeted messages.

4 Finally, we will be enhancing our campaign
5 investment to put advertisements for NYC Hope in
6 convenience stores, check cashing locations and
7 laundromats. We are also exploring similar messages
8 for pharmacies and grocery stores.

9 We know that with New York State on pause,
10 survivors, particularly those who are living with
11 their abusive partners, have very limited
12 opportunities to leave their home and connect with
13 services. There are limited access points for
14 information for survivors right now and we are
15 exploring all pathways for information that exist
16 across our sister agency programs and initiatives.
17 For example, we are partnering with the New York City
18 Department of Education and the Department of Housing
19 Preservation HPD and the New York City Housing
20 Authority and the Department of Small Businesses just
21 to name a few in identifying ways to connect with
22 survivors during the pandemic. We are also working
23 collaboratively with the Mayor's Office of Criminal
24 Justice and the District Attorney's offices to
25

1 directly support their outreach to survivors and
2 connection to services.
3

4 We have also been regularly connecting
5 externally with providers through multiple channels
6 to provide open lines of communications, identify
7 challenges, troubleshoot issues, share best
8 practices, and provide support, training, and
9 technical assistance. Providers and stakeholders
10 engagement has been included for example, bi-weekly
11 calls with 100 plus providers led by myself, borough-
12 based meetings with Council funded DOVE providers,
13 hosting or partnering in stakeholder meetings, and
14 broad outreach to stakeholders.

15 We anticipate seeing both short-term and longer-
16 term impacts of COVID on survivors and will be
17 continuing to process and analyze this in the coming
18 months. We know that switching to remote operations
19 has inspired ENDGBV and our partners to think
20 creatively and innovatively about how to reach
21 survivors and deliver services in this new way. We
22 already know that there are some great lessons
23 learned from this experience that will enhance the
24 ways in which we provide services. As we think about
25 what re-opening may look like, integration of new

1
2 methods of service delivery will be an essential
3 piece of that discussion.

4 The city is here for survivors during this
5 crisis and beyond and we will continue to work to
6 identify best practices and innovative approaches to
7 enhance the services and outreach. We look forward
8 to continuing to collaborate with the Council, our
9 sister agencies and community partners.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to speak to these
11 issues. I welcome any questions you may have.

12 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Deputy Chief White.

13 KATHLEEN WHITE: Good afternoon Chair Richards,
14 Chair Rosenthal, and Members of the Council. I am
15 Deputy Chief Kathleen White, the Commanding Officer
16 of the New York City Police Department's Domestic
17 Violence Unit. I am joined here today by Assistant
18 Commissioner Oleg Chernyavsky and the Commissioner
19 for the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender
20 Based Violence, Cecile Noel.

21 On behalf of Police Commissioner Dermot Shea, I
22 wish to thank the Council for the opportunity to
23 speak about the Department's efforts to combat
24 domestic violence.

25 During this time of uncertainty, the NYPD's

1
2 efforts to protect residents and businesses have
3 never been more crucial than it has been over the
4 past two months. It has been an unprecedented time
5 in our nation's and history of our city. A time when
6 residents are depending on their first responders
7 more than ever. While the Department has experienced
8 significant challenges with nearly 20 percent of the
9 uniformed workforce out sick at the height of the
10 pandemic, over 4,000 members of the service having
11 tested positive for the virus, and tragically 37
12 members having succumbed thus far, the men and women
13 of the Department remain committed to fulfilling our
14 mission by first and foremost protecting those who
15 are most vulnerable, those who cannot help or control
16 their circumstances.

17 Among the most vulnerable are victims of
18 domestic violence, a crime that we all know to be
19 historically underreported. Unfortunately, domestic
20 violence continues to afflict our communities as the
21 NYPD responds to and assists with over 240,000 911
22 calls for domestic violence annually. Combating
23 domestic violence has been and remains one of the
24 Department's top priorities. But our collective
25 efforts to combat domestic violence are all the more

1 important during these times of physical isolation
2 when victims may be left alone with their abusers.
3 Stressors such as the loss of employment, financial
4 hardship and social isolation can exacerbate an
5 already abusive relationship.
6

7 Yet, from March 29th through April 26th, all of
8 which was spent in lockdown, reported domestic
9 violence index crimes have been down 36.5 percent,
10 618 versus 973. Further, during this twenty-eight
11 day period, domestic violence arrests were down 43.6
12 percent, 3,822 versus 2157, even though radio runs
13 were up 1.6 percent 17,987 versus 17,699.

14 I want to assure you that we are not lulled into
15 complacency with these lower domestic crime numbers.
16 We are responding to every call for service. If we
17 are able to develop that probable cause of a crime
18 exists, we are making arrests. When we respond to a
19 call for service and cannot develop probable cause of
20 a crime, we always take a Domestic Incident Report to
21 document the complaint and our response. All
22 Domestic Incident Reports are triaged and appropriate
23 follow-up conducted on each founded Domestic Incident
24 Report by both the domestic violence prevention
25 officers and the crime victim assistance program

1
2 victim advocates of each respective precinct and
3 police service area. My staff and I continue to
4 closely monitor reported incidents of domestic
5 violence in every precinct, borough and citywide to
6 ensure that no victim slips through the cracks and to
7 identify patterns early on so that resources can be
8 dispatched and social services can be recommended.

9 In spite of the effects of COVID-19, we are
10 endeavoring to continue unabated as best as we can.
11 We still monitor the High propensity and Child at
12 Risk programs. These programs allow our domestic
13 violence prevention officers to focus on the most at-
14 risk homes, homes where domestic violence occurred in
15 front of the children, where there have been multiple
16 complaints or where there are elderly individuals
17 involved. I continue to attend weekly meetings with
18 members of the clergy and domestic violence advocacy
19 groups virtually, so that I can have the best
20 possible understanding of what they are seeing and
21 hearing as well. Often times people who are
22 unwilling to speak with the police, will confide in
23 these community advocates or leaders.

24 We have been reviewing hundreds of body worn
25 camera videos of radio runs related to domestic

1
2 violence. We wanted to make sure that officers were
3 handling these situations properly. We have been
4 able to confirm that in all of these situations,
5 officers responded to radio runs and services were
6 provided as needed.

7 We have continued our outreach as well. Every
8 day, I tweet about how individuals can get help. We
9 have been sending out our domestic violence car
10 around to neighborhoods with high number of
11 complaints to get the word out that help is
12 available. I worked with Live on New York to discuss
13 the support that is available to domestic violence
14 survivors. I am pleased that I was invited here
15 today because any opportunity that we have to
16 potentially reach survivors of domestic violence is
17 one that I value. I encourage all the Council
18 Members, as community leaders, to use their networks
19 to continue to spread the word that help is
20 available.

21 The NYPD has dedicated many resources to
22 fighting domestic violence and our officers are
23 committed to helping anyone who feels disconnected or
24 vulnerable during this pandemic. Each local precinct
25 and police service area has at least one domestic

1
2 violence prevention officer. Our 525 NYPD domestic
3 violence prevention officers, investigators and
4 supervisors assist victims of domestic violence in
5 precincts and Housing Bureau police service areas
6 citywide. Under normal circumstances, domestic
7 violence prevention officers visit the homes of
8 victims, make referrals to court, offer counseling
9 services, and shelter alternatives and help in
10 personal safety planning.

11 We are continuing to work with victims to create
12 safety tips, including one, keeping a cellphone with
13 you at all times, developing a code word to share
14 with children, family, friends, co-workers when you
15 want them to call the police. Staying in touch with
16 family, friends, co-workers by engaging in face to
17 face contact via facetime, skype, phone or other
18 social media to help stay connected and telling
19 family and friends, if they don't hear from you by a
20 certain time to call 911. Identifying safe rooms in
21 an apartment or house and avoiding dangerous
22 situations. Telling children to go to a separate
23 room for their safety and call 911. Making weapons
24 less accessible for example, putting knives on a top
25 shelf to buy more time to leave a residence if

1
2 necessary. Planning an escape route, where would you
3 go, who would you call, having a go bag in your home
4 or at a friends house, containing clothing, money,
5 important documents and medication for you and your
6 children.

7 Domestic Violence prevention officers typically
8 make nearly 200,000 home visits a year. However, in
9 light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the domestic violence
10 prevention officers have had to adjust their
11 practices and have been reaching out to victims of
12 domestic violence by telephone. These dedicated
13 professionals and the Department as a whole, are
14 doing everything in our power to assist victims of
15 these terrible crimes and are providing these same
16 essential services during these trying times.

17 Our Crime Victim Assistance Program, a
18 cornerstone of the NYPD's efforts to improve its
19 response to victims of crime, staffed by Safe Horizon
20 personnel, places two victim advocates in each of the
21 NYPD precincts. One specializing in working with
22 victims of domestic violence, the other serving
23 victims of all other crimes. Victim advocates have
24 done yeoman's work in addressing the trauma that
25 reverberates for victims of crime, particularly

1
2 domestic violence crime. Our victim advocates have
3 also been required to alter their practices by
4 working from home to offer and deliver services to
5 victims during these trying times. Victim advocates
6 connect with victims with the same array of high
7 quality programs and service as were available prior
8 to the outbreak. These dedicated workers have not
9 wavered in their commitment to providing the highest
10 quality of service.

11 The NYPD's Domestic Violence Unit stands ready
12 and committed to provide valuable services to those
13 falling victim to domestic abuse. Officers are
14 working vigorously to follow-up on reports, make
15 arrests where appropriate, and check in on New
16 Yorkers including the most vulnerable population
17 children and elderly, amid this ongoing COVID-19
18 crisis, to ensure that everyone is safe.

19 I cannot stress enough that those who are in need
20 of assistance should reach out to the NYPD. The NYPD
21 is continuing to respond to cases of domestic
22 violence and remains committed to serving and
23 assisting survivors during this challenging time.
24 There is no need to suffer in silence. Help is
25 available. In case of emergency, victims should call

911. Victims seeking help can call 1-800-621-HOPE,
24 hours a day, 7 days a week to get help.

I thank you for this opportunity to speak about
this important issue and I look forward to answering
any questions that you may have.

COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you to
Commissioners Noel and Deputy Chief White. We will
now move to Council Member questions for the
Administration. During this time, all members of the
Administration, we will unmute you all. We will
start with questions from the Speaker, followed by
Chair Rosenthal and then Chair Richards. If Council
Members would like to ask questions or testify,
please raise your [INAUDIBLE 48:37] in the order that
you raise your hands.

Thank you, Speaker Johnson?

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you Brenda, I want to go
to the NYPD first and I want to thank you Deputy
Chief for your testimony and for the work that you
are doing and I want to give my real thoughts to the
police department who have lost a tremendous number
of officers and other personal, so, but we are
thinking of you and thank you for being here today.

1
2 You know, you talked about it and Chair
3 Rosenthal and Chair Richards spoke about it as well
4 but I'm concerned about the statistics for March.
5 Radio runs were up 10 percent but DV crime complaints
6 were down 15 percent and I wanted to see if that
7 trend has continued in April.

8 KATHLEEN WHITE: Okay, so we'll look at April
9 and I'll go with you on a week by week basis in
10 April, if that works for you?

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes, thank you.

12 KATHLEEN WHITE: Okay. So, the week ending
13 April 5th domestic incident reports were down 8
14 percent. They were down 422 and this is citywide and
15 the DV radio runs were up 5.5 percent up 238.

16 The next week ending on April 12th, domestic
17 incident reports were down 14.3 percent, down 757 and
18 then domestic violence radio runs were down 3.4
19 percent, down 154.

20 Then the week ending April 19th, domestic
21 incident reports were down 22.6 percent, down 1,229.
22 DV radio runs were down 5.9 percent down 266.

23 And then the last week that we're looking at,
24 the numbers aren't fully in yet, but DV radio runs
25 are down 8 percent, down 361 and as of 9:45 this

1
2 morning, the domestic incident reports were down 18.8
3 percent, down 1,016 and that number will increase a
4 little bit more as we have some data inputting issues
5 as so many of our officers are out sick and we have
6 the clerical civilians working from home. So, they
7 are constantly being updated every couple of hours to
8 catch up.

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you Deputy Chief, so how
10 do you interpret those numbers? When you look at
11 that as someone -

12 KATHLEEN WHITE: Oh, okay.

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yeah, I would love to hear
14 your thoughts on how you interpret the March numbers
15 and the April numbers and what concerns you see from
16 those numbers.

17 KATHLEEN WHITE: Well, I like to think that
18 that's going to be the million dollar question that
19 we're going to be looking at and really analyzing
20 between now and probably a little bit more time
21 throughout the next couple of months.

22 Of course, when the pandemic first started in
23 March, you know, everyone was at home and now as we
24 see we're moving on further, individuals are starting
25 to leave the residences a little bit. They are going

1
2 out, going to the grocery stores and they are out and
3 about social distancing and you know, going to the
4 parks now. So, there's a little bit more separation
5 if you will. They are not home bottled up together
6 all the time per se and there are a lot of other
7 avenues out there that they can go. I mean, we are
8 always concerned about domestic violence about being
9 under reported and that's nothing new. We've been
10 concerned about that from day one before the pandemic
11 because victims only want to report it when they are
12 ready to report it or when they feel that the time is
13 appropriate for them to report it.

14 You know, we try and reach out to all the
15 victims. We've gone so far as to reach out to
16 victims of felony assaults and misdemeanor assaults
17 from the week before. Every week we reach out to the
18 victims the week before they have reported to make
19 sure that they have gotten follow-up home visit phone
20 calls and that they have been afforded you know,
21 different planning, the safety tips and let them know
22 that the FJC's are virtually open for them and we
23 still have our officers from the FJC's working as
24 well. And we are also reaching out to our high
25 propensity violence victims, our children at risk

1
2 households and our elderly households. We've had
3 these lists established you know, for quite a long
4 time now and we usually check in with those victims
5 twice a month, you know, two to three times a month
6 anyway. So, we're continuing to check up on them as
7 well.

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Deputy Chief, I have a
9 question. So, why are arrests down more than 43
10 percent then criminal complaints, which are down 25
11 percent overall and 36 percent for felonies.
12 Whenever there is a criminal complaint for domestic
13 violence there should be an arrest unless the person
14 flees but you would think they would go down by the
15 same amount of officers are making all arrests when
16 the victim alleges a crime. So, how do those numbers
17 sort of add up?

18 KATHLEEN WHITE: Well, you know, normally when
19 we take the Domestic Incident Report for the
20 violation of the Order of Protection, our DVO's are
21 going to follow that up with a in-person home visit.
22 And sometimes when we knock on that door to do the
23 home visit, the offender is there and we can arrest
24 him right then and there. The follow-up home visits
25 are being done by phone.

1
2 So, that window of opportunity has now closed
3 for us since we're doing the visit by phone as
4 opposed to in-person. The other reason might be you
5 know, the victims, they might not wish to tell us
6 that they are there. They might not want then
7 arrested right now because you know, they are going
8 to possibly go to Central Booking, go to jail, pick
9 up COVID, bring it back home. You know, there is a
10 lot of factors that are coming into play. We can
11 stress that you know, the should always try and make
12 sure that they are safe and we know that they are
13 going to tell us, if they really need help, they are
14 going to call us. They might reach out to advocacy
15 groups, they might reach out to the clergy, they
16 might reach out to other family members. It's not
17 that we don't wish to make the arrests. We always
18 try and make the arrests. You know, our manpower has
19 been really, really strained because of this whole
20 pandemic.

21 At the height, a couple of weeks ago, my
22 domestic violence officers, I had 72 DVO's out sick.
23 That was 18 percent of my staffing and now this week,
24 I'm happy to say that this week we just got slightly
25 under 7 percent. I only have 30 officers out sick.

1
2 So, our manning is coming back but as well as our
3 manning is coming back, patrol is still losing
4 officers out sick from the pandemic and we sometimes
5 backfill patrol.

6 The housing domestic violence units are down to
7 one Sergeant and two officers assigned to each PSA
8 and we are trying to ensure that we have one or two
9 in our units as well. So, by all means, if we are
10 given the opportunity to make an arrest, we will
11 definitely make that arrest. We are very good at
12 that. We want to make sure that these victims are
13 kept safe.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you Deputy Chief. I
15 mean I totally understand what you are saying as it
16 relates to how your workforce has been impacted by
17 this and how it's impacted your ability to
18 potentially do the job that you would normally do
19 outside of the pandemic if you were fully staffed up.

20 You know, I am concerned, as I am sure you are
21 as well, and that's why we're having this hearing, it
22 goes to the heart of your testimony, of Commissioner
23 Noel's testimony and I'm sure you are going to hear
24 it from Chair's Richards and Rosenthal. I'm just
25 really concerned that given the unprecedented and

1
2 unique circumstances that we find ourselves in right
3 now, that there are countless, countless, victims who
4 are just trapped at home with abusers. With people
5 that are threatening them, abusing them, harming them
6 in a significant way and we know that these folks
7 were vulnerable before coronavirus hit, but now, they
8 are even more vulnerable and what I'm just hoping is
9 that with a coordinated response from the NYPD, from
10 the amazing organizations that are being represented
11 here today, that do this work with survivors and with
12 victims from the Commissioner Noel and her team that
13 we are going to be innovative. We are going to be
14 creative. We are going to figure out ways to get to
15 these victims, to these survivors because it's
16 heartbreaking to think that in this incredibly
17 painful moment for our city, that there are people
18 that are literally trapped behind doors. Children
19 and adults who are just being constantly abused and
20 taken advantage of and harmed in serious ways and I
21 understand of course that protocol has changed in
22 this moment because of COVID-19, but it is a little
23 alarming to me that the officers aren't going to the
24 apartments.

1
2 I would think that you know, I was talking to
3 the Administration for Children Services and they are
4 still sending out child welfare specialists to do
5 home visits. They have a protocol on how to do it.
6 They have PPE, they may not walk inside the
7 apartment, they have all sorts of things they do to
8 check but to think that some of these follow-ups are
9 happening by phone, that sort of concerns me even
10 more to know about the situation these victims are
11 in.

12 So, I just want to acknowledge that I totally
13 understand this really difficult task that you all
14 have right now but I just feel so alarmed for you
15 know, thousands if not tens of thousands of people
16 that are currently being abused today, May 1st in New
17 York City and are we doing everything we can to help
18 these individuals?

19 I mean, I know that's what you want to happen.
20 That's our big concern.

21 KATHLEEN WHITE: Well, you know, we were even
22 trying to think outside the box and looking at the
23 311 calls for loud noise or arguing and that, that
24 maybe neighbors might be placing and we took a look
25 at our busier precincts, the 34 up Washington Heights

1
2 and then the 73 and the 75 Brooklyn north area and
3 there were thousands of calls for loud noises etc.
4 And we drilled way, way down to see if any of those
5 calls could have been domestic related and in all
6 three places, it was maybe two or three calls. And
7 at that point, when we really looked at it, it was
8 for a verbal argument, it was a violation as minimal.

9 So, and we looked at over 3,500 calls in each of
10 those precincts.

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But I guess Deputy Chief, the
12 concern is that officers are not making arrests in
13 all cases that they should and how do we make sure
14 that they are making arrests in all cases that they
15 should? They should make an arrest for every
16 complaint related to domestic violence.

17 KATHLEEN WHITE: Officers must make an arrest on
18 all felony complaints and what we do here, is we
19 review the body camera footage from the patrol
20 officers when they respond to the jobs to make sure
21 that they are affecting arrests when they need to.
22 Not every domestic incident mandates an arrest.
23 That's kind of a misnomer that's being referred to.

24 You know, there is discretion on some of them
25 and if a complainant does not want an arrest on some

1
2 of them sometimes, we do not have to make that
3 arrest. So, you know, on must arrest situations, we
4 must arrest but to prevent that, to defend any that
5 are slipping through the cracks, we are doing self-
6 inspections on all body worn camera footages from
7 jobs that you know, domestic related.

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, thank you. I have a lot
9 more questions but I'm not going to keep going
10 because there are a lot of members on the call. The
11 Chair's have questions and I have a bunch of
12 questions for Commissioner Noel, so I will come back
13 for a second round later after we get through a bunch
14 of the other members. I have to go on another Zoom
15 conference in a little while, so I hope I'm around to
16 ask the questions to Commissioner Noel. But I will
17 turn it now over to I believe Chair Rosenthal because
18 she has been an incredible leader during all of this
19 on these issues and I want to make sure she has
20 plenty of time to ask questions and then, she and
21 Chair Richards will make sure we get through to the
22 members as quickly as we can as well.

23 So, thank you Deputy Chief, I'll come back to
24 you Commissioner Noel if I'm still around and I turn
25 it over to Chair Rosenthal.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: You know, thank you
3 Speaker Johnson. You have been on leader in the city
4 whose really picked up on this issue. I appreciate
5 your agreeing to have a hearing on this, that's a
6 real sign of leadership on your part and it is
7 incredibly meaningful that we're doing this today.

8 I'm going to just ask one question each of the
9 NYPD and ENDGBV and then turn it over to Council
10 Member Richards but I would like to start with the
11 NYPD Deputy Chief. If we could just keep going on
12 the Speaker's line of questioning. What he is
13 pointing out is that if we set aside the radio runs.
14 So, just we're not going to think about radio runs.
15 If the complaint is taken, right, then an arrest is
16 made if the abuser is on site, right? If he is not
17 on site, then you are going to put out a warrant for
18 the arrest and etc.

19 KATHLEEN WHITE: We're talking about a violation
20 of order protection. If an order has been violated,
21 we would make an arrest.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: No, I'm talking about a
23 felony complaint or a domestic misdemeanor, domestic
24 violence misdemeanor.

1
2 KATHLEEN WHITE: A felony complaint is a must
3 arrest.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

5 KATHLEEN WHITE: There is no discretion in that,
6 we are making the arrest.

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: That's right and the
8 concern is, is that in the categories where - there
9 are two concerns. One, is the number of complaints
10 themselves are down in a statistically significant
11 way and then the number of arrests are down in a
12 statistically significant amount. Look, COVID has
13 brought on, we're learning, everyone is learning
14 every day about this and I'm not saying that your
15 officers - you know, I am saying, your officers are
16 juggling so much and my heart goes out to our lost
17 officers. That's tragic and its got to be, you know,
18 they are doing even more of a public service now as
19 they go to someone's door. But I know there is
20 language that they could be using to try to coax out
21 an abuser.

22 We could know that you know that there is
23 language on how they could be talking to someone
24 behind the door to respond to a situation where the
25 abuser might be saying look, everyone has COVID here,

1
2 go away. There is no abuse. Wouldn't you agree that
3 it's concerning the drop in the number of complaints
4 and the drop in the number of arrest and I appreciate
5 your saying that you are looking at the body cam
6 video. I'm curious to know what you are seeing
7 there. Does that tell us anything?

8 KATHLEEN WHITE: I'm seeing that the officers
9 are responding to the jobs and they are handling them
10 properly and if there is an arrest to be made, they
11 are making the arrest on the scene. I'm also having
12 officers reach out to victims from the past. That
13 let's say a household had past domestic history, I'm
14 having the officers take a proactive approach and
15 call those households and see if there is anything
16 that they want to talk about or we're also availing
17 people that we'll meet them somewhere. If they don't
18 feel comfortable talking at the house and they want
19 to meet us you know, at a different location or if
20 they want to come in by the precinct, we can meet
21 them outside the precinct. Or, you know, whatever
22 would make them feel more comfortable that would try
23 and help them out, we are availing them of that. I
24 mean, the domestic violence officers are all
25 dedicated. This is their mission, they have

1
2 extensive training on how to talk to complainants and
3 victims and try and you know, befriend them and let
4 them know, listen, if you don't want us to help you
5 per se, we can give you the name of the advocacy
6 groups. We can give you, you know, go to your
7 clergy. Go to your friends and family. there are a
8 lot of different avenues. We are not the only avenue
9 out there that can get you help.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Absolutely. I'm going
11 to move on Deputy Inspector, I'm going to move on. I
12 think we haven't quite answered the question and you
13 know; I'd like to explore this further but we can
14 move on for now.

15 Commissioner Noel, just one quick question. You
16 know, I heard you say that let's see, that hang on
17 one second. That the text, the COVID text number
18 652-652, I can't remember what it is exactly. It
19 sounds like it took until April 7th to get the first
20 text out and then over the past, people think of the
21 pandemic as having gone on for at least seven weeks,
22 there have been four texts that have gone out. It
23 sounds like when they have gone out, they have been
24 successful because you've gotten more hits to your
25 website when they go out, which is really just

1
2 terrific. But what I haven't heard in your testimony
3 and I wonder if you want to just speak to a little
4 bit is, whether or not you think the agency is doing
5 enough. Whether or not there could be more that
6 could be done and I would love to, if not now, but at
7 some point, hear your sort of game plan for what the
8 agency is doing in preparation for when the pause is
9 lifted.

10 CECILE NOEL: So, first I'd like to say that
11 outreach to survivors is critical and we started this
12 with a clear understanding that we understand that
13 survivors may have found it or maybe finding it
14 difficult to reach our for services now.

15 So, we looked at how we could stand up services
16 as quickly as possible in two phases. The first
17 phase was really thinking about what we could
18 immediately push out. Looking at social media,
19 thinking about the tools that we had at our
20 fingertips at that point and we did that through
21 Google and Twitter and we were pushing out our
22 messaging. Letting folks know that we are open. The
23 city is open, shelters are open, resources are here.
24 Our wonderful providers are here waiting to serve.
25 We stood up our FJC services and are really

1
2 connecting in that way and so, a major part of
3 pushing out, that was in fact using the social media
4 platform and we had a large increase using social
5 media. We saw a great uptick with Google and Twitter
6 and we continue to see that.

7 The second phase of our outreach, we'll really
8 look at how we can continue to amplify using those
9 means but also figure out how we can get our
10 messaging into convenience stores and check cashing
11 locations and laundromats and places that are open,
12 so we can actually put signage up, so that they can
13 really access services and know that services are
14 available. And we've also done a PSA with the First
15 Lady and have pushed those things out as well.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Have you gotten a
17 commitment for additional funding should demand
18 increase?

19 CECILE NOEL: We have gotten funding to do the
20 second phase of our plan. So, to be able to really
21 push that out to the places that I mentioned,
22 convenience stores and check cashing and laundromat,
23 we have gotten a commitment for that and we will
24 evaluate that impact as we go forward and evaluate
25 our funding needs at that time.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, I'm going to turn
3 it over to my Co-Chair Council Member Richards.
4 Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner, I'm trying to
5 turn it over to my colleague, Council Member
6 Richards.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Is Chair Richards there?

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay.

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Counsel, Sergeant, do you see
10 Chair Richards on the line?

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: We do not, sorry, he must
12 have gotten knocked off, we'll get in touch with him.

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, let's see. Next,
15 I'd like to call on in order, Council Members
16 Lancman, Vallone and Cumbo next and I think we have a
17 five minute clock. Thank you.

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And if Chair Richards come
19 back on, we will let him go after the person who is
20 currently speaking is speaking. Go ahead Council
21 Member Lancman.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you very much.
25 Could you just go over what the Administration and

1
2 various agencies or nonprofits at the Admins
3 direction is doing to proactively check in with prior
4 domestic abuse victims or individuals who had
5 previously called the hotline or had any interaction
6 with the city or one of the nonprofits that we fund
7 for a DV incident, to make sure that they are okay?
8 Given how challenging it is for a DV victim cooped up
9 with his or her abuser to themselves maybe reach out.

10 CECILE NOEL: So, part of what we do generally
11 is safety planning with all survivors. Folks who
12 come forward to the family justice centers, it's not
13 a one time call often. Often our calls involve
14 multiple times with the provider, providing
15 counseling and services to children. Their needs
16 evolve over time.

17 Survivors let us know what they need. Sometimes
18 they only need us once. Sometimes they need us
19 multiple times. We go at the direction of survivors.
20 That is the model, that is the client center trauma
21 informed model. Now, we check in as survivors
22 determine that they need us.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Sorry, let me just ask
24 you, let me just interrupt. In light of the
25 different environment that we're in, don't you think

1
2 that it might be a good idea to at least identify
3 some segment of the DV victim population for want of
4 a better term, that the city and the nonprofit
5 providers will affirmatively reach out without
6 waiting to be called and told, hey I've got a
7 problem?

8 CECILE NOEL: Survivors negotiate safety issues
9 every single day. They negotiate safety issues with
10 their abusers every single day. They let us know
11 what they need and the duration in terms of how they
12 need it and that's what we seek to do. That's the
13 level of engagement and that's how it's provided. We
14 could call and it's unsafe and we make something more
15 unsafe for a survivor in that situation.

16 So, we're always guided by the survivors atomy
17 and ability to tell us what they need and that's what
18 we should be doing.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Right, one of the
20 things I think Helen and I might have had a hearing
21 on this not to long ago, these batterer intervention
22 programs; there are all sorts of programs that
23 abusers are asked to, in some cases required to
24 participate in so that they can learn better behavior
25 and not be an abuser.

1
2 What is the status of those programs now that
3 people can't leave their homes? Has any model been
4 developed where people can participate in those
5 programs in a meaningful way online or remotely or
6 are just all of those programs on hold and in hiatus?

7 CECILE NOEL: I would defer to MOCJ on that who
8 handles the abusive partner intervention programs.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Okay. We had passed in
10 the Council a law prohibiting making it a crime for
11 people to engage in revenge porn and I've heard and
12 understand that as one could imagine in this
13 circumstance, online harassment, online abuse, some
14 classic revenge porn others just online harassment
15 has increased, as one might imagine. What is the
16 city doing to target that phenomenon in particular?

17 CECILE NOEL: We have a program with NYU Cornell
18 Tech that really provides a digital and safety
19 checkups for survivors on their phones, laptops,
20 whatever that might be. We help them figure out if
21 there is Spyware on their phones that they can take
22 off. We help them establish new email accounts that
23 the abuser may not have access to. We help them
24 identify when their tech instruments, their devices
25 are compromised and so, that they can then begin to

1
2 take some steps. We also do training with our not-
3 for-profit partners around how to include tech and
4 tech safety issues within the context of any kind of
5 safety plan.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Have those efforts and
7 initiative been enhanced and increased during the
8 current crisis? And if so, how so in what kind of
9 measurable ways?

10 CECILE NOEL: If survivors are experiencing tech
11 abuse -

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

13 CECILE NOEL: They can reach out to us for help
14 and we're happy to connect them.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: My time is expired; you
16 can still answer.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Commissioner, you can
18 finish your question. You can finish your answer,
19 please.

20 CECILE NOEL: I did. You know, if survivors are
21 experiencing any kind of tech abuse, they can reach
22 out and we can connect them to services and help them
23 manage that issue.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you.
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, we're going to
3 turn it back to Council Member Chair Richards for
4 your questions.

5 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Thank you Council Member
6 Rosenthal. I appreciate it, sorry, somebody called
7 me and we're all adjusting and I hit the wrong
8 decline button. So, to the NYPD, how many felony
9 arrests have been made since COVID has begun?

10 KATHLEEN WHITE: Alright, since the current 28
11 day period, we have 2,157 arrests.

12 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: How many? Go back again,
13 how many arrests since COVID begun?

14 KATHLEEN WHITE: I'm going with the 28 day
15 period which is pretty much close to the COVID time.
16 We're looking at a total of 2,157 arrests. Of which,
17 950 were felonies and 1,205 were misdemeanors and 2
18 were violations.

19 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: And like others I am
20 concerned, so thank you for that answer. Like
21 others, I am concerned about underreporting and I
22 want to figure out if there is ways we can do better
23 in ensuring that victims could reach out for help.
24 What is going on with Text to 911?

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2 KATHLEEN WHITE: Okay, well, the texting to 911,
3 that's an outside agency that is with the Department
4 of Information Technology and Telecommunications and
5 we have been working with them and they are telling
6 us that that will be operational in June and we
7 cannot get it up any quicker than June.

8 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: And would you agree with
9 me that text to 911 could be helpful in DV cases?

10 KATHLEEN WHITE: I think texting could be
11 helpful in any cases.

12 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: I specifically asked
13 about DV cases because text to 911 was supposed to be
14 operational already. So, we're going into June and -

15 KATHLEEN WHITE: Yes, yes, and the answer to
16 your question is yes. It would be helpful.

17 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Right, and is there any,
18 I would say since text to 911 won't come out, are
19 there any alternatives in the meantime when it comes
20 to texting DV officers who are working day to day.

21 KATHLEEN WHITE: Well, here is the problem with
22 that. You know, officers work in shifts, you know,
23 we work 24 hours a day. The officers change, the
24 numbers change. Who is going to be pulled from DV to
25 go to patrol, you know, who responds. You know, is

1
2 it going to go to the desk. There is so many
3 different ways that it could be done and all of those
4 ways, the potential for it to fall through the cracks
5 is a mess. So, that's why, they are going to have it
6 operational the beginning of June I believe. You
7 know, that's what we would be shooting for. If they
8 could get it earlier, that would be great.

9 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Right, and I thank you
10 for the work and I know it's been a tough time
11 certainly. But do you think there are any
12 alternatives possible until text to 911 comes online.
13 So, we have DV officers obviously; is it feasible for
14 them to receive text or to get their numbers out?

15 KATHLEEN WHITE: The answer would be no.

16 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Why not? If every
17 officer has a cellphone.

18 KATHLEEN WHITE: Okay, let's say I text officer
19 Jones, he is working at 8-4. Officer Jones takes off
20 today, who is going to pick up that text? Where is
21 that text going to go?

22 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Right.

23 KATHLEEN WHITE: You know what I mean, there's
24 no — what is someone's not in the office to read that
25 main number? The text comes into the Domestic

1
2 Violence office. You know, and there is no one in
3 the office. Let's say they got pulled for patrol or
4 somebody is out sick or they are doing something else
5 or you know they are on a lunch break or something.
6 Where is that text going to go? It's going to sit in
7 space and that person really needs help. If they
8 really need help at that moment, they are going to
9 have to call 911 or text a friend or a relative and
10 have them call 911. We've set that up in all the
11 trainings. You know, we've told them to make sure
12 that you involve your co-workers, your family, your
13 friends, your neighbors. If they get that text,
14 maybe you could text a group. You know, and then
15 somebody will get that call to 911 but we don't want
16 to see you know, texting to some office or some
17 officer and they are reassigned or something happens
18 and God forbid that text doesn't get read, how could
19 we live with ourselves on that, that's terrible.

20 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: So, let me ask you this,
21 so we have neighborhood police and NCO's and I know
22 that they are not specifically trained in DV but one
23 of the questions I would have is if we have
24 neighborhood officers who are supposed to be
25 responsive as well, is it feasible to ensure that on,

1
2 because they are supposed to be responsive to
3 communities 24/7, I'm assuming unless I'm wrong, I
4 believe the Commissioner has said that. Are there
5 ways to be creative in ensuring that DV victims also
6 have their numbers in the event because I believe,
7 unless I'm wrong and you could correct me if I'm
8 wrong, that community officers are supposed to be
9 available 24/7.

10 KATHLEEN WHITE: Everyone in the police
11 department is 24/7 and we all want to help. That's
12 our mission in life to help people, okay. We don't
13 want to see anyone fall through the cracks and yes,
14 an NCO, everyone is supposed to be reading their
15 phone 24/7. I'm supposed to look at my phone 24/7.
16 What if I'm in a very deep sleep and I don't hear it
17 go off or I put it on mute or vibrate and I don't
18 hear it. You know, we can't have that small margin
19 of error. You and I both know that that's when it's
20 really going to hit the fan and happen and that ball
21 will get dropped and I don't want that on my
22 conscience and I don't think you want that on your
23 conscience.

24 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Absolutely not, that's
25 why I want you to respond.

1
2 KATHLEEN WHITE: The answer is no. No, this is
3 up and running, no, I don't want to do a slip shot
4 half, you know job. I want to do it correctly from
5 the get go. I want to put that out there and plug it
6 and put it all over social media and get that program
7 started on the right foot. I don't want to start it
8 you know, so so and something bad happens and we're
9 very upset by it. We don't want to see that victim
10 fall through the cracks.

11 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Let me ask you this. Is
12 there a specific number in every precinct and maybe
13 you know, we have to think outside the box here
14 right.

15 KATHLEEN WHITE: Absolutely, and I do. I do
16 that very well. But -

17 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Is there a specific, hold
18 on. Is there a specific number that you think we can
19 be creative in creating for DV victims to local
20 precincts?

21 KATHLEEN WHITE: No, we've tossed this around a
22 ton of times since this all started and you know the
23 desk officer position is supposed to 24/7. If that
24 desk officer gets up and walks away from the desk,
25

1
2 that's when the text comes in and we don't see it and
3 you know that it's not going to keep -

4 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: A call, text, I don't
5 care about just text. Alright, so let's get to call.

6 KATHLEEN WHITE: Okay, so if you're calling, why
7 wouldn't you just call 911?

8 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Because not everybody
9 can call 911. Let me just go to this to. I found
10 your statements on checking in and I'm assuming you
11 track DV victims, correct?

12 KATHLEEN WHITE: We do and we check -

13 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Okay, hold on. Go ahead,
14 go ahead, I'm sorry.

15 KATHLEEN WHITE: I was going to say, we check in
16 with all victims, both the CVAP's check in with them
17 and the uniform DVO's check in with them. And we
18 also have been trying to think outside the box and
19 see if there's households that have had prior
20 violence. Maybe not reaching up to the level of
21 hyperintensity or children at risk list but victims
22 maybe victims that have had let's say multiple
23 misdemeanor felony assaults or that the offender
24 might have gotten out of jail you know, recently and
25 he has a heavy domestic violence background or a very

1 bad criminal background. We are trying to reach out
2 to those households and let them know that we are
3 here for them and to give them the safety -

4 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: And let me just go back
5 to your testimony. I think you testified that you
6 check up on DV victims two to three times a month, is
7 that correct?

8 KATHLEEN WHITE: Those are the high propensity
9 children at risk and elderly households that have
10 been designated the most at risk in every single
11 precinct.

12 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Including domestic
13 violence victims correct?

14 KATHLEEN WHITE: Oh, no just domestic violence
15 victims. A domestic violent victim could also be an
16 elderly domestic violent victim.

17 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Right, right, and
18 children, I agree.

19 KATHLEEN WHITE: And children, yes, correct.

20 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Do you think that's
21 sufficient enough during a period when we're all
22 locked in for COVID?

23 KATHLEEN WHITE: I'd say a minimum of two times
24 a month, a minimum and every precinct has a different
25

1
2 amount of individuals on that list and those
3 households are used to us checking up on them. Both
4 the victim and the offender know that we check up on
5 them. There is no secrets there and so, I do think
6 that we check up on them a minimum of two or three
7 times. You know, sometimes the offender doesn't live
8 with them you know, but if they are living with them,
9 you know, they would let us know that and then we
10 could check up on them more.

11 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Let me ask you a question
12 was two three on average a checkup before COVID?

13 KATHLEEN WHITE: About two was the average
14 before COVID, yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Alright, so, do you think
16 during COVID, when people are locked in their homes
17 every day that an increase would be certainly more
18 sufficient in addressing and forgive me if you hear
19 my son in the background.

20 KATHLEEN WHITE: Okay.

21 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: But please respond to me.
22 If you were checking up two to three times before
23 COVID, before a lockdown, do you think double that
24 number on the very least would be sufficient in the
25

1
2 event of a pandemic when people are locked in their
3 homes together with their abusers?

4 KATHLEEN WHITE: Okay, I'm going to say to you
5 it depends on the household and what's going on in
6 the household. Does the offender live in that
7 household currently?

8 Also, we are you know, six weeks into this
9 pandemic, people are going out. They are going to
10 the grocery stores, the pharmacies, the parks. They
11 are social distancing out in the street. So, they
12 are getting that breath of fresh air. The first two
13 weeks, it seemed like everyone was in and it was
14 almost a ghost town and you couldn't see anyone out
15 on the street. Now, you do see people coming out.
16 So, I think it's what's going on in that household
17 and no one is better at knowing what's going on than
18 those special DVO's in that precinct that deal with
19 that family all the time.

20 These families didn't just get added to this
21 list this month. They've been on this list; they've
22 been on our radar for months. We know who is living
23 in that household, what's going on, what the
24 backgrounds are of the offenders, the criminal
25 backgrounds and what that family likes and how often

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2 they like to hear from us. Sometimes they want to
3 talk on the phone, sometimes they want to meet at a
4 private location. Sometimes they don't necessarily
5 want to see us at all, but we do let them know of the
6 different avenues that are available whether it's
7 advocacy groups, the FJC'S, the clergy, their family,
8 and friends, and having the importance of those
9 emergency plans in place. That they should be able
10 to text their family, friends, co-workers and get 911
11 if they need it.

12 There is planning that has been going on since
13 day one when they have first put that complaint
14 report in on that domestic incident report. That
15 family has been touched numerous times. Sometimes
16 they like to even talk to the civilian advocates that
17 work with Safe Horizon rather than necessarily talk
18 to the DVO's. Which and by the way, they work hand
19 and hand the CVAP's and the DVO's because they're in
20 the same office together. They have a very intimate
21 relationship of the households and the different
22 parties that are there and they know who the victim
23 likes to talk to.

24

25

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2 Sometimes the victim feels much more comfortable
3 talking to the civilian victim advocate in the
4 precinct, as opposed to the DVO.

5 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: How many DVO's have been
6 out since COVID?

7 KATHLEEN WHITE: Okay, at the height of COVID,
8 the week of April 6th, we have 72 DVO's out sick
9 which was 17.31 percent. Now, this week that we're
10 in now, we have 29 out sick, 6.9 percent. So, we are
11 getting better. We are getting closer to full
12 strength.

13 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: And who filled their
14 positions when 72 percent to nearly 73 percent were
15 out. Who filled those positions?

16 KATHLEEN WHITE: Okay, and to something that the
17 NYPD does very good, we do more with less and we do
18 what we need to do.

19 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: No, I didn't ask you a
20 more to less question. I asked you who filled - Did
21 we have replacements?

22 KATHLEEN WHITE: No, we did not. In fact, you
23 know what the total number of DVO's, we know that
24 patrol was crushed when this epidemic started, okay
25 and we had to back fill patrol with all the special

1
2 units whether it's anti-crime, DVO's, community
3 policing, NCO's, you know, everyone had to jump in
4 the game and multitask, alright, so.

5 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Got it, got it. So, 73
6 percent were out -

7 KATHLEEN WHITE: No, no, no, no, no, time out,
8 time out.

9 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Okay, go ahead.

10 KATHLEEN WHITE: 72 DVO's were out which was -

11 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: 72-

12 KATHLEEN WHITE: Which is 17 percent.

13 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: 17 percent.

14 KATHLEEN WHITE: Right, right.

15 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: And who filled those
16 positions, I'm sorry?

17 KATHLEEN WHITE: No one filled those positions.

18 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: No one did, okay.

19 KATHLEEN WHITE: Before, we've always had one or
20 two in every precinct. Some precincts, you know,
21 each DV office runs on how many DIR's come in. You
22 know, so the busier precincts have more. They might
23 have a sergeant and ten DVO's. The slower precincts
24 might only have one or two DVO's. So, it's driven by
25 the data.

1
2 So, we tried to ensure that there was always one
3 or two DVO's in the precinct at all times to handle
4 complaints.

5 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Alright, so can we get,
6 can the Council get a breakdown of how many were out,
7 who replaced them by precinct and I don't want to
8 hold this because I know we have a lot of people who
9 want to testify and then my other question is, what
10 is the relationship with CBO'S on the ground who
11 possibly can fill these gaps and if the NYPD was
12 actually giving them additional assistance or the
13 Mayor's office to fill the gaps that we might have
14 seen.

15 So, I don't want to hold this up but your
16 answers to me are insufficient if 17 percent of DVO's
17 were out and we didn't fill those positions, we
18 endangered lives in our city and there is a direct
19 correlation between the reduction in DVO's and also
20 arrests and arrests down in domestic violence as we
21 all know is not necessarily good, especially when
22 people are locked in during a pandemic.

23 So, I'm not here to attack you, we're here to
24 find a common goal and I see you are getting a little
25 uptight, it's okay.

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KATHLEEN WHITE: No, I'm not, I'm not.

3

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CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: I'm right here, I want you to relax. We all share the same, hold on, hold on I'm talking. We all share the same common goal in ensuring that we can protect. So, we're all on the same team. I just want to put that out there.

8

KATHLEEN WHITE: Okay, time out, time out.

9

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CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: And I'm going to get time out but the mere fact that we had DVO's out and we didn't fill those positions in a meaningful way, means that we have people cooped up in their apartments or in their homes right now with their attackers.

15

16

OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: Council Member, those are your words.

17

18

CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: They are my words but they are fact.

19

20

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OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: She did not say that they weren't filled in a meaningful way but she did say that the jobs -

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CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: She just told me that they weren't filled. So, tell me how they were filled.

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2 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: So, the Chief has answered
3 your questions. You keep repeating the same question
4 and misinterpreting her answers.

5 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: I'm not misinterpreting.
6 No, I'm a very intelligent young man. I think I'm
7 interpreting it the right way that 17 percent of
8 DVO's were out and we didn't have a meaningful way in
9 filling those positions.

10 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: You said that there wasn't
11 anything meaningful, that's not what we said. So,
12 what she said was that much like the rest of the
13 Department, there is a historic pandemic going on.

14 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Agree.

15 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: We've lost members of the
16 service; we've had 19 upwards of 20 percent of our
17 Department out sick. Thousands of officers stricken
18 with the virus. In the midst of all of that, that
19 included DVO's, that included detectives, included
20 parole officers and we were doing our job. Our
21 officers were out there, they were out there making
22 arrests. They were out there communicating with
23 domestic violence victims.

24 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: How many arrests were
25 made; felony arrests were made -

1
2 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: We keep repeating ourselves
3 but I'm in the middle of my answer now. So, we were
4 doing our jobs, we were responding to DV calls, we
5 were making arrests, the numbers did fluctuate and I
6 think over time we're going to try to realize and I
7 think it's not only the NYPD but advocates and
8 experts and academics are going to try to make sense
9 of why radio runs were up, arrest are down,
10 complaints are down. One of the points that Chair
11 Rosenthal made in the beginning is, some victims are
12 holding back, maybe delivering their complaint until
13 the time is right for them.

14 Maybe that will be one of the answers that we're
15 going to come to. At the end of the day, we have put
16 in protocols internally to include reviewing body
17 worn cameras to make sure that the radio runs that
18 we're responding to or responded to in the right way.
19 Whenever there is an opportunity to make an arrest,
20 we make an arrest but we are dealing with a crisis
21 and to sell this as if where somehow there are
22 officers that are out sick and we're lacking our
23 responsibilities and not responding to calls or not
24 making arrests when there is an arrest to be made,
25 that's just false. That's insinuating -

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2 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: I didn't insinuate that
3 but -

4 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: That's absolutely insinuating
5 and you are leaving victims with a misperception that
6 if they call 911, if they call the police, that we're
7 somehow going to inadequately respond to them.
8 That's inappropriate.

9 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Well, let me get back to
10 text -

11 KATHLEEN WHITE: [INAUDIBLE 1:37:05]

12 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Hold on. Let me get back
13 to text 911 Oleg. So, where are we at with text 911,
14 will we see that in our review?

15 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: We keep going in a circle,
16 the Chief answered that question.

17 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Hold on, now I want you
18 to answer that question.

19 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: I'm answering.

20 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Are text to 911 going to
21 be ready by June?

22 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: DOITT is handling that
23 project, that's not a DV project and the last we
24 heard is text to 911 will be up and running in June.

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2 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: And I live in the real
3 world, there is no abuser that can call 911 with
4 their abuser in the house. So, I don't know what
5 world your living in.

6 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: We live in the same world.

7 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: In the world I live in,
8 it would be very complicated for victims to be able
9 to pick up their phone and call 911, so that's why I
10 want to stress text to 911 -

11 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: And that's we really wanted
12 to get text to 911 up and running. It's going to be
13 made up and running in a safe way to make sure that
14 no call falls through the cracks. It wasn't rushed
15 through to leave a victim calling 911 with nobody on
16 the other end to answer their call. So, it was done
17 prudently, diligently. The city took their time to
18 make sure that the system, the text to 911 system put
19 in place was a sound system that worked. That didn't
20 leave anybody unanswered and that system is going to
21 be up and running in June.

22 KATHLEEN WHITE: And every victim that a
23 domestic incident report had prepared on them during
24 this whole pandemic, they got a phone call by the
25 CVAP and by the DVO's. So, there was follow up on

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2 everything and if there was an arrest to be made, it
3 could have been a timing issue of when a 61 was
4 dropped and the squad picks up someone later on,
5 maybe they were at the house when we went to make an
6 apprehension, but every victim who did file a report,
7 did have the prudent, quick, timely follow-up. So, I
8 want you to understand that.

9 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: And I'm not discounting
10 that.

11 KATHLEEN WHITE: Radio runs, radio runs will
12 also be up because during the pandemic, victims did
13 not walk into the precinct. They could have called
14 911 or they could also have neighbors are calling 911
15 as well. So, you know, a lot of times victims do
16 come into the precinct and go right up to the squad
17 or the DV office.

18 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Let me, let me, let me
19 just say this and I want to end because I know my
20 colleagues have questions.

21 KATHLEEN WHITE: Sure.

22 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: But for you to say to me
23 that one, that your desk officers are walking away
24 from their desk and they can't answer the phone is
25 unacceptable.

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KATHLEEN WHITE: [INAUDIBLE 1:39:45]

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CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Hold on, hold on, I
didn't finish. I didn't finish my statement.

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KATHLEEN WHITE: [INAUDIBLE 1:39:48].

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CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: I didn't finish my
statement. I'm going to let you, you know, let me
finish my statement. So, desk officers are assigned
to a precinct, a local precinct should absolutely at
the mere least, as I do at my staff, they better
answer the phone. One person walks away, hold on,
they better have somebody else who can answer the
phone. Hold on.

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And then secondly, lastly, I would add to that,
that checking up on DV victims two to three times a
month is unacceptable. We need to make sure that
we're ramping that up and whether that means you get
more civilians, I know the NYPD is hiring another
class of officers, perhaps we need to look at
civilian hires, so that we can ensure that people are
checking up two times or three times the amount of
times that they did prior to COVID, because people
are locked in their homes with their attackers. So,
I just wanted to make that clear. I'm not here to

1
2 attack you. We're on the same side on this issue. I
3 want the NYPD to have 100 percent success here.

4 So, I don't want you and I understand the
5 challenges around staffing and everything else but we
6 need to find a common ground here to ensure that
7 we're protecting DV victims, LGBTQ victims.

8 KATHLEEN WHITE: Two to three times that's on
9 the DVO's. There is also additional times by the
10 CVAP's. So, it is more than two to three a month if
11 you add the two together.

12 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Well, that's not what you
13 said to me earlier. I'm giving you what you gave me.

14 KATHLEEN WHITE: The DVO's not the CVAP'S.

15 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Alrighty.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah, I mean, if I can
17 just follow up. The question was what's the change
18 between pre-COVID and during COVID, just to be clear.
19 Of course, the CVAP's are making their calls as well.
20 The question by Council Member Richards was, what's
21 the change now?

22 KATHLEEN WHITE: The high propensity victims
23 have always been at a high propensity for violence.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: That's just not the
25 answer to the question and maybe the answer to the

1
2 question is, there is no change with COVID. That's
3 fine but just be clear.

4 KATHLEEN WHITE: There is no change.

5 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: Chair, it's the same number.
6 It's the same number.

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

8 KATHLEEN WHITE: Where we were worried about
9 them before -

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: And I think the other
11 point, just to follow up on Council Member Richards
12 other point is, if you, the DVO's are specially
13 trained to do their work and they do an amazing job.
14 It is concerning that the number of complaints taken
15 and arrests are down. That's just a fact. I'm
16 reporting what your reporting. The complaints are
17 down, the arrests are down and of course, that's
18 concerning.

19 One could think that if the DVO's are out,
20 totally understandable. That the PO's who make those
21 wrongs perhaps are not as equipped to deal with this
22 very bazaar situation of COVID on top of a DV
23 situation and I think what we are suggesting and
24 hoping we can hear from the PD is, we recognize there
25 is a difference with COVID. We recognize that

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2 complaints in all three areas are down, right in DV.
3 We have rape complaints, felony, and misdemeanor
4 complaints all down, arrests are down. What we want
5 to hear is that you recognize it and that you are
6 doing everything you can and what we want to hear is
7 what exactly you are finding as you look at those
8 metrics and what you are doing to deal with that.

9 You know and saying that you've reviewed the
10 body cams and they all look right, really doesn't
11 answer the question. Then, what is going on? If
12 complaint are down, another words the report taken
13 when you get to the door. So, all we're saying is
14 those questions are valid questions and they have not
15 been answered yet. Nothing more, no casting
16 aspersions.

17 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: Sure, so I think your point
18 is right and the Chief mentioned that in her
19 testimony, that we recognize that DV has always been
20 a historically underreported crime. So, when we see
21 the numbers drop, you know the complaint numbers drop
22 off, we are concerned and that's why and she said
23 clearly in her testimony, we're not taking it to mean
24 that oh, the numbers have dropped, so therefore, DV
25 seems to - the crime is going down. We're actually

1
2 concerned that the numbers are dropping, so they are
3 following up with the DV victims. We are reviewing
4 body cameras, I mean, that's not something to be made
5 light of, it's to your point - no, no, no, I'm not
6 saying your making light of it.

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I'm just saying it's not
8 good enough to say, we looked at the body cams and
9 everything is fine.

10 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: That's just one of the things
11 that we're doing right but it's an important thing.
12 To your point that you just made, if the DVO's are
13 out sick, if there is a large number of DVO's that
14 are out sick and police officers are responding to
15 these runs, which mind you, the police officers were
16 always responding to the radio runs. The patrol
17 officers, the DVO's were doing the follow-ups but
18 it's important to look at the body worn camera video
19 to ensure that during this pandemic, that nothing is
20 slipping through the cracks.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: By definition, something
22 is slipping through the cracks. Just by definition,
23 that's all we're saying.

24 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: How is down by definition?
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Because complaints are
3 down.

4 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: Okay, but we can't reach that
5 conclusion now that's something slipping through the
6 cracks. It could be that complaints are down because
7 victims aren't making complaints. The question is -

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: But your radio runs are
9 up, so someone's calling 911.

10 KATHLEEN WHITE: But it could also be by
11 neighbors calling 911.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I heard that. I heard
13 that. The drop in complaints and the drop in
14 arrests, there is a statistical, statistically
15 significant drop.

16 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: But we're going to move
18 on, so other people can ask questions. We're saying
19 the same thing over and over. I'm not hearing an
20 answer. You're not hearing when I don't hear an
21 answer, so let's move on to the next person, but I
22 think we have we have a little work here to do.

23 Council Member Vallone, I think you were up next and
24 then Council Member Cumbo, Majority Leader Cumbo.
25 We've also been joined by Council Members Kallos,

1
2 Gibson, Deutsch, and Rivera. Oh, no, not Council
3 Member Rivera, my bad. Alright, Council Member
4 Vallone.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you Helen.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Okay, I'm sorry.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: You can begin.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Okay, thank you to our
10 Co-Chairs Helen Rosenthal and Donovan Richards and
11 our Speaker. Thank you to NYPD and the Mayor's staff
12 that are here today.

13 First, we're all in agreement to thank you for
14 everything that you are doing to keep us alive in the
15 city during these times. So, I wanted to personally
16 thank everyone of our first responders in the NYPD
17 for everything you are doing and the staff that's
18 doing the work that Helen and Donavan are bringing
19 out today.

20 One thing that came up between Rory's and Helen
21 and Donovan's, the providers that are actually
22 handling the DV work, some of them in my district
23 that are handling this are telling me that calls are
24 up over 300 percent. So, I just want to make sure
25 we're on the same; even though maybe 911 calls are

1
2 down. I have providers telling me that in the last
3 five weeks, they've gotten over a 300 percent
4 increase. But they are also being told that as of
5 today and maybe you could clarify for me and for
6 them, are they still categorized as not an essential
7 service? Because right now, they are having
8 difficulty working under the conditions because they
9 haven't been classified as an essential service.

10 CECILE NOEL: DV providers who are working, we
11 have reached out to our contractors who are deemed as
12 essential services and have been working with them to
13 be able to figure out whatever their COVID needs are
14 and address those appropriately.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, that they are
16 classified as essential services, because I'm being
17 told that they haven't even done that yet. So, if we
18 can coordinate and make sure that is lifted, that
19 would be a big help in their ability to address these
20 concerns.

21 CECILE NOEL: We are constantly looking at that
22 and we are really accessing the COVID response
23 looking at residential program providers and really
24 discussing what if any modifications need to be made
25 to their budgets to be able to honor any reasonable

1
2 or additional costs that they have incurred due to
3 COVID.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, that's
5 encouraging. I just want to thank Helen and Donovan
6 for bringing this up because for example, I have the
7 Korean American Family Service Center in Queens and
8 they are looking for that help. They have over 300
9 percent increase in DV calls and it's at crisis stage
10 here in northeast Queens and Queens. So, clearly
11 there is a need for this hearing. Clearly there is a
12 need to connect the services that are trying to be
13 provided and whats done.

14 So, if you can maybe just end by saying how we
15 can make that connection.

16 CECILE NOEL: I would encourage that service
17 provider to reach out to the agencies that hold that
18 contract and talk to them about what they are seeing
19 and what some of their needs are.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you. Thank you,
21 Helen, thank you Donovan.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much.
23 Majority Leader Cumbo?

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Majority Leader Cumbo,
3 are you unmuted? No, I don't think she is unmuted
4 yet. Yeah, she's not unmuted yet.

5 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Unmute myself.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: There you go, we can
7 hear you.

8 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Okay, thank you so much
9 for doing this timely hearing. I really was holding
10 on because I wanted to obviously the Text 911 is my
11 bill and I couldn't be more excited that I have
12 champions on the Council that are advocating and
13 fighting harder for my bill than I ever could.

14 So, I thank you all for that because I just want
15 to add how critical the ability to have Text 911 is
16 at this critical time and I certainly stand and
17 associate myself with the words of Council Member
18 Donavon Richards in terms making sure that this is
19 expedited. Because the challenge that we face is
20 that it has been one of those, it's coming online
21 next year. It's coming online next month; it's
22 coming online and it's constantly been about to come
23 and this legislation was passed in our last term.

24 So, while I recognize that it's in DOITT, we
25 certainly want to make sure that you are doing all

1
2 that you can to continuously make sure that this is
3 pushed through as quickly as possible.

4 I wanted to ask and I apologize, I'm here with
5 my son and so, I've been a bit in an out in terms of
6 a lot of the questions that are being asked. What
7 are the options currently now in terms of, and if
8 this has been asked, I certainly, please just inform
9 me. In terms of, if there are people in dangerous
10 situations as far as calls that are being made that
11 the police department are responding to. Because of
12 the situation with COVID, have there been additional
13 spaces, places, safety spaces, housing options that
14 are now more readily available than ever before?

15 KATHLEEN WHITE: Do you mean when calls come in
16 from 911 and then we farm them to domestic violence
17 officer, that we meet victims at a different location
18 if they so request. If they don't feel comfortable
19 with us coming into their homes or they don't want us
20 you know, to be seen at their homes. We do make
21 those provisions to meet them at a different location
22 of a mutual understanding to help them. We do that.

23 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you. So, what
24 happens now if you've discovered that there is a
25 case, a dangerous situation, someone stepped out,

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2 they met you at this disclosed location previously
3 pre-COVID, all of the housing options were booked
4 solid. Everyone had a very difficult time with
5 actually leaving their abuser because there were very
6 few housing options available. Have we opened up;
7 I'm just making examples of these questions were
8 asked. Have we further opened up our hotels, other
9 safety spaces and other things like that, that now
10 make it easier because the challenge prior to COVID,
11 was that the housing stopped particularly for DV was
12 so packed and the waiting was list was so long that
13 often times people didn't come forward because the
14 understanding would be, there's really no place else
15 to go. You are going to have to return home.

16 So, my question is at this time, are there
17 [INAUDIBLE 1:54:22].

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Oh, no, come back, we
19 need to unmute the Majority Leader again.

20 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Okay, you hear me?

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

22 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Okay, so are there more
23 safe spaces in a COVID world right now at this time
24 then there were pre-COVID?
25

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2 CECILE NOEL: Can I, this is Commissioner Noel
3 and I'd first like to say that domestic violence
4 shelters are open, services are available. But I'd
5 also like to defer to HRA who is here as well to
6 answer that specifically.

7 Thank you, Majority Leader, to answer your
8 question, as Commissioner Noel just stated, we have
9 capacity in the emergency shelter system for those
10 individuals who might require immediate placement in
11 one of those shelter options.

12 UNIDENTIFIED: I think something that you are
13 asking is slightly different and you are asking about
14 housing options. I would just say that our HRA
15 offices that are processing housing applications for
16 rental assistance remain open. We've stood up an
17 opportunity to be able to work with landlords to do
18 remote viewing for apartments when linking somebody
19 to rental assistance and ensuring that they are able
20 to move out into permanent options as well.

21 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: So, I just want to be
22 clear about that because I think that information is
23 really important. Are you saying that in this time
24 right now, there is an opportunity, if you are in a
25 situation where you can no longer live with your

1 abuser, you and your family have to leave. Are you
2 saying that there are housing opportunities that are
3 available for them if they want to leave that day?
4 And what you are saying is that there are, there's
5 shelter housing available.
6

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Please, this is an
9 important question, Council Member, please continue.

10 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Can you still hear me?

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

12 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I think it's important,
13 I think a lot of things are important. It's
14 important for us to be able to outline clearly to the
15 New York City worldwide. If you are having issues
16 that housing is an option, there is some place that
17 you can go temporarily or support for services for
18 temporary shelter and so, I just want to make sure
19 that that is actually the case and that it's very
20 streamlined in terms of how they go about doing that.

21 And I also say it from the place of, we hear
22 very much about the uptick in domestic violence, but
23 we're not hearing at same level. We understand that
24 there is an uptick in violence, we have some place
25 for you to go. I think that's a critical part of

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2 this, so that people know there is an option and that
3 there is some place for them to go. That it's not,
4 your going to be returned back to the same household
5 where the incident is taking place. Because you
6 know, for me if I were in that situation and I knew
7 that I'd have to return back to the same home, I
8 probably wouldn't report it because you would
9 infuriate the person who you've called this upon and
10 not have any place to go at that point.

11 And I guess because of COVID, what I mean, what
12 kind of provisions are being made for someone to move
13 if they have to leave their home very quickly and
14 rapidly in that way?

15 CECILE NOEL: Well, what's important I think to
16 understand is that part of our messaging out there is
17 that one, that we're open. Two, is that services are
18 available. Part of safety planning includes figuring
19 out how we help you exit that situation. That you
20 need to do safely.

21 Part of safety planning will include linking
22 you to the hotline to find that placement. That you
23 need in the borough that's safe, in the area that's
24 safe. It's really working with the survivor where
25 they are and really strategizing with them on how to

1
2 leave safely and how to access the system that they
3 need to.

4 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Is the shelter for DV
5 victims, have all the precautions and dynamics been
6 taken into place in terms of COVID? Because I would
7 be concerned as an individual leaving my – you know,
8 you are looking at it from a place of, I'm
9 jeopardizing my health and my safety of my family in
10 this home but I may also be jeopardizing my health
11 and my family in this shelter that's unknown that I
12 know nothing about.

13 Are the dynamics in the shelters also places
14 where we're saying, these particular DV shelter are
15 safe havens. They are safe, you will be protected.
16 You will have the privacy of your own space, your own
17 housing opportunity. Like, you are going to be in a
18 space that is safe as reasonable as possible under
19 the current COVID circumstances.

20 UNIDENTIFIED: Sure, thank you for the
21 questions, I was having a bit of difficulty the last
22 couple of minutes unmuting, so I was not able to
23 respond. Thank you to Commissioner Noel for jumping
24 in there.

1
2 The vast majority of the domestic violence
3 shelter system is set up with apartments and private
4 bathrooms. There is a subset that does include
5 shared kitchens and bathrooms. I want to make it
6 abundantly clear to these committees and to the
7 individuals who are listening and watching at home,
8 in respect to the guidance that we have provided to
9 our contracted providers about the guidance from
10 DOHMH in respect to congregate locations and the
11 necessity to maintain social distancing, cleaning
12 those areas, communications for the sites that do
13 have congregate bathrooms or kitchens, the necessity
14 of staggering meal times to be communicating with one
15 another to ensure social distancing. But I want it
16 to be abundantly clear that you know, we have not
17 heard from providers that there are instances in
18 which there are concerns. If folks are hearing
19 otherwise, we do need to hear that information, so we
20 can work with providers.

21 If somebody is unable to isolate in one of our
22 locations, DSS has stood up isolation capacity. We
23 talked about that in great extent last week at a DHS
24 hearing on the subject. But we've been in regular
25 communication with our providers to make sure that

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2 communities and those impacted individuals know that
3 there are safe options available for those who are in
4 need in our emergency domestic violence system.

5 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I'll just conclude with
6 a statement and I thank you so much for your clarity
7 on the answer. I think it's really important when
8 there's been a lot of back and forth in terms of
9 things slipping through the cracks and not
10 understanding the low reporting but knowing that the
11 abuse is actually higher. I think that we have to
12 ramp up the information that we're sending out about
13 what to do and what's available and that you are
14 going to be in a safe space and that we understand
15 that it's COVID. And we understand that you are
16 making a choice between leaving your home, which is
17 unsafe and going to a new space that you don't know
18 if it's going to be safe. Like, all of that
19 information somehow needs to get filtered to the
20 community that going into a shelter if you have never
21 been in one, may seem like you are going into a room
22 or a space with 100 beds and they're all in one room
23 and you are going to be sleeping on a cot next to
24 someone. Like, if you've never been, you don't know.

1
2 UNIDENTIFIED: I appreciate that. Across
3 neither the HRA nor DHS system does that environment
4 exist. Across the HRA system, families and singles
5 are placed in their own unit. Some of which as I
6 just mentioned, the majority have a self-contained
7 bathroom and kitchen. And there is a smaller subset
8 that does not, and as I indicated, we provided clear
9 guidance about maintaining social distancing in those
10 environments to exactly address the concern and I
11 think it's all incumbent upon each of us to be
12 messengers of that safety in these environments, so
13 that way, if an individual is you know, has the
14 opportunity to leave an abuser and enter into the
15 domestic violence shelter system, that they take it
16 and there isn't mixed messaging.

17 So, we're happy to provide additional
18 information to this committee about what was provided
19 as guidance to our providers. It's posted on the
20 DOHMH website. And certainly, happy to answer any
21 questions so we can all be stewards of accurate and
22 precise messaging around this.

23 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Just because people are
24 watching and viewing and this might be like the
25 greatest information that they've gotten, if you are

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2 facing a situation in an abusive household or
3 relationship, do you call 911 or do you call the
4 Mayor's Office to combat domestic violence? Do you
5 call one of the providers? What is your first
6 touchpoint in terms of how to deal with this and if
7 you do decide that you are going to call the police
8 first, do they then streamline the process to get you
9 into housing?

10 CECILE NOEL: Okay, first and foremost if you
11 are in danger, if you are at risk, at serious risk,
12 you should call 911. You should reach out and have
13 that response.

14 Police I train, they will take the complaint,
15 they will follow up and also, you can reach out to
16 the domestic violence hotline. You can go to NYC
17 Hope and actually be able to speak with someone who
18 is not law enforcement, who can talk about some of
19 those other services. Not that law enforcement
20 can't, they certainly can and they are well aware of
21 those services and well aware of all the numbers and
22 give them out all the time but they can also call
23 directly to the hotline. If they don't want to speak
24 to someone, they can go to NYC Hope and look for
25 resources and find resources within the community.

1
2 Not every, I think it's important for us just to
3 ground ourselves a little bit in understanding that
4 survivors have the autonomy, have the ability to
5 choose and they do. And they negotiate safety for
6 themselves and their children every single day. And
7 yes, it is more challenging during COVID, and we
8 understand that and the importance of getting the
9 messaging out is truly, truly important and we want
10 to do that but not every survivor wants a law
11 enforcement response and not every survivor is ready
12 to go to shelter. Many survivors just want
13 information. They want to understand their options,
14 they want to be able to think about what the next
15 step could be, understand that step and reach out to
16 providers and think about that. And remember that
17 all of our FJC's are open and available to do that
18 work as well.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I'm going to keep going
20 here if that's okay with you Majority Leader Cumbo
21 and move on. We have next Council Members Cabrera
22 and then Lancman again and if any other Council
23 Members would like to ask questions, please, please
24 do so by raising your hand in the practice event
25 list.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so much to
3 the Chair's and to the Speaker. I just want to
4 review a couple of things here just for the record.
5 Oleg, help me understand this, if I heard you right,
6 the situation with the 911, is not because of a hold
7 up by the NYPD, it's solely because of DOITT?

8 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: Well, I mean, I'm not blaming
9 DOITT, but the point I was making is -

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I'm not blaming, I just
11 want to point out where it's happening.

12 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: Right, so the agency that's
13 adding the upgrade or conversion to text to 911 is
14 DOITT. They are doing the citywide, they are the
15 citywide project leader in doing it. They have set
16 the go date as June of this year. We're definitely a
17 customer I'm sure so is the Fire Department, DMS and
18 so on of the text to 911 system.

19 But we are certainly doing our part because
20 there is a certain level of training that goes on for
21 the PCP's and so on, so we have a role in it and you
22 know, they are standing up to technology, we're doing
23 the backend in terms of making sure that our folks
24 know how to use it and to ensure that nobody slips
25 through the cracks that uses the text to 911 system.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: But you have done your
3 piece, that's what I'm asking, right.

4 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: Yeah, yeah, I think we're
5 working together, yes, yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay, I just want to
7 make sure that we're not demanding of an agency
8 something that they have no control over at this
9 point and so, it really comes down to DOITT and the
10 discussions need to take place with DOITT for them to
11 be able to expedite because we definitely need it.

12 The second thing is, I wanted to ask you, there
13 was a really good question regarding the most
14 sensitive cases, right and normally they get three
15 calls. What are the best practices that you see
16 nationwide and are we among the best practices during
17 the COVID-19 season that we're going through right
18 now?

19 KATHLEEN WHITE: Well, we've been in contact
20 with other law enforcement agencies around the
21 country, we read the you know, weekly newsletters of
22 all the different practices. We're all on board with
23 most of the same practices because they have been you
24 know, proven over and over again to work.

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2 So, we also send our offices to seminars across
3 the country. We've been doing that for the last
4 couple of years to talk with other law enforcement
5 agencies and see what the best practices are that
6 they employ and we share our practices with them and
7 so forth.

8 And I think that we do have some really great
9 practices going on right now. We have weekly
10 strategy meetings with the Mayor's Office to NGBB and
11 different advocacy groups, clergy groups and
12 collaborative community policing with Commissioner
13 Parker, so that we can all be onboard and have the
14 same exact format that we're using.

15 You know, again, to go with Commissioner Noel,
16 she said that you know what victims, victims are
17 like, they are absorbing all this information that
18 we're giving them. We're reaching out to them, we're
19 visiting them. We're first interacting with the 911
20 job, then the DVO's and the CVAP's are calling them.
21 We're giving them the numbers to the FJC's and the
22 different agencies and they are calling them and they
23 are going to do what is best for themselves and their
24 families when they are ready to do it.

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You know, we want them to get the help and get out of those dangerous situations but the bottom line is, they are going to do it when they wish to do it and we have to be respectful, especially in a pandemic when they are worried about illnesses, money, dislocation, their children. There's a lot of factors at play here. It's not always that simple as to say, let's call 911 and make an arrest immediately and be done with this. That's not how it is. The very fluid long term planning process.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: So, because I only get five minutes. So, the question maybe to ask you in a different way is, a more defined way, is the numbers that you saw before with the most cases that they get three phone calls a month. Have you seen a disparity or in terms of those cases becoming more dynamic or have you seen pretty much the same because you are applying the same practices that had before?

KATHLEEN WHITE: Okay, in answer to that, we have nominated those households as households at risk and that's because of past incidents that have happened and we do check on them, like I said, that's a minimum of two to three times a month, minimum.

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2 Sometimes we get more visits in, sometimes they call
3 us, etc., alright.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

5 KATHLEEN WHITE: Because we are checking in,
6 they are being handled. Those households are not
7 seeing an increase in violence because those
8 offenders know that we are watching what is going on
9 in that household.

10 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: I mean I think and just to
11 finish off on the answer to Council Member. I think
12 what you are trying to get at and the answer is,
13 we're not shortchanging any households. If it looks
14 like a household needs more than the minimum in terms
15 of visits, that's what they're getting. But that
16 seems like the two to three minimum a month,
17 historically has seemed to be the right recipe but
18 that's not a one size fits all. Sometimes there's a
19 household that needs more and we're certainly going
20 to provide more and the other piece, just to finish
21 off on to your very first question about the text to
22 911, I don't want to leave with a misconception that
23 a city agent, DOITT or any other city agency was
24 sitting on their end and they could somehow you know,
25 flip a switch and do it a lot faster and they haven't

1
2 been. That just hasn't been the case. This is a
3 very, it's a difficult process because we can't make
4 a mistake. That's the key. You need to build a
5 system that's a sound system that and sure, you need
6 to test the system before it goes live to ensure that
7 if somebody that's falling for in the course of an
8 emergency, needs help from a first responder, that
9 that call gets received on the other end.

10 And that testing, that building out testing and
11 training, it takes time and we didn't want to rush
12 through it and get it going before it was ready to go
13 live. So, we're all working together, the PD, the
14 FD, DOITT. Everybody is working together to get it
15 up and running as quickly as humanly possible and
16 it's not the fault of any agency. I just want to
17 make sure that that's clear.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I run out of time,
19 thank you so much.

20 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Council Member Kallos
22 and then Council Member Menchaca.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.
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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Council Member Kallos,
3 have you been unmuted? No, not yet, I think
4 actually, oh, there you go.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you very much.
6 Thank you to Chair Rosenthal, thank you to Chair
7 Richards. I wanted to just touch on two quick items.
8 One of the first things I did with Council Members, I
9 set up text based constituent services because one of
10 my colleagues, Council Member Cabrera already had it.

11 It is one of the most straight forward pieces.
12 I guess the piece I'm a little lost on is we have two
13 911 centers and folks are already on computers.
14 There is already a way of distributing phone calls to
15 the operators. Why aren't we able to distribute the
16 text message like, just to be very clear, you buy a
17 text messaging gateway, the text messaging gateway
18 pretty much has unlimited bandwidth per text
19 messages. They are very small; they are very easy to
20 send. They actually built them for other states and
21 then it's just a matter of having the training, but
22 you already have the trained operators, so I guess
23 what is the hold up in just getting the text
24 messaging gateway? Which literally I could build
25

1
2 three this afternoon to feed messages to your
3 operators.

4 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: I mean, Council Member, I'm
5 certainly not the person qualified or running the
6 project to answer that question for you. I know that
7 there is a report that's mandated. I believe by
8 Council Member Cumbo's legislation that gives a
9 status report on what's being done year over year or
10 maybe semiannually to get text to 911 up and running.

11 But I would defer to do it to explain more of
12 the technology and what the impediments are or you
13 know, to getting the system live. What I can tell
14 from the first responder or from the PD standpoint,
15 yes, as you mentioned, there is the training piece
16 which we have done and two, there is conceptually the
17 process when it stands up, it's something that's new,
18 something that hasn't been done before in New York
19 City. We want to ensure that when an emergency text
20 comes in, that somebody receives it and we dispatch
21 services to the right location.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I thank you. I
23 appreciate your answer, I think that's the same
24 answer you previously given. I think I'm just saying

1
2 that a text and a phone call are very similar and
3 that the technology exists to just route it.

4 My other question is regarding what resources
5 are available to folks who might be watching at home
6 who might be in a domestic violence situation and
7 they are concerned about going to a shelter. They
8 are concerned about employment, maybe they've lost
9 their jobs and so, now is not a great time but maybe
10 there's an opportunity to do a video visit, because
11 it's a crisis right now and they say I want to talk
12 to somebody. What resources short of having to leave
13 for shelter are available that somebody can pick up
14 the phone right now or text right now to get
15 resources for their families so that they can try to
16 resolve situations and try to come back together with
17 a partner?

18 CECILE NOEL: That is a great question and one
19 of the first things they can do is reach out to our
20 family justice centers. They are in every borough,
21 we can connect them to services, we can give
22 counseling. We can provide legal consultation; we
23 can connect them to shelter if they want to be
24 connected to shelter.

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2 So, it is a multi-service entre to be able to
3 help a survivor both access a situation, safety plan,
4 and then connect to services if they need that. If
5 they are sure that they want to go into shelter, they
6 can call the New York City hotline and be connected
7 to a shelter. They can also go to NYC Hope, which is
8 our resource directory. They can look up services,
9 they can call services within their community and get
10 connected that way. There are multiple ways that
11 survivors can connect and that's what I think that we
12 all need to make sure that they hear. And they also
13 need to hear that we are here, we are responding,
14 NYPD is responding, shelters are open and they should
15 reach out if they need services.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: What is the number for
17 the New York County Family Justice Center and if I'm
18 coming in to be an essential worker in Manhattan, can
19 I use the New York County Family Justice Center?

20 CECILE NOEL: Yes, you can use the New York
21 County Family Justice Center and let me just pull up
22 that number because each of the numbers are
23 different, but I will get that for you and give you
24 that in just a moment and for our website. So, let's
25 just be clear while we get that number, they can also

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2 go to our website, which is nyc.gov/nychope and they
3 can find our numbers there as well or they can call
4 the Domestic Violence hotline, which is 1-800-

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

6 CECILE NOEL: 621-4673 and for New York Counties
7 Family Justice Center, let me just get that number.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: 212-602-2800 and just to
9 repeat because time was called, 800-621-HOPE. Hope
10 spells out 4673.

11 CECILE NOEL: That is correct.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And if I may have just
13 an extra moment, I just wanted to ask, during this
14 time, are video visits available for your resources,
15 so that folks don't have to travel into a family
16 justice center and then similarly, if they do choose
17 to travel in and I have a small two year old, I don't
18 want her to get coronavirus, what are the ratios?
19 What safety precautions are being taken so that we
20 don't get coronavirus while we're trying to get other
21 type of safety?

22 CECILE NOEL: So, family justice centers have
23 transitioned to virtual intake and processing. So,
24 all you have to do is call the number. Right now, we
25 are temporarily closed due to COVID, but they can

1
2 call and get that service and the number for
3 Manhattan is 212-620-2800 for the Manhattan Family
4 Justice Center.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I'm going to go now to
6 Council Member Menchaca. I know that you've been
7 waiting for a while and your technology dropped you
8 off, but you are back. Council Member Menchaca.

9 CECILE NOEL: Chair Rosenthal.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Oh, yeah.

11 CECILE NOEL: Just one second. I just want to
12 repeat the number because I think I said that very
13 quickly. Again, the number for the Manhattan Family
14 Justice Center is 212-602-2800.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you very much.
16 Council Member Menchaca.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you Chair's and
18 everyone involved in making this hearing possible. I
19 want to direct our attention to the immigrant
20 community. An immigrant community who has been part
21 of the massive essential response and who are being
22 left behind by many of the federal and state and what
23 we've trying to fix here in the city as well. And I
24 want to talk specifically about DV cases that will
25 trigger ICE agent enforcement. Immigrant communities

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2 especially the survivors are feeling a chilling
3 effect and we've been hearing this, so I'm glad we're
4 having this opportunity to have a conversation with
5 both you Commissioner and the Deputy Chief.

6 Their having a chilling effect that is
7 preventing them from calling 911 or activating any of
8 the DV services. The immigrant community has been I
9 think a difficult community to connect to services
10 period. We're seeing that in the census response.
11 Immigrant communities are not responding and so, this
12 is I think a big issue but I want to focus on the
13 DVP'S. So, how is the NYPD and the Mayor's office,
14 you Commissioner dealing with this as you encounter
15 retaliatory actions from ICE?

16 CECILE NOEL: Well, I first want to just talk
17 about our relationships with providers because we
18 have a robust community of providers who serve
19 immigrant communities who are very connected each to
20 our family justice centers and also, to all the
21 services that we deliver. They are a major piece of
22 all that we do. All the work that we do with clients
23 at the family justice center is safe and confidential
24 period. We do not disclose that information at all
25 and we tell that to our survivors who come through

1
2 the door and they know that and we stand by that in
3 every way.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay, so and I
5 appreciate that and I know that that's true, I guess
6 what I'm saying is, I guess I'm talking about very
7 recently ICE has been, and I'm talking about in the
8 last month and a half has been active still and we've
9 been fighting that in a big way and we have heard of
10 a report that someone, a survivor who had called and
11 engaged in the system, was engaged by ICE at their
12 home and that is what I'm talking about. That kind
13 of stuff has been spoken about in our communities.
14 And so, I want to address that, not the general, you
15 are open to immigrants, that's true. Is that on your
16 radar one? And two, how are you responding to that
17 and this is maybe more for Deputy Chief. And because
18 I only have two minutes, I want to ask my second and
19 final question in this five minutes, which is the
20 letter that we all got, the 114 groups that are
21 asking for a massive reduction in the NYPD period to
22 really rethink how we work in our communities. The
23 letter is a beautiful letter, you should just read it
24 but how we rethink how we can really resource these
25 organizations. The ones we talked about. The

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2 immigrant community organizations that have a robust
3 and strong trustful relationship with communities.

4 And so, I would like to hear from the NYPD about
5 how we can engage that conversation since we are
6 going to be in budget negotiations. We are in that
7 right now and how we can start creating a plan that
8 works with community to reduce, massively reduce the
9 NYPD budget. And I'll leave you with those final
10 questions.

11 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: Sure, so thanks Council
12 Member for the question. So, I mean in terms of the
13 case that you mentioned that you said you heard that
14 somebody had filed a DV complaint and ICE came to
15 their house. I mean if you can share anything about
16 what that case is, I could look into the particular
17 case. I haven't heard of it. I can tell you in
18 terms of what the PD policy is and I know that you
19 are aware because me and you communicated many times
20 about immigrant issues is, we don't share information
21 particularly complainant, witness information with
22 ICE. There is very strict protocols that were passed
23 in the privacy laws by the Council. We adhere to
24 those strictly. I think the most telling is putting
25 aside victim or witness information if you just

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2 simply look at individuals that are arrested and what
3 our compliance rate is with detainer requests. Their
4 basically nonexistent.

5 So, and in your example, you're not even talking
6 about individuals arrested. You're talking about a
7 complainant. So, I wouldn't know how that could
8 possibly happen. We certainly wouldn't be turning
9 that information over to any third parties but if you
10 have any more information about that particular case,
11 you can call me offline and I could look into that
12 particular case and see what may have happened.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

14 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: And I still going or?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Yeah, answer the other
16 question about massive reduce in the budget and the
17 114 groups that just sent out a letter to the Mayor
18 and to the Speaker.

19 OLEG CHERNYAVSKY: Yeah, I'm not familiar with
20 the letter, I haven't read it, so I'm certainly
21 looking forward to reading it but look, I think it
22 wouldn't surprise you if I tell you that the NYPD
23 budget is a necessary budget. I mean to keep New
24 York City safe, to keep New York City at record crime
25 lows, you need a police force that's a vibrant

1 dynamic police force. A police force like the NYPD.
2 Now, we certainly have instituted a lot of programs,
3 for example neighborhood policing. I think that's in
4 the vein that you were talking about and more
5 recently, the current Police Commissioner stood up
6 our youth initiative is to intervene and engage with
7 youth before they go on the wrong path and before
8 they enter the criminal justice system.
9

10 So, we are doing all of those things. I mean,
11 I'm sure there's a large number of programs that I'm
12 sure you are aware of that we're doing. Some of you
13 may not be but I'm certainly willing to talk to you
14 offline and give you a larger picture on that but the
15 NYPD budget is a necessary budget. I mean, that's
16 what keeps people in New York City safe.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Alright.

18 CECILE NOEL: I'd just like also add one thing
19 that I think is really important. Again, not just
20 serving the immigrant community because I do believe
21 that they face additional barriers and we are working
22 with our providers very much to get the word out
23 there. Just in our time of doing the family justice
24 centers virtually, we've serviced clients from 45
25 countries in 23 different languages. So, immigrant

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2 communities are coming forward and they are reaching
3 out when it is safe to do so. So, thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much
5 Council Member Menchaca and thank you to all the
6 Council Members for your very thoughtful questions.
7 Thank you, Chair Richards, and Speaker Johnson, I
8 really appreciate your insights and the issues that
9 you are pushing. I'm going to wrap it up with the
10 Administration just to say thank you so much for your
11 time. We're now two and a half hours in, so thank
12 you so much for all your time. I know you have
13 important work to do. But it goes without saying
14 that I think we'd like to see more information about
15 why on the NYPD side, why complaints and arrests are
16 down. I think that could be an important topic of
17 conversation to explore and Commissioner Noel, you
18 know, you are doing an enormous job and I really
19 appreciate all of that.

20 I guess I would ask you know, for a much more
21 robust messaging plan, much more robust and
22 culturally competent messaging. It sounds like you
23 have a phase two coming up. We look forward to
24 hearing about that. And we'll look forward to
25 hearing about how you are planning for how survivors

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2 will, what services will be available to survivors
3 who are choosing to stay home at this point. But who
4 will be emerging as the pause is lifted. But really
5 appreciate all of your work.

6 I also just want to again thank the ASL
7 interpreters. I don't know if other people have been
8 watching them. They are extraordinary and I think we
9 also have Spanish interpretation going at the same
10 time. So, thank you all for your very hard work and
11 of course, thank you to the staff for keeping this
12 going.

13 I'm going to turn it back to my Counsel who I
14 think is going to start now with the advocate panel.
15 I thank everyone for their patients. Thank you very
16 much.

17 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you Chair
18 Rosenthal. We will now turn to public testimony.
19 I'd like to remind everyone that unlike our typical
20 council hearings, we will calling individuals one by
21 one to testify. Council Members who have questions
22 for a particular panelist should raise their hand
23 function in Zoom and we will call on you after each
24 panelist has completed their testimony.

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2 For panelists, once your name is called, a
3 member of our staff will unmute you and the Sergeant
4 at Arms will give you the go ahead to again, upon
5 setting the timer. Today, we will be using a three
6 minute clock for testimony. Please wait for the
7 Sergeant at Arms to announce that you may begin
8 before delivering your testimony.

9 So, we will start with testimony, the first four
10 panelists today. Again, one by one. Rahnum Tasnuva
11 followed by Niketa Sheth or Niketa Sheth followed by
12 Brian Dworkin followed by Jae Young Kim.

13 I will call on Rahnum Tasnuva.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

15 RAHNUM TASNUVA: Good afternoon distinguished
16 members of City Council. Thank you for the
17 opportunity to speak today.

18 My name is Rahnum Tasnuva and I am the Manager
19 of our help line program at Womankind formerly New
20 York Asian Woman's Center.

21 We are here today as a culturally [inaudible
22 2:32:07] gender based violence organization with over
23 three decades of experience to provide on how our
24 communities are [inaudible 2:32:17] life during the
25 COVID-19 pandemic.

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2 I will do this by highlighting our work through
3 our community based programming, more specifically
4 our help line and community based counseling
5 services. Our help line has been instrumental in
6 allowing us to stay committed to the issues and in
7 communities.

8 Found back in 1982, our help line continues to
9 be at the front line being the gateway for our
10 community to accessing services. In operating
11 offline, along now is a chat and chat feature. We
12 are able to be able to nimble and move more
13 intentionally with the safety needs of our community.

14 Just recently, I received a call from a client
15 who I interacted with in Bengali. We were working
16 together to plan a move out strategy for her existing
17 home to our emergency residential home. At the
18 beginning of the call, I was able to share our text
19 line number as well as information regarding our chat
20 service, in the event the call gets disconnected.

21 In the middle of the conversation, her abusive
22 partner arrived while she was on the phone with me
23 and she had to end the call. Moments later, we were
24 able to connect over text and continue our
25 conversation safely. Having this alternating

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2 platform available to support the client at the
3 moment, is something we realize we need more than
4 ever during this stay in place.

5 As most of our survivors are living within an
6 environment where abuse is also present, so the
7 effects of emotional and physical safety is more
8 difficult at this time. Being on a call with 911
9 operator may put our survivors at high risk to being
10 caught by the abuser while they are seeking help.

11 Having a text option along with the call may
12 reduce that possibility. We have seen this being
13 helpful while we were negotiating calls with 911
14 operator on behalf of our survivors at the situation
15 where they were unable to physically call themselves.

16 Our help line is being present and available in
17 so many languages put us also in a very unique
18 position where we are able to support the culturally
19 [INAUDIBLE 2:34:42].

20 We, the Womankind community thank the City
21 Council for allowing us the opportunity to speak
22 today. For survivors of gender based violence –

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

24 RAHNUM TASNUVA: Should I continue or?
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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Wrap it up. If you
3 could just wrap it up quickly.

4 RAHNUM TASNUVA: So, we are asking to continue,
5 all of you to commit to gender based violence
6 survivors and immigrant communities recognizing the
7 multiple barriers [inaudible 2:35:20]. In all this,
8 we ask for your financial commitment to ensuring
9 organizations like ours who are deeply rooted for
10 underserved communities are able to stay home during
11 and after the pandemic to able to provide critical
12 service to New Yorkers.

13 Thank you.

14 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you Ms. Tasnuva.
15 We may have a Council Member question. Council
16 Member Lancman, do you have a question?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: I do, thank you. I
18 just wanted to get your opinion on why you think
19 there might be this increase in domestic violence
20 calls but fewer arrests. Are you hearing from, are
21 you seeing anything in the community that might give
22 you some reason to think that or understand why that
23 is occurring? Because I, and I don't think my
24 colleagues have gotten a really clear explanation
25 from the city.

1
2 So, I want to hear what you are seeing on the
3 ground.

4 RAHNUM TASNUVA: What we are seeing during our
5 help line calls are that survivors are calling help
6 lines but there is delays in response from NYPD. I
7 also had experienced a similar situation while I was
8 on the phone with one of our survivors. She called
9 multiple times NYPD while she was actually being
10 forcefully evicted by her abuser from the home. And
11 she was literally on the streets with her child. She
12 called 911 twice, no one showed up and then, I had to
13 be on the phone with a 911 operator to help, seek
14 help for the survivor.

15 So, I'm not going to say that we are not seeing
16 an increase of help line calls or domestic violence
17 calls but I do get feedback from survivors that there
18 are delays in response.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And are those delays
20 different then the kind of delays and experiences
21 they had before the coronavirus crisis?

22 RAHNUM TASNUVA: I would say that I think - I
23 think right now survivors, they are not only dealing
24 with domestic violence or the safety of their
25 physical wellbeing but also like, the health concern

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2 because the two things are going together and I think
3 that's making them more insecure at the moment and we
4 do like to see that NYPD response more faster because
5 I think we just haven't seen any change in that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Alright, and one other
7 question, if I can. And the other providers who are
8 going to be testifying, if you could incorporate this
9 maybe in your testimony, so I don't have to ask each
10 of you each time.

11 But I asked the city whether or not they thought
12 it was a good practice, a good idea to affirmatively,
13 proactively reach out to DV victims, people who they
14 have interacted with before to check in, see how they
15 are doing. Given that it seems like it is
16 particularly difficult for a DV victim to reach out
17 on his or her own while they are potentially cooped
18 up with their abuser. And I don't think I'm
19 mischaracterizing the city's response when I say that
20 they thought that would not be a good idea and is not
21 necessary.

22 So, again, I'd like to hear from you and the
23 other witnesses, the ones who are like on the ground
24 also dealing, in some cases, with your own particular
25 communities and particular cultures, do you think

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2 that it would be good for the city and for you to be
3 reaching out affirmatively to people with whom you
4 have a history? And if you do think that's a good
5 idea, what do you think that the city should be
6 doing?

7 RAHNUM TASNUVA: Thank you for your question.
8 Again, I do think that it is important to have a
9 check in with the survivors but I also do understand
10 the safety concern that survivors may have about
11 their situation, so I would not suggest voluntarily
12 go and do a check in with someone because that might
13 put them into more risk than they are at.

14 So, I think what we are doing, our agency, our
15 help line, that we are providing messages out there
16 that if anybody, if any of the previous victims is
17 experiencing something new at this time, they should
18 always reach out to us. Via our phone number or our
19 chat line but we would not voluntarily go and make a
20 phone call to see how that person is doing because
21 that may not be safe for them.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Good, well, that's why
23 it's important for me to hear from the experts and
24 the people who really know this work.

25 Thank you very much.

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RAHNUM TASNUVA: Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you Council Member
Lancman. Let's continue.

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COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you Ms. Tasnuva.
I will now move to the next panelist who is Niketa
Sheth, also from Womankind.

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NIKETA SHETH: Thank you. Thank you to all the
esteemed members, Chair's and Administration who are
on this call today.

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I just want us to take a step back. I know many
of you have been on this call today hearing so much.
I want to ground us back to the survivor experience,
especially survivors who are living in communities of
color, who represent communities of color and
represent undocumented immigrant communities.

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If you could just take the next couple of
moments and imagine what it would feel like to be in
the shoes of a survivor in this extraordinary time
that we're in. I want you to imagine if you were a
mother who just had a child, a premature baby at this
time of COVID and you were staying in an emergency
house, so that you can keep you and your two children
safe.

1
2 Imagine if you were a mother and you have a
3 child and you were in the process of trying to escape
4 from an abusive family leaving your belongings
5 outside with the support of an organization like
6 Womankind, yet you are by an adverse party.

7 You are a survivor who is being forced by an
8 abuser to engage in sexual activity and experiencing
9 threats of contraception. You can't afford access to
10 medical help. You are a survivor who is desperately
11 needing food access to support you and your children,
12 yet your abuser has taken control and powers to the
13 next level and is holding on to all of the food
14 stamps that you might have.

15 And finally, you are survivor who is sheltered
16 in place with an abusive partner for some time and
17 you are in the process of a divorce and unfortunately
18 due to courts being closed, you are simply in a
19 holding pattern enduring more anxiety and abuse.

20 I'm grounding you with these experiences because
21 I ask you to feel into the lives of these
22 individuals. These individuals are real. These are
23 out clients in the last few months and they are your
24 constituents. These individuals need our help. I
25 ask us all today, to find a way to work together. I

1 know it's difficult. There are many challenges ahead
2 of us and I ask us to remember our survivors and make
3 sure that each of your decisions and all of your
4 actions really align with the passion that you are
5 bringing on this call today.
6

7 I also ask us to hold ourselves accountable to
8 all of our roles, including myself. The positions of
9 privilege and the positions that bring us on this
10 call today. Our survivors are relying on us. I'm
11 Niketa Sheth and I am survivor and I am the CEO of
12 Womankind. Womankind for 38 years, formerly known as
13 the New York Asian Women's Center, has helped
14 countless Asian survivors and beyond. Our focus has
15 been domestic violence, sexual violence, and human
16 trafficking. We also help elders.

17 I want you all to know that what we are seeing
18 right now is unimaginable. Our help line and chat as
19 you heard from Rahnum, we are representing 18
20 different languages and dialects. Recently, as you
21 heard, our language capability has allowed us to help
22 unique situations, such as an individual who is able
23 to call and unfortunately needed to hang up and
24 because of our chat feature, in combination with our
25

1 translation ability and our cultural competency, was
2 able to immediately call 911 on behalf of survivor.

3
4 I want to highlight that because there are going
5 to be limitations that the city may not be able to
6 fill the gap for. And that's why organizations like
7 ours exist. It's really important that organizations
8 like ours have your support. It's at times like this
9 that undocumented immigrants -

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: You can finish, thank
12 you.

13 NIKETA SHETH: That the times like this and
14 undocumented immigrants such as 75 percent of who
15 Womankind serves, are not being represented and I ask
16 you today to keep in mind what are often the core
17 needs at this time.

18 Our survivors are not just seeing violence, they
19 are facing homelessness and starvation. They are
20 undocumented immigrants who do not speak this
21 language that we speak and so, therefore, I ask you
22 to think about the vast mount of needs that need to
23 be thought about for domestic violence. And that's
24 why today, I ask that we really pay attention and we
25 do everything we can as City Council Members, you

1
2 have the ability to support us to make sure that cuts
3 are not made to discretionary funding because cuts
4 like that would really cause an equity issue across
5 New York City and beyond. It would hurt small
6 organizations and organizations supporting
7 communities of color.

8 At Womankind 85 percent of our funding relies on
9 government grants and I just want to be able to be
10 back here and have Rahnum be back here on a call
11 months from now, and not have to worry about the
12 implications that it would have for us to keep doing
13 our work.

14 We hope that we can continue to collaborate with
15 you on problems and solutions and we hope that you
16 will reach out informally if you'd like to learn more
17 about what we know about the communities that we
18 serve.

19 Thank you so much.

20 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you so much Ms.
21 Sheth. We're going to call the next panelist and
22 just a reminder, please wait for the Sergeant to
23 announce that you may begin before beginning your
24 testimony as they set the clock. Thank you again.

25 Our next witness is Brian Dworkin.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

BRIAN DWORKIN: Good afternoon. My name is Brian Dworkin and I am from Legal Services NYC from our Queens office. I supervise the domestic violence and family law practice. My colleague Jae Young Kim from the Bronx office will also be testifying shortly.

I thank you all for this opportunity to testify about the impact of coronavirus on DV and our clients here in New York City.

We want to express our appreciation to the City Council for its continued support for the work of combating DV. The DoVE program supports 12 advocates at Legal Services NYC in whole or in part, who provide direct services to clients.

This public health emergency is directly and disproportionately impacting communities of color and not coincidentally our clients are primarily immigrant survivors of color. Support for our program and for all of DoVE programs and for all of the other agencies that do this work, really affirms the City's commitment to improving lives in these communities.

Legal Services NYC advocate provide legal and core services to low income families, families and

1 individuals experiencing violence and we serve
2 survivors regardless of their immigration status.

3
4 During this public health emergency, LSNYC
5 continues to provide comprehensive legal and support
6 services to individuals effected by DV. Although our
7 physical offices were closed in March, our staff are
8 working remotely on behalf of new and existing
9 clients. All of our staff members are equipped to
10 work remotely. We have full use of all of our
11 electronic systems, files and working phone systems.

12 Our advocate are providing legal assistance and
13 representation in the virtual NYC courts including
14 obtaining new orders of protection, drafting
15 emergency motions related to custody and visitation.
16 We continue to provide advise to clients concerning
17 custody and parenting issues that have arisen as a
18 result of the public health emergency.

19 This is probably the number one issue that's
20 effecting our client population right now is how to
21 negotiate custody and parenting time given the health
22 situation that we're in. How to help parents work
23 out compromises with each other and how to help them
24 assert their rights with the compromises that are not
25 possible.

1
2 Our advocates are also continuing to provide
3 immigration assistance to survivors of domestic
4 violence and trafficking. LSNYC also continues to
5 engage in interdisciplinary client assessment and
6 advocacy. Makes in house referrals to our housing
7 program or public benefits program, our education
8 program, and other essential needs that arise for
9 clients during this time. And DoVE funding supports
10 all of this work.

11 LSNYC has been working with the state courts as
12 they transition to virtual appearances for the
13 emergency system. -

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

15 BRIAN DWORKIN: Advocates have been regularly
16 facilitating virtual communication with the courts.
17 We've been petitioning with the courts since the very
18 first day when the virtual courts went into
19 operation. The stress of the pandemic has escalated
20 tension and violence due to limitations on the
21 survivors usual coping tactics and safety measures
22 thereby increasing risk of harm within the homes that
23 they live. To meet this need, we continue to except
24 referrals and conduct intake telephonically including
25 referrals from the family justice center citywide.

1
2 Our advocates provide free and confidential
3 legal assistance and ensure that all of our clients
4 are aware of the constant changes within the civil
5 and immigration legal systems.

6 If I can just take a moment and respond also to
7 Councilman Lancman's question. We are reaching out
8 to all of our current clients for whom we have
9 established safe ways to reach out them if they are
10 currently living in their abusive situations. Some
11 of our clients also indicate to us, they do not wish
12 us to reach out, that they will initiate contact when
13 they need it.

14 I'll break here. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: And Council Member
16 Lancman, do you want to follow up on that?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: I do, thank you. Not
18 so much on that but the Committee that I Chair has
19 jurisdiction over the courts for what that means at
20 the City Council level.

21 Is there anything that you can tell us that we
22 should try to be encouraging the courts to do
23 differently as they are grappling with how to handle
24 cases, how to do virtual and remote hearings?
25

1
2 BRIAN DWORKIN: Well, I mean, you know, we're in
3 regular frequent communication with the family courts
4 and the supreme court. What they need, is they need
5 all the assistance they can toward increasing their
6 capacity to function. They have got everything up
7 and running and you know, they've started with
8 emergency applications. Recently, they've expanded
9 the work that's happening in pending cases in the
10 Supreme Court. So, for example, some of our
11 matrimonial cases can begin to move forward a little
12 bit. But the operation is constrained by the
13 technology right now. You know, they are trying to
14 get more and more court staff and jurists able to
15 participate and be active, but they are constrained
16 by the limits on the technology and on the limits of
17 available people because we know many court staff
18 have been effected by the virus and gotten sick and
19 simply are not also available at this time to pitch
20 in.

21 For things that we cannot do right now that we
22 are hoping that we get access to in the near future,
23 for example, we can't file support petitions for
24 clients now and we can't file support modification
25

1
2 petitions to clients who have lost jobs and might be
3 in need of modification.

4 We also cannot initiate new nonemergency custody
5 and visitation petitions at this time. So, the scope
6 of what's being heard is, we know everybody is trying
7 hard, it's just limited right now and so, we're all
8 working within those constraints.

9 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you. We have no
10 other Council Member questions and Council Member
11 Lancman, are you finished? We'll move on to the next
12 panelist and I'll list the next several panelists
13 after this next panelist. The next panelist will be
14 Jae Young Kim after that will be the Honorary Judy
15 Harris Kluger followed by Kelly Coyne, followed by
16 Jeehae Fischer and Amy Barasch.

17 So, Jae Young Kim if you could please begin.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

19 JAE YOUNG KIM: Good afternoon Chair Rosenthal,
20 Chair Richards, and other Council Members. My name
21 is Jae Young Kim. I am the Director of the Family
22 and Immigration unit at the Bronx office with Legal
23 Services NYC and I'm going to speak a little bit to
24 LYSNYC's COVID response and what we've done to shift
25 resources to really assist our clients in the areas

1
2 where we have seen sort of the greatest need. We
3 have been increasing our peer technical assistance
4 capacity in supporting our other colleagues in
5 navigating the virtual courts and keeping up to date
6 on issues within immigration court and with USCIS.
7 We've also, some of the boroughs have started rapid
8 response hotlines specifically to address these
9 custody and visitation issues and order of protection
10 issues. We've also established an emergency client
11 fund targeting those who are particular vulnerable
12 and those are usually our undocumented clients who
13 are not eligible for the stimulus relief or any form
14 of unemployment or public assistance and we've also
15 been shifting resources to do public assistance
16 application clinics to maximize the number of our
17 clients who are eligible for public assistance.

18 And we are you know, very proud of the fact that
19 folks have really been shifting to meet the needs
20 because we're really seeing those as sort of
21 vulnerable areas and I wanted to just share some
22 client stories, because we've been really busy at the
23 office even though we have shifted to virtual working
24 from home, clients are still in need of services. We
25 filed one of the first virtual family events

1
2 petitions on behalf of a healthcare worker who was
3 being stopped by her abuser and she knew that she was
4 going to be going to work and she was deeply afraid
5 because there was a long history of physical violence
6 and she knew she needed the order of protection for
7 safety purposes and it was really great to actually
8 work in conjunction with the courts to file that
9 order of protection and were successful in getting
10 that temporary order of protection. And you know we
11 continue to have issues around custody and
12 visitation. For example, we've just recently filed
13 in our Bronx office on behalf of a survivor that was
14 assaulted by her abuser at visitation exchange and
15 we'll also probably be seeking a modification of the
16 custody and visitation order. And we're really
17 seeing how abusers are using pause orders are using
18 COVID-19 as a way to withhold contact with children
19 and you know, this is true whether our clients have
20 physical custody of the children or whether their the
21 visiting parent but that's unacceptable and it's been
22 very difficult because we are doing the best that we
23 can and the courts again, as my colleague Brian had
24 mentioned, are constrained, but we're hoping to
25 continue to advocate on behalf of our clients. And

1
2 as well, with the immigration clients, we continue to
3 screen people because they need to be able to get
4 work authorization, get eligibility for public
5 benefits and often times, our clients are either the
6 sole provider of their family or they have no support
7 networks in part because the abuser created a
8 situation where they were isolated. So, even if we
9 have clients who are able to leave the abuser and
10 have some modicum of relief, they really are relying
11 on the immigration cases still going forward and
12 having advocates pushing to get work authorizations
13 and ensuring that they get the documentation to prove
14 their eligibility for public assistance.

15 And so, I would just strongly urge you know, we
16 are deeply concerned about the safety of our clients
17 at this time and we believe that our work is
18 definitely essential and we need the funding to
19 continue to do that work because without it, we
20 cannot support these clients who are immediately in
21 crisis.

22 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you very much.
23 I don't believe we have any Council Member questions
24 and so, we will move to the next witness. Judge

1
2 Kluger from Sanctuary for Families. Please begin
3 once the Sergeant has started the clock.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

5 JUDGE KLUGER: Good afternoon. I am really
6 grateful for the opportunity to testify today and
7 thank the Council, in particular Chair Helen
8 Rosenthal for its leadership in addressing the dire
9 situations facing domestic violence survivors during
10 these unprecedented times.

11 Long before New York City's first - am I being
12 heard?

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yes, thank you.

14 JUDGE KLUGER: I got a notice. Long before New
15 York City's first COVID-19 case, we were battling
16 another public health crisis. High rates of domestic
17 violence and sex trafficking, the disproportionately
18 harmed already marginalized communities.

19 The great dangers faced by victims quarantined
20 with abusers are compounded for those communities
21 facing disproportionate layoffs, racisms. Xenophobia
22 and harsh federal policies. While Sanctuary's
23 website traffic has more than doubled in the past
24 month, lower hotline numbers may actually be a
25 troubling evidence that victims have fewer safe

1
2 moments to place calls. There is a wide recognition
3 that there will be a spike in domestic violence in
4 the months ahead and essential service providers like
5 Sanctuary must be prepared, including assurance from
6 the city that our funding will be kept whole.

7 We are seeing evidence that the abuse is
8 escalating frequency and severity. Both for those
9 living with abusers as well as those who are not.
10 We're observing increased harassment via cyber abuse,
11 via text, email, and social media. Clients are
12 facing complex legal issues with deep uncertainty
13 about how or when they can be addressed, given the
14 modified court operations. One client was told by
15 her abuser, she better watch her back because the
16 courts are closed, so don't do anything.

17 This comment highlights the communication
18 challenges that I will address shortly. We assume
19 the city take many positive steps in response to this
20 crisis but have several key concerns and
21 recommendations. At the top of the list is improving
22 communication about victim resources to the most
23 vulnerable of us.

24 The City can utilize its Notify NYC emails,
25 texts, social media alerts, to publicize domestic

1
2 violence resources. Including the phone context for
3 the family justice centers and Sanctuary's legal and
4 clinical helplines, as well as our newly launched
5 text chat numbers.

6 The city could also display this information on
7 life like kiosks, bus stops and subway display
8 screens. We are grateful to the Council Speaker and
9 members who have already pushed out some of this
10 information but the city can do much more to get the
11 information to people in need and counteract the
12 flood of misinformation that is spread by abusers and
13 on social media.

14 We are very grateful for our partners at the
15 Mayor's office to end gender based violence who got
16 the family justice centers up and running quickly but
17 we know that there are many people out there who are
18 still not accessing services or not getting the help
19 they need when they need to try and reach out.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

21 JUDGE KLUGER: While recognizing the
22 extraordinary strains and heroic sacrifices on the
23 part of the NYPD and emergency services. Right now,
24 we have concerns about police response to abuse
25 during this crisis. Multiple sanctuary clients have

1
2 reported issues with police informants, ranging from
3 refusal to serve and enforce orders of protection and
4 failure to arrest abusers who violate existing
5 orders.

6 There are several examples in my testimony, my
7 submitted testimony that I want to highlight to. One
8 client, after managing to obtain an exclusionary
9 order of protection, contacted two police precincts,
10 both told her that they could not enforce the order
11 unless she had a hard copy. Of course, she had only
12 received the order by email because the courts were
13 closed.

14 Only late night calls from a Sanctuary lawyer,
15 only after late night calls by one of our lawyers did
16 they agree to help. What might have happened if
17 there had been no lawyer advocating strenuously for
18 action by the police?

19 When another clients abuser came to her
20 apartment in violation of a five year order of
21 protection, responding officers told him to leave but
22 declined to arrest him for criminal contempt, a
23 mandatory arrest situation.

1
2 We welcome the opportunity to speak with NYPD to
3 ensure that what we hope are isolated incidents do
4 not happen again.

5 On the service delivery side, I am pleased to
6 report that Sanctuary has pivoted to continuing
7 providing all our services that we have for years.
8 Our shelters remain open, they are at capacity, we
9 have new intakes. Sanctuary lawyers are staffing the
10 legal helpline, so callers always receive a live
11 answer. Our clinical program is providing counseling
12 and case management by a secured telehealth platform
13 and our economic empowerment program purchased and
14 hand delivered laptops to our clients at home.

15 And our survivor leaders and staff have
16 published safety plans, flyers, Know Your Rights
17 information in many languages and broadcasted widely
18 on social media to city officials and other service
19 providers.

20 It is only a matter of time before we see a wave
21 of new domestic violence cases and the level of need
22 among the existing clients will only deepen in the
23 difficult months ahead. Human service providers like
24 Sanctuary and our community partners must be prepared
25 to respond. We need city officials and law

1
2 enforcement to work with us to ensure that abuse
3 survivors know that their lives count. That their
4 desperate situations are worthy of timely
5 compassionate and professional interventions.

6 Thank you so much.

7 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you so much
8 Judge Kluger.

9 JUDGE KLUGER: Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to
10 not have the video on, I guess that was the message.

11 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: We can see you.

12 Chair Rosenthal, did you have questions?

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah, just real quickly.
14 Judge Kluger, you are always the wise voice, I really
15 appreciate your testimony which just gets right to
16 the point and we will read your submitted testimony
17 as well.

18 I think the obvious question is, the two cases
19 that you mentioned that have to do with police
20 interaction, do you think it would be worthwhile for
21 us to communicate the date, time and location of
22 those interactions, so the Deputy Inspector can go
23 back and look at the body camera?

24
25

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2 JUDGE KLUGER: Absolutely and I will be in touch
3 with the lawyers who are involved in those cases and
4 get the information.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you very much.

6 JUDGE KLUGER: And there are few others in my
7 written testimony as well.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I think you know, thank
9 you or bringing those forward and we will follow up
10 with them about that. I really appreciate your
11 insights. Thank you.

12 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Moving to Chair, oh
13 sorry, excuse me. Moving to Council Member Lancman
14 next for questions.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you. Judge, it's
16 good to see you.

17 JUDGE KLUGER: It's good to see you too.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Could you maybe give us
19 a little more depth, where you said that the city
20 could do much more to get the word out to alert
21 people as to the services and resources that might be
22 available to them and then in particular, I don't
23 know if you were referring to this but from whether
24 or not the messaging that you do see coming from the
25 city is fitting the time that we're in or are they

1
2 just kind of cookie cutter messages from a pre-COVID
3 era that should be fine-tuned? What more and
4 different can the city be doing?

5 JUDGE KLUGER: Well, I think the message has to
6 be that despite shelter in place, there are phone
7 numbers that they can call, family justice center,
8 call us directly, the Safe Horizon hotline. I think
9 it has to be targeted to the fact that people are at
10 home, they are often with their abuser in the home
11 and they have to know that there is a way to
12 virtually get help. And I'm not even sure what kind
13 of signage are on the courts now. I mean, hopefully
14 they are in multiple languages because there is some
15 people who might go to family court and then not know
16 what to do or who to call.

17 Also, to my colleague who talked about opening
18 more, the courts for more applications, particularly
19 in family court around a custody and visitation and
20 support. I think the plan is to get that going but I
21 had a visitation example in my written testimony that
22 shows that there really needs to be attention to the
23 fact that there could be clients whose abuser is the
24 father of their children have visitation but the
25 child has asthma, they don't want to take the child

1 on the train and they are ordered to do so by the
2 court.

3
4 So, there has to be some availability other than
5 by order to show cause, which is the only way
6 available now for a victim to go and speak to a judge
7 about visitation modifications.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: And, you know, we
9 interact with OCA and you know that world better than
10 I do. Would you say that the lines of communication
11 are open and I know that the system is trying to
12 grapple with going from zero to sixty in just one
13 second. Things are opening up in kind of a
14 sequential way and some effort to try to triage and
15 prioritize at certain kind of proceedings but can you
16 just tell us like what conversations there are with
17 OCA to make sure that these issues that you are
18 raising are gotten to.

19 JUDGE KLUGER: Yeah, the lines of communication
20 are very strong. We have many of us on the phone and
21 other service providers have regular calls with the
22 family court administrative judges. We've had
23 contact with Judge Marx, I know Judge Deferia[SP?] is
24 committed to getting the courts open as soon as
25 possible.

1
2 I think like many organizations that we're not
3 ready technologically to do this. I understand the
4 City Council had some challenges as well. I think
5 that it's a hard time for everybody but the lines of
6 communication are open and we're having another call
7 next week with Judge Weiss to talk about suggestions
8 and what we think can be done better, whats being
9 done well, what kind of changes can be made.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: We've had that positive
11 experience also including in particular with Judge
12 Weiss. Alright, thank you very much.

13 JUDGE KLUGER: Thank you.

14 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you. We do not
15 have any other Council Member questions, so we'll
16 move to the next witness. Our next witness is Kelly
17 Coyne from Safe Horizon.

18 KELLY COYNE: Thank you. Good afternoon
19 everyone.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 KELLY COYNE: I want to thank you for the
22 opportunity to talk with you all today and a specific
23 thanks to Chair Rosenthal and Richards.

24 My name is Kelly Coyne and I am the Deputy Chief
25 Program Officer at Safe Horizon, the nations largest

1 nonprofit victims services organization. At Safe
2 Horizon, we offer a client center trauma informed
3 response to a quarter of a million New Yorkers each
4 year who have experienced violence and abuse.
5

6 I'd like to offer a general overview of how Safe
7 Horizon is operating during this pandemic and a
8 couple of reflections about how the City and City
9 Council could help engage New Yorkers who might be at
10 risk of domestic violence and who might think there
11 is no options to seek safety during this time.

12 One thing to note is normally Safe Horizon has a
13 thousand employees working in over 200 locations
14 across the city. Since the pause has gone into
15 effect, many of Safe Horizon staff are now working
16 remotely as their program sites have physically
17 closed. For example, the advocates who typically sit
18 in all 86 police precincts in the police service
19 areas are now reaching out via telephone to New
20 Yorkers who file police reports related to domestic
21 violence, assault, and other crimes. Similarly, our
22 staff who normally sit in the five family justice
23 centers are continuing to offer safety assessments
24 and safety planning and resources to clients over the
25 phone.

1
2 Some of our programs are also essential and are
3 still operating in the in person. All eight of our
4 domestic violence shelters remain open, our five top
5 advocacy centers remain open. Our street work
6 project is continuing to respond homeless youth who
7 are in need of shelter or drop in services and our
8 hotline is working both remotely and in person.

9 A couple of recommendations during this great
10 time of uncertainty and fear is I think that we
11 really want to offer the following words to all New
12 Yorkers who might be feeling unsafe right now and
13 that's, we are open. While some programs and sites
14 are physically closed, Safe Horizon staff and many,
15 many of our community partners are still reaching out
16 and supporting victims of crime each and every day,
17 offering our services either by phone, Skype, Zoom,
18 other virtual platforms and then in person in our
19 physical locations.

20 We're still offering evidence based mental
21 health counseling to survivors over the phone. We're
22 helping victims obtain an order or protection through
23 virtual courts and our web based chat line safe chat
24 is offering a more private way for New Yorkers to
25 reach out for help.

1
2 To further the points is we're also working
3 closely with 110 of the organizations funded through
4 the City Council's DoVE initiative to make sure
5 appropriate services are available to New York's
6 diverse cultural communities. Understanding the
7 heightened fear in immigrant communities especially
8 during this health crisis, we are proud to partner
9 with those domestic violence organizations funded
10 through DoVE that specialize in responding to New
11 Yorkers no matter where they are born.

12 The DoVE initiative has always been important.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

14 KELLY COYNE: But in this environment at this
15 moment in our history, it's literally a life saver
16 for New Yorkers in every neighborhood. I want to ask
17 the City Council to remember these vulnerable
18 families as we go into what's definitely going to be
19 austere budget for FY21. We hope that we keep these
20 vulnerable families and victims close to your heart
21 as you enter what is obviously going to be a
22 complicated budget negotiation for this year.

23 Thank you all so much for this time and I'm
24 happy to respond to any questions that you might
25 have.

1
2 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you Ms. Coyne.
3 We do not have any Council Member questions at this
4 time but we are going to pause for just a moment to
5 switch out captioners if we can please wait.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I think it's worth, I
7 just need to correct for the record, we don't have
8 Spanish translation going at this hearing, we do have
9 Cart, and ASL for the hard of hearing and the deaf
10 population.

11 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Okay, if you are
12 watching the hearing, we are ending our pause and we
13 will be moving to the next witness. So, our next two
14 witnesses, I will call you one at a time, are Jeehae
15 Fischer and Amy Barasch. Jeehae Fischer, as soon as
16 the Sergeant starts the clock, you may begin your
17 testimony. Thank you.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You can start.

19 JEEHAE FISCHER: Good afternoon everybody.
20 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this
21 afternoon. I would like to thank Speaker Johnson,
22 Chair Rosenthal, and Chair Richards for coordinating
23 this budget hearing.

24 My name is Jeehae Fisher, the Executive Director
25 at the Korean American Family Service Center. We

1
2 provide services including 24 hour hotline shelter,
3 long term transitional housing and economic
4 empowerment programs to immigrant survivors of
5 domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse.

6 We're committed to preventing and ending
7 domestic violence, sexual assault and relationship
8 abuse and creating a violence free society.

9 KFSC is the only organization serving Korean
10 immigrant families who are effected by domestic
11 violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and child
12 abuse in the tristate area with an emphasis on the
13 high screened populated areas in the borough of
14 Queens, Manhattan, and New York City. 90 percent of
15 our clients are Asian immigrants, 95 percent are
16 women and 98 percent have limited English
17 proficiency, 98 percent of our clients live under the
18 poverty line. Our population is proportionately at
19 risk and left without a safety net in the wake of
20 this global pandemic.

21 As a direct service organization serving the
22 vulnerable immigrant community, we are an essential
23 human service provider that cannot cease operating.
24 KFSC continues to still be fully open to the Korean
25 community and we have stepped it into the role of

1
2 providing services that have not normally been our
3 target area. KFSC continues to provide crisis
4 intervention in COVID-19 related service to our
5 community for small business loans, emergency fund
6 application, public benefits, health insurance
7 enrollment and more through both in person and
8 virtual appointments.

9 I just want to point out because of the
10 population that we're serving, we made a decision to
11 be physically open. Our serving population is elder
12 immigrant survivors who have a very difficult time
13 navigating virtual world, especially with the
14 technology. So, it was very important for us to be
15 open physically and still take intake, in person
16 intake.

17 Our staff members are provided with some
18 protected gear.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

20 JEEHAE FISCHER: And clients are screened very
21 carefully. Our survivors are faced with
22 inconceivable challenges during this difficult time.
23 Many are undocumented and work hourly at local
24 restaurants living paycheck to paycheck. So,
25 enforcement of social distancing and other safety

1
2 measures, mean that our survivors and their children
3 are trapped at the home and face additional violence
4 and challenges.

5 Financial difficulties compounded with social
6 isolation heightened existing abusive relationship.
7 In fact, we're experiencing a 300 percent increasing
8 calls at our bilingual 24 hour hotline in the last
9 five weeks with 80 percent related to domestic
10 violence, sexual assault, and child abuse.

11 So, we ask all of you to please continue to
12 support our services and programs to this vulnerable
13 community and more than ever, our immigrant survivors
14 are needed for our services, therefore we ask you to
15 continue to provide specially for the upcoming
16 physical year discretionary funding.

17 Thank you.

18 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you for your
19 testimony. We do not have any Council Member
20 questions and we'll be moving to the next witness.
21 Before next witness, which will be Amy Barasch I'm
22 going to list the next three. We have Margarita
23 Guzman from the Violence Intervention Program VIP,
24 Tuo zhi Lorna Zhen from NYLAG and Melina Sfakianaki,
25 excuse any mis telling from Legal Aid.

1
2 So, Amy Barasch, once the Sergeant starts the
3 clock, you may begin your testimony.

4 AMY BARASCH: Good afternoon. Thank you,
5 Speaker Johnson, Chair Rosenthal, the Committee on
6 Women and Gender Equity. Chair Richards, the
7 Committee on Public Safety, and other members of the
8 Council for inviting me to testify today.

9 I am Amy Barasch the Executive Director of Her
10 Justice. A nonprofit that stands with women living
11 in poverty in New York City. My pronouns are she,
12 her, hers.

13 In 2019 alone, Her Justice provided a range of
14 legal help to more than 4,000 women and their 5,000
15 children in the areas of family, divorce, and
16 immigration law.

17 We provide free legal service in a unique pro
18 bono first way. Our legal department of 21 lawyers
19 and nonlawyers enable hundreds of private attorneys
20 from across the city to deliver more than \$41 million
21 worth of legal services every year. Our clients live
22 in all five boroughs of the city, more than have are
23 foreign born and most are mothers who are or become
24 the heads of their households.

1
2 More than 75 percent of our clients are victims
3 of domestic violence. During the COVID-19 crisis,
4 our unique pro bono model has allowed us to pivot
5 quickly and smoothly to provide services remotely,
6 leveraging private volunteerism, to prepare victims
7 of domestic violence to engage with the courts now
8 and once the reopen more fully and to keep work
9 moving forward for ongoing cases of all kinds.

10 Our civil legal services are always essential
11 services, preventing greater crisis down the road for
12 women living in poverty. Civil court is critical for
13 those victims and survivors who do not wish to call
14 the police and or need to address issues regarding
15 custody, visitation, and financial support. For us,
16 that work is continuing during the pandemic and is
17 more essential than ever.

18 Most of our clients come to us through referrals
19 from the courts, the FJC's, and our colleagues. All
20 of these systems are still up and running, as is our
21 telephonic helpline.

22 I wanted to give three brief example about what
23 we're doing now as attorneys. There is more
24 information in my submitted written testimony. I
25 wanted to say that first of all, as people have

1
2 talked about, many of our clients are sheltering in
3 place with abusers. Typically, about two-thirds of
4 our time is spent handling existing cases, not on new
5 cases and we're spending even more time with those
6 clients right now.

7 So, for example, we have a client who is an
8 immigrant victim of partner violence, who lives in a
9 building in which her husband works. She has been
10 able to text her volunteer attorneys when her husband
11 goes upstairs to work in the building, so that her
12 immigration continues to move forward. And once the
13 pandemic restrictions are lifted, we anticipate that
14 she will have her green card. I also want to point
15 out that although we do have many clients who are
16 victims sheltering in place, many of our clients have
17 already left their abusers but still face violence
18 now.

19 Like a client who wants a divorce and was
20 delivering food to her mother who was sheltering in
21 place, only to be assaulted by her husband in the
22 hallway in front of their seven year old daughter who
23 tried to intervene.

24 That client already had an order of protection,
25 she called the police as she did the last time she

1
2 was assaulted. Many abusers are stopped neither by
3 the pause order -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

5 AMY BARASCH: Nor by a court order. Since her
6 husband had fled before, they issued a second warrant
7 for his arrest and for her, we are preparing all of
8 her divorce documents, so the minute the courts open,
9 we can file and get her on a path to meaningful
10 separation and safety.

11 And finally, I just want to echo the fact that
12 the COVID crisis become a new tool used by abusers to
13 manipulate partners particularly in the areas of
14 custody and visitation. When a client who had fled
15 to New York City from Clinton County New York to
16 avoid her abusive husband, they had visitation
17 exchange but then when COVID broke out in New York
18 City, the husband refused to return the child to the
19 city insisting that the low numbers of COVID in
20 Clinton meant that it was safe there and it was not
21 safe in New York.

22 After many weeks of negotiation, we were finally
23 able to file an emergency petition through the courts
24 and the Judge saw through this position on the part
25 of the husband and did return the child to our client

1
2 who hadn't seen her child for over four weeks. And I
3 should just note, there was no evidence that the
4 father had been social distancing himself, in fact,
5 he had been going out socializing, working with
6 others and taking no public safety measures during
7 the month that he had custody of their child upstate.

8 So, in short, I would just want to reiterate
9 that the vital financial support we receive from City
10 Council for which we are extremely grateful, helps us
11 provide direct representation, advice instilled
12 advocacy in the civil courts that are often thought
13 of second to the criminal system but are equally
14 vital to victims of domestic violence in the city.

15 For public health crisis has highlighted the
16 cracks that already existed in that civil justice
17 system and we appreciate the Council's support and
18 recognition of the legal services that are essential
19 to help fill those cracks and give partners victims
20 of violence a path to safety.

21 Thank you so much for your time.

22 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: We have one question
23 from Council Member Lancman. Council Member.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: So, you mentioned
25 cracks in the court system and you got my attention.

1
2 So, what are some of those cracks, the highlights and
3 how can we help fill them?

4 AMY BARASCH: Thank you Council Member. I think
5 you know, there has always been a deficit of
6 available attorneys for litigants in the civil court.
7 So, that's just number one and the Council goes a
8 long way to making that more plentiful, so we thank
9 you for that.

10 I think right now, you know, we to as Judge
11 Kluger said, we have been in constant communication
12 with the courts and I do appreciate that for all of
13 this pivoting to a virtual reality is extremely
14 difficult.

15 I will say that echoing one of my colleagues
16 earlier, I would encourage the courts to be thinking
17 as much as the can about virtual filing, e-filing
18 even if a case can't proceed right now, in cases like
19 support matters or divorce matters. If we can get a
20 date, register a date for the filing of the case,
21 that's very relevant to certain financial decisions
22 that are made later on.

23 We also would love to see more information for
24 the general public about what the courts are or are
25 not doing. We're constantly sending memos around

1
2 among ourselves and the courts have been very
3 available to not-for-profits and to attorney's which
4 is terrific. But if there were a way for the courts
5 and perhaps in coordination with the city to publish
6 more of that information, it would relief a burden
7 from us in disseminating that information, so we can
8 do more direct representation for our clients.

9 I can't tell you how much time we spend both
10 with volunteer attorneys and clients trying to
11 explain what is or isn't available within the court
12 system now. And again, appreciating that is a
13 challenging time for them. You know, I think we've
14 heard a theme here that communication is really
15 essential.

16 So, anything we can do to get that information
17 out to the general public would be helpful.

18 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Okay, thank you so
19 much Council Member and thank you Ms. Barasch for
20 your testimony. We'll next, oh sorry, Council Member
21 Lancman. I think you are on mute Council Member.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thanks. So, you know,
23 it's very hard often for OCA to translate its memos
24 in delayed terms. So, I don't know how optimistic I
25 am about that. They just came out with an order

1
2 today or maybe it was late last night on electronic
3 motion practice which, you know, it took me a few
4 minutes to decipher.

5 But let me ask you substantively, the Council
6 spent a tremendous amount of money on civil legal
7 services in the housing arena justifiably and I'm a
8 fully supporter of that. Very briefly, do you
9 anticipate a need for lawyers who are available to
10 people without resources in different subject areas
11 that relate to DV aside from housing?

12 AMY BARASCH: Absolutely, we expect to see a
13 huge surge in cases in the family courts and in the
14 matrimonial supreme parts. Some of those are clients
15 we already have identified, so if they are filing for
16 divorce, we are taking this pause moment to prepare
17 all the paperwork so that they can file immediately
18 once the courts become available for that.

19 We have a huge backlog in people who need to
20 file for child support. You can imagine, people are
21 losing jobs are desperately in need of income and
22 we're unable to file for those cases right now. And
23 then, there are a lot of pending matters where there
24 is information we may not be getting. We've been
25 very creative in reaching clients through virtual

1
2 means. Many of our clients text. We've even been
3 able to reach out to some through social media
4 channels if that's safe but there are always the
5 clients you can't get to that you are worried about.
6 We expect to hear from them once the restrictions are
7 lifted with modifications to existing orders needed.

8 So, absolutely, I think that we are going to
9 have not only our hot client base now, that we'll
10 need more help once the restrictions are lifted but
11 there will be more clients coming forward in the
12 family and matrimonial parts.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you.

14 AMY BARASCH: Thank you.

15 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Okay, thank you. We
16 will move to the next witness. Ms. Guzman from VIP.
17 Once the Sergeant starts the clock, you may begin
18 your testimony.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You can start.

20 MARGARITA GUZMAN: Thank you. Good afternoon
21 Speaker Johnson, Chair's Rosenthal and Richards and
22 esteemed members of the Committees on Women and
23 Gender Equity and Public Safety. I thank you for
24 creating this opportunity to come before you today to
25 share our insight about one of the most hidden and

1
2 dangerous byproducts of the COVID pandemic, the
3 increase in severity and frequency of domestic
4 violence.

5 Normally, I would begin by introducing myself
6 and my organization, but I would like to begin not
7 with my name, but the name of Tonia Gonzalo. I say
8 her name, so that everybody listening can lift her
9 spirit and do justice to her memory.

10 Almost two weeks ago, on Sunday April 19th,
11 Tania Gonzalo was found unconscious and unresponsive
12 inside her apartment on East 105th Street in East
13 Harlem. Police had just responded to a 911 call
14 about a dispute she was having with her partner. She
15 had been strangled to death and she was 48 years old.

16 My name is Margarita Guzman, you can use she,
17 her, they, or Margarita. I am the Executive Director
18 of the Violence Intervention Program VIP. VIP is the
19 only culturally specific nonprofit in New York City
20 serving Latina, Latino and Latinx survivors of
21 domestic and sexual violence. The vast majority of
22 whom are low income immigrants.

23 VIP never went on pause. Our 24 hour hotline,
24 our online chat service, emergency shelter and
25 transitional housing have remained fully operational.

1
2 Our community based staff immediately pivoted to a
3 remote service model that is now more in contact with
4 clients than before COVID providing the strongest
5 network of support possible.

6 But these services are in jeopardy. The
7 survivors we may have helped along with all of their
8 children are in danger of going unseen, unheard, and
9 unserved. And the problem is not a lack of dedicated
10 workers or a lack of expertise. It's not even
11 because Latina's and immigrant women are hard to
12 reach, because we can and we do reach and with great
13 success.

14 It is the threat of losing discretionary funding
15 if not all of our services are considered essential.
16 The program most at risk is some of the most
17 important and necessary work for any domestic
18 violence provider. A strategic and culturally
19 relevant outreach team. This couldn't be happening
20 at worse possible time.

21 When Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, a study was
22 conducted on the incident and impact of intimate
23 partner violence related to the disaster. It was the
24 first population based study that had ever documented
25 the prevalence of IPV in a region before and after a

1
2 major disaster and it found that there was 35 percent
3 increase in the prevalence of psychological
4 victimization of women and a 98 percent increase in
5 physical victimization for women.

6 It also concluded; the findings of this study
7 have important implications for intervention efforts
8 following large scale disasters. First, the findings
9 suggest that information -

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

11 MARGARITA GUZMAN: About IPV resources should be
12 disseminated to effected populations, so that women
13 and men who experience IPV for the first time
14 following a disaster, will know where to turn for
15 help and information.

16 Similarly, shelters, hotlines, and other
17 existing resources should be appropriately staffed.
18 To handle the potential influx of inquiries.

19 Every single person testifying before you today
20 and so many more who cannot do so are speaking with
21 one voice and delivering one message. There is a
22 slowly simmering crisis of domestic violence
23 happening in the city right now and it's a public
24 health issue that predated COVID-19 by centuries, but
25 that is being intensified by this pandemic and it

1
2 would be so very wise to increase investments to
3 these providers.

4 Please reference the research on this issue,
5 which I've included in the written testimony I
6 submitted.

7 In addition, there is an extraordinary article
8 in the Washington Post today about the incidents of
9 child abuse that also cross references about pieces
10 of increased domestic violence and we cannot turn our
11 back from these families now.

12 I don't know if VIP's outreach would have ever
13 reached Tania Gonzalo but last year alone, we reached
14 over 10,300 community members in low income, Latinx
15 immigrant neighborhoods with messaging specifically
16 tailored to them.

17 And in those thousands, we have reached so many
18 more people in Tania's situation. People whose lives
19 have been saved. People that were never going to
20 call NYPD. But we can't save any lives if we can't
21 tell them we are here to help them and if our
22 workforce is decimated because of cuts to funding.

23 I'm hear to ask you to fulfill the city's
24 commitment to those lives and the safety of some of
25 New York's poorest and most vulnerable communities.

1
2 We look forward to working with this esteemed body
3 and the city to continue to reach out to all the
4 people trapped in abusive homes.

5 Thank you for providing me the opportunity to
6 testify and I'm happy to answer any questions that
7 you have.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Margarita, thank you for
9 all the good work VIP does. You are an extraordinary
10 advocate for your clients and for so many others who
11 would otherwise be unseen.

12 You know, it's hard to think specifically about
13 Tania but for the people who were not necessarily
14 reaching, is there, what's the next step up of what
15 the city could be doing? Is it more messaging, which
16 is what has been the theme here? Was Tania on
17 anyone's radar?

18 MARGARITA GUZMAN: I don't know the history
19 between Tania and any of the institutions that she
20 may have interacted with. I know that she had not
21 interacted with VIP. But I don't know if she had
22 ever called out to the police before.

23 You know, what's interesting is I know in a lot
24 of sister organizations and at the city at large,
25 we're seeing a reduction in calls to providers.

1 That's not true at VIP. We've seen an increase in
2 calls to our hotline. Last week, the week from April
3 19 to the 25th, we had about a 40 percent increase in
4 calls in that single week.
5

6 We don't run a huge hotline; we maybe get
7 somewhere between 125 to 140 calls a week. But last
8 week, we got over 200. So, we are still conducting
9 our outreach, we're still out there. We have been
10 doing a series of PSA's in Spanish language and we
11 are looking to get those interpreted in the
12 indigenous languages that our clients may speak, so
13 that we are getting messages out there in every way
14 that we can.

15 The messaging theme that you are hearing is a
16 critical one, absolutely, but I also think that to
17 make sure that it's effective, that it's heard and
18 that it gets to the communities you need it to get
19 to, you need to partner with the smaller culturally
20 specific organizations. VIP is one of them Sakhi for
21 South Asian Women, Womenkind, Sauti Yetu Center for
22 African Women and Children, Korean American Family
23 Service Center, Arab American Family Support Center,
24 just to name a few who are in community and trusted
25 and strong bridges. You know, if people don't have a

1 bridge to cross, they are not going to go anywhere.

2 So, we hope that we can partner by being those
3 bridges.
4

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much for
6 all of your work Margarita.

7 MARGARITA GUZMAN: Thank you, thank you for your
8 work Chair Rosenthal.

9 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you. We will
10 move to the next witness. Our next witness is Tuozhi
11 Lorna Zhen from NYLAG.

12 TUOZHI LORNA ZHEN: Hi, good afternoon. Thank
13 you, Chair Richards, Chair Rosenthal, and Council
14 Members, for the opportunity to testify today.

15 My name is Tuozhi Lorna Zhen and I am a
16 Supervising Attorney at the New York Legal Assistance
17 Groups Domestic Violence Law Center.

18 Our domestic violence law center staff speaks
19 over ten language including Spanish, Mandarin,
20 Russian, Bengali and Urdu and provides free
21 comprehensive and culturally competent family
22 matrimonial, appellate and immigration representation
23 to domestic violence survivors in this city.

24 As the committees have already heard, there is a
25 dangerous concern that during this pandemic, our city

1
2 is experiencing an increase in domestic violence
3 coupled with declining access to services for
4 survivors.

5 The few resources that have been available
6 during the pandemic substantially disadvantage those
7 living in poverty and those with limited English
8 capacity. Like many other provider agencies, we have
9 seen a drop in calls that reflects the new challenges
10 domestic violence survivors face during this time.
11 Growing isolation which obstructs the survivors
12 ability to seek help, lack of knowledge of what
13 services remain open and available and financial
14 instability making survivors dependent on abusers and
15 impacting their ability to access remote or virtual
16 services.

17 In recognition of the dual public health crisis
18 of COVID-19 and domestic violence, our city can and
19 must guarantee continued and even increased funding,
20 so that we are able to provide essential services to
21 survivors through critical programs such as the DoVE
22 initiative. In the past few weeks, NYLAG has pivoted
23 to respond to the needs of New Yorkers including
24 survivors of domestic violence.

1
2 NYLAG launched and is staffing a COVID hotline
3 and our domestic violence log unit attorney's
4 continue to virtually staff the family justice
5 centers. While increasing our immigration work, as
6 that work is imperative to our clients financial
7 security. We started to translate Know Your Right
8 materials into multiple languages, so that resource
9 information is accessible to everyone and begin
10 implementing new systems and partnerships to respond
11 adeptly respond to the expected rush of individuals
12 in need of legal assistance when our city begins to
13 reopen gradually.

14 During the pandemic, domestic violence law unit
15 also partnered with organizations like Safe Horizon
16 to assist survivors who are coming forward to draft,
17 file, and appear virtually in family court to seek
18 orders of protection. Just last week, we
19 successfully helped seven survivors file for and
20 obtain their first orders of protection and our work
21 confirms what we already believe, that being stuck in
22 home is placing survivors at greater risk of harm or
23 preventing them from being able to seek help.

24 Take for example our client Tina who was
25 repeatedly sexually assaulted by her husband but had

1
2 to carefully coordinate conversations through a code
3 word as her husband was home after being laid off.

4 Without funding, we could not pivot to do this work -

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

6 TUOZHI LORNA ZHEN: And meet our current demand
7 while continuing with regular cases. And without
8 continued funding, we will not be able to meet the
9 anticipated surge that will come next when survivors
10 have more freedom and ability to leave their homes
11 and seek help.

12 We believe that it is vitally important,
13 particularly for trauma survivors to have one
14 attorney or one agency with whom they can develop a
15 strong, trusting relationship to respond to their
16 many intersecting legal need. NYLAG has and will
17 continue to prepare to respond to the long term
18 domestic violence crisis that will come after this
19 immediate health emergency ends.

20 When this pause order is lifted and the surge in
21 reporting inevitably will come, come, we must be
22 available with appropriate funding to meet this
23 anticipated demand or we risk sending survivors back
24 into the arms of their abusers.

25 Thank you and I welcome any questions.

1
2 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you for your
3 testimony, we do not have any Council Member
4 questions. I will name the next, before I name the
5 next witness, I am going to read the next several
6 witnesses. So, after Melina Sfakianaki from Legal
7 Aid, we will have Julie Taylor from CCI, Nathaniel
8 Fields from URI, Alyssa Keil from New Destiny Housing
9 and Sylvia Morris from SCO.

10 So, our next witness is Melina Sfakianaki, when
11 the Sergeant announces that you may begin, please
12 begin with your testimony. Thank you.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 MELINA SFAKIANAKI: Good afternoon everyone and
15 thank you for the opportunity to testify here today
16 and a special thank you to all of you that have
17 lasted so long at this very lengthy meeting and are
18 still attuned.

19 The Legal Aid Society is the nations oldest and
20 largest provider of legal services to indigent
21 clients. Across the society our civil, criminal, and
22 juvenile rights divisions serve over 300,000
23 individual matters each year. The family domestic
24 violence unit of the Legal Aid Society represents
25 hundreds of survivors of domestic violence and human

1
2 trafficking in both family and supreme court
3 annually.

4 The attorney's of our unit provide full
5 representation in complex and adversarial contested
6 divorces covering all issues for survivors including
7 their rights to be free from harm in their own home
8 with orders of protection, their rights to custody of
9 their children, to child support, spousal maintenance
10 and equitable division of property including the
11 right to continue to occupy their homes and
12 apartments, maintain their leases and other benefits
13 while divorcing from their abusers.

14 In family court, we also represent survivors in
15 family offense matters to obtain orders of
16 protection, custody visitation and support matters.
17 We also represent eligible persons to obtain
18 uncontested divorces without needing to appear in
19 court. Citywide, we received telephone intake from
20 the public, referrals from the family justice
21 centers, from other legal services agencies and from
22 our community based partners that are an integral
23 part of what we do and I just want to echo what Ms.
24 Guzman said earlier, we are coming here to speak to
25 you all of us across the agencies, whether legal or

1
2 direct services or emergency service providers in one
3 voice. Because we all feel the same needs and we all
4 feel the same empathy towards our clients.

5 In some of our neighborhoods, we also picked up
6 walk-in intake as well. We are now working remotely
7 since our offices have been closed during this
8 crisis. We are all equipped with internet access and
9 society provided cellphone whereby we can text and
10 email our clients as whatever means is more safe for
11 them.

12 Since the start of the crisis, we've witnessed
13 drastic changes in the intake that we're receiving
14 and our ability to serve our clients. In the first
15 instance, we are getting more calls but they are
16 often times just calls for advice, not for people in
17 immediate crisis that are looking for shelter or for
18 police intervention. There are calls sometimes from
19 people who have been wanting to get divorced, didn't
20 have time in the past to do the research and have the
21 conversations, were overwhelmed with just subsiding
22 their ordinary life.

23 Now, they've come out and asked for information

24 -

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

1
2 MELINA SFAKIANAKI: And consider their options.
3 We also get calls from people who already have
4 existing orders of support and are now in fear of
5 losing that support because the person providing
6 support is jobless or unable to work or in quarantine
7 or ill because of the virus and they stand to lose
8 their shelter and their ability to care for their
9 children. And there are also calls from people who
10 are struggling with visitation and custody existing
11 orders that they cannot reconcile on their own and we
12 are limited in helping these people because we don't
13 have enough access to the courts right now.

14 We're responding, we're calling every body back
15 but we cannot provide legal services while the courts
16 are closed to everything but emergency matters. We
17 cannot commence divorces now, we cannot start new
18 support petitions, we cannot make new applications or
19 in just custody and visitations. We are not helping
20 some of the most vulnerable.

21 So, we look to you in these situations to help
22 us to get the courts moving again, to assist us in
23 serving our clients. In addition, we see the
24 technology gap that is existing. Our client
25 community includes people with multiple family

1
2 members at home during the crisis but with limited
3 access to technology.

4 Those without smart phones and internet service
5 are not able to search the web for services or to
6 make calls, even if just for advice.

7 Also, people are without privacy. There are
8 many family members sharing technology when clients
9 reach out for help for domestic abuse issues. They
10 need to reveal very personal and private and
11 sometimes traumatizing details in their lives. They
12 cannot do this in small apartments with their
13 children and other family members in the same space
14 and they cannot go outside right now. Lack of
15 technology is critical here.

16 In that same way, when looking that we can get
17 technology out there the same way that the Public
18 School Remote Learning initiative got tablets and
19 internet service to children. Similarly, every
20 household should have access to phone communication.
21 Once upon a time, there were landlines. They were
22 considered a basic necessity for a household. Today,
23 every person should have the right to access to a
24 personal cellphone where they can have private and
25

1 safe communications while they are with others in the
2 same home.

3
4 And we ask you once again to help us to help the
5 courts ease in to more active functioning to allow us
6 to file these support petitions in whatever way
7 possible to preserve that initiation date to allow us
8 to negotiate with our clients in front of a Judge,
9 their inability to perform their custody and
10 visitation responsibilities. And as always, there
11 are clerical matters that could be going on in the
12 courts right now that do not require the full opening
13 of the court system. We have many, many filed
14 divorces waiting for an official signature at the end
15 waiting to be filed in the clerks office. Clearing
16 such matters would allow our clients who have
17 survived abuse and survived the court system to truly
18 begin the next stage of their lives with dignity and
19 autonomy that they have earned.

20 I thank you for this opportunity, I echo what
21 many of my colleagues have said across the agencies
22 and please know that we are always present and always
23 available to work with you, our Council Members, to
24 achieve these common goals. We welcome the
25 opportunity to assist you in any way.

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Thank you.

COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Council Member Lancman has a question.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you. You've talked about the changes that you need to see from OCA from the Office of Code Administration. Others have mentioned them, we're going to have a conversation after this hearing where we can really drill down on that and we can you know, try to get faster movement on that. Although, I don't think you are disagreeing that OCA is trying to deal with a difficult situation you know, as best as they can.

Other than the mechanics of the operation of the courts now, which kinds of hearings and petitions and motions can be heard, how do clerks do things remotely. All of that, they are trying to work on. We're going to try to move that along for you and with you. Are there resource issues that you anticipate having. I don't want to turn this into a budget hearing but how much of ensuring that the legal needs of domestic violence victims are taken care of have to do with the mechanics and operations

1
2 of the courts and how much has to do with the
3 resources that will be available to you?

4 MELINA SFAKIANAKI: So, within Legal Aid, we are
5 up and running. We have the capacity to do the
6 virtual court appearances to meet with our clients
7 over the internet or to do it by text and by
8 telephone. We don't have that need but we do have
9 the need that these resources be available for the
10 courts. Even before the virus crisis began, video
11 accessing in the court system was limited and I speak
12 to family court where the video machine has to move
13 from one court room to the other. If can all
14 communicate virtually, conduct these hearings
15 virtually, then we need the resources available for
16 the courts to be able to do that also and the
17 personnel and the staff that would be available in
18 order to facilitate those resources.

19 In the same way, we are going to need more
20 attorney's available to represent people because we
21 are all anticipating that once people get out, we
22 have filings just waiting. We have so many people
23 that we've talked to, that we've said, we can't help
24 you now but we got to get this filed as soon as it's
25 open to file. Those logistics I can't even imagine

1
2 how the court is going to negotiate the number of
3 filings that start coming in but we need the
4 resources.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: So, in terms of
6 resources, it sounds like it's really all a function
7 of the backlog that is accruing as opposed to legal
8 services of a different kind and a different type as
9 a result of the effect that the coronavirus situation
10 is having on people and families.

11 MELINA SFAKIANAKI: Yes, I would say yes. I
12 don't think we're going to get at least in the family
13 and domestic abuse sector, different types of needs.
14 Abusers will be abusers; this is one new and
15 different opportunity to find a way to coercively
16 control their spouses. If they can do it by claiming
17 it's a public health need, I won't bring the child
18 back. If they can do it by claiming, you are a
19 hospital worker, you are risking my child. They will
20 use whatever mechanism and we do have the responses
21 in place and we do have the experts and the
22 professionals in place to address it. But we are
23 going to have a volume. There is no way that post
24 crisis, we're not going to see what is on earth when
25 people are able to come out and get help safely.

1
2 Based on the advice that we've been giving
3 people; they know that they are not in a position now
4 to take it up in the court system. Divorce is the
5 last thing you do after you feed yourself and you
6 have shelter and you have safety and you have
7 resources, then you go and you do the legal filings
8 that go with it. So, it's our frontline people who
9 really are going to have to get in there and get
10 those people out of their difficult situations.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you.

12 MELINA SFAKIANAKI: Thank you.

13 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: We have no other
14 Council Member questions, so we will move to the next
15 witness. Our next witness is Julie Taylor from
16 Center for Court Innovation.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 JULIE TAYLOR: Good afternoon. Thank you to the
19 Council for holding this important hearing. My name
20 is Julie Taylor, I'm the Director of Community Impact
21 and Youth Initiatives at the Center for Court
22 Innovation.

23 The center has seen the impact of COVID and the
24 stay at home order through our programs serving
25 survivors referred through law enforcement. Our work

1
2 with individuals accused of causing harm in our
3 community based programs. In addition to our work in
4 New York City, the center works with over 60
5 jurisdictions across the country on improving their
6 responses to partner violence. Since the COVID
7 crisis, the center has been hosting weekly calls for
8 domestic violence attorney's, advocates, battered or
9 intervention programs and prosecutors to share
10 experience and strategize responses.

11 The center has a longstanding commitment to
12 working within the criminal justice system with
13 individuals who are accused of causing harm to
14 address those harms and prevent reoffending.

15 Our supervisor release program provides a
16 community supervision alternative to pre-trial
17 detention and programming specific to IPP. Our
18 victim services program in Red Hook, Red Hook Cares,
19 provides advocacy, counseling and case management to
20 individuals who have experienced or witnessed crime
21 and violence.

22 In the wake of COVID-19, care is immediately
23 pivoted to providing all services remotely and
24 virtually. Care is continue to seek referrals from
25 the district attorney and to provide crisis

1
2 counseling and safety planning and advocacy
3 virtually.

4 The center also uses restorative justice circles
5 to address intermittent partner violence through
6 CARES and separately with young people in school. We
7 continue to see the young people in the community
8 want access to these kinds of approaches to reduce
9 violence during the COVID epidemic.

10 The center also operates the RISE project, which
11 prevents a response to IPV in neighborhoods most
12 impacted by community violence. RISE is a part of
13 the city's crisis management system and works in
14 partnership with anti-gun violence program sites
15 across the city using community based restorative and
16 public health approaches to build our community
17 abilities to prevent and respond to IPV, connect
18 survivors to resources and voluntarily engage
19 individuals causing harm.

20 RISE provides street outreach, public education,
21 training, community workshops and circles and gender
22 based programming. RISE serves communities of color
23 where justice system responses may not seem like a
24 safe option due to past experiences and harm systems
25

1
2 may have caused in the community or fears around
3 escalation.

4 Survivors need services they are comfortable
5 with and that don't compound other issues such as
6 employment or economic insecurity, especially during
7 this time.

8 It is often our credible messengers and
9 community providers, the people who are in our
10 neighborhoods day in and day out that those
11 experiencing harm feel safe reaching out to first.
12 This is true now more than ever. With COVID,
13 community members are more physically isolated and at
14 the same time, the trusted community providers and
15 credible messengers may be less physically present,
16 which may mean there are fewer opportunities for
17 those who need help to reach out.

18 We are all doing our best with virtual services,
19 but we know many are not able to access these
20 services virtually, as many have spoken to already
21 due to safety concerns and space.

22 We also need community responses to people
23 causing harm and violence. We can't wait until they
24 are arrested. A system response isn't enough
25 especially -

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

JULIE TAYLOR: Now as many people may be less likely to call law enforcement. We need to provide additional tools to reduce violence levels. Everyone who abuses does not interact with the criminal justice system. Programs that focus on long term engagement in neighborhoods and communities build trust and increase access to resources and can provide their continued reinforcement tools and resources to those who have caused harm need to change their behavior and maintain that change over time.

Our research has confirmed that survivors from communities of color, LGBTQ communities in particular seek interventions that will also address the harm in the context of the social economic and cultural realities they experience.

Participants from communities of color stress the need for interventions outside the criminal legal system that would not jeopardize their partners or families with deportation or incarceration. As one survivor said, I needed support, the did not demonize undocumented men of color.

1
2 Thank you to the Council for holding this
3 incredible hearing and providing us with an
4 opportunity to share our work. We look forward to
5 our continued partnership to promote a safe and
6 healthy community.

7 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: We do not have any
8 Council Member questions. Thank you for your
9 testimony. We will move to the next witness.
10 Nathaniel Fields from URI. Please wait for the
11 Sergeant to announce that you may begin before
12 delivering your testimony. You are the next witness.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin Nathaniel.

14 NATHANIEL FIELDS: Good afternoon Speaker
15 Johnson, Council Member Rosenthal and Richards and
16 other members. My name is Nathaniel Fields and I
17 have the pleasure of being the CEO for Urban Resource
18 Institute, URI. As well as the Chair for over a
19 decade of the New York City Coalition of Residential
20 Domestic Violence. The later, excuse me, represent
21 all license domestic violence shelter programs in New
22 York City.

23 I am so thankful for the opportunity to come
24 before you and share some important lessons and
25 takeaways from our frontline work at URI during the

1
2 COVID-19 outbreak. With that being said, I do want
3 to pause for just a moment and thank all of you
4 elected officials, government agencies, providers and
5 survivors as New York City has the most comprehensive
6 approach to domestic and gender based violence.

7 I also want to acknowledge the work of the
8 nonprofit sector. We haven't talked about this
9 enough. During this crisis, the nonprofit sector,
10 particularly the women and men at URI, they've made
11 tremendous sacrifices leaving their home each day to
12 take care of vulnerable New Yorkers. More
13 specifically, victims of domestic violence and again,
14 I really appreciate each and every one of them and
15 the work that they are doing.

16 A little more about URI. For over 40 years,
17 we've been providing that client center trauma
18 informed services to victims of domestic violence and
19 gender based violence, as well as shelter services
20 for homeless with a focus of communities of color.

21 With that being said, URI is organized to end
22 domestic and gender based violence and to this end,
23 we have over 1,200 beds or close to I should say,
24 1,200 beds for victims of domestic violence at any
25 given day in New York City and that allows us to be

1
2 the largest domestic violence shelter provider in New
3 York City as well as in the country. And I'm going
4 to talk about our plans to increase capacity based on
5 what's happening with COVID-19. We also offer
6 additional services because we do know we need a
7 comprehensive approach. You've heard from my
8 colleagues that talked about, many survivors don't
9 reach out to the criminal justice system, so we do
10 need a comprehensive approach and that's what we've
11 done in New York City and that's what we've done at
12 URI. So, we offer additional services such as
13 economic empowerment programs to survivors and a full
14 suite of dating violence prevention at community
15 education programs. In junior high schools and in
16 high schools reaching nearly 40,000 people each year.

17 We also work with abusive partners. If we're
18 going to end domestic violence, we know we're working
19 with abusive partners, working with them around
20 accountability and promising and evidence based
21 private practices. We do this work in partnership
22 with Danny in Westchester county and in New York
23 City.

24 Let's talk quickly about New York City and our
25 response. You know, as we began to shelter in place,

1
2 we partner with state representatives to include wage
3 to better understand the virus and the necessary
4 implications for the populations we serve.

5 This resulted in engagement of proactive review
6 of our disaster emergency initiatives. We know the
7 current policies weren't going to work. So, this was
8 unprecedented and we moved quickly. In crisis, we
9 want to be right but we need to move also quickly.

10 So, we had to enhance our protocols. We
11 developed systems of tracking, health tracking and
12 process the daily check in.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

14 NATHANIEL FIELDS: We had to take care of the
15 concrete things such as pantries, stocking pantries
16 with food and over the counter medication. We had to
17 clean rigorously because survivors were coming into
18 shelter. We had to get those PPE's. We also have to
19 work with our staff members. You know our staff
20 members, like our clients, they were experiencing a
21 heightened sense of anxiety and loss.

22 We've lost staff members due to COVID-19 and we
23 had to expand our EAP services.

24 So, I want to just talk about a way forward
25 because, as you've heard from my colleagues that we

1
2 have to think about moving forward and some of the
3 things -

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Nathaniel.

5 NATHANIEL FIELDS: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Nathaniel if I could
7 just - unfortunately, we still have 14 more
8 witnesses. It's five o'clock and you are getting to
9 the meat of what I really want to hear you talk about
10 which is, what's different under COVID, what do we
11 need to do going forward. I'm going to ask you to
12 try to summarize that in about one minute and then
13 for the people who are waiting to testify, if you
14 could just look through your testimony real quick and
15 know that we really will put a hard stop on three
16 minutes going forward. And if you could think about
17 answering the most important question this time,
18 which is what's different under COVID and what
19 resources or what more could the city be doing to
20 help you do your job better, so we can meet the needs
21 of survivors.

22 So, Nathaniel, I'll just ask you to wrap that up
23 and then we'll move on.

24 NATHANIEL FIELDS: And I appreciate that. You
25 know, when I think about the good work that's been

1
2 done, I do think we can do a few things. We need to
3 continue to communicate. When individuals are in
4 crisis, they don't hear often the messages and
5 availability of services.

6 So, we have to continue to look at how we
7 communicate. I think the Majority Leader Cumbo said,
8 tell me about safe housing. So, I think we need to
9 talk about shelter. Take away some of the myths, the
10 misconceptions and say that we're doing a lot to keep
11 survivors safe in shelter.

12 I think our technology and systems have to
13 change. Listen that on a domestic violence hotline
14 advisory council. They have over 400,000 contacts, I
15 didn't say calls, I said contacts and that means
16 calls, chats and texts. Last year, their texts and
17 chats exceeded their phone calls. So, we know we
18 need to improve our systems and we need to do it as
19 quickly as possible. Survivors particular now in a
20 time of COVID when they may be around an abusive
21 partner, need to find other ways to communicate.

22 So, we definitely have to do that and this is a
23 time not to reduce funding. We need to get ready; I
24 think what we've learned from a federal and a local
25 level, we have to be ready. So, part of what we're

1
2 doing, we're getting ready to increase our DV shelter
3 capacity. We have two shelters opening in the first
4 quarter, we hope to expedite that process working
5 with HRA and OTBA as part of the city's plan in terms
6 of ensuring that there are services for victims of
7 domestic violence.

8 Thank you all.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Great, thank you.

10 NATHANIEL FIELDS: For all of the great work
11 that's been happening.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much and
13 just real quickly Nathaniel, the current shelters
14 that URI runs, what percentage capacity are you at?

15 NATHANIEL FIELDS: We have about anywhere from
16 88 to 95 percent capacity depending on the location.
17 Across the system, I think we have about 8 to 12
18 percent availability.

19 I'm not sure if you heard my response.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Your not running out of
21 space yet.

22 NATHANIEL FIELDS: No, no.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you very much.
24
25

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2 NATHANIEL FIELDS: And we're actually bringing
3 on new shelters during the first quarter as people
4 move out, I think we'll be ready as a city.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Right, thank you very
6 much. If going forward, people could try to limit
7 their remarks to three minutes, I'd appreciate that.
8 I'll turn that back to you General Counsel McKinney.

9 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you Chair
10 Rosenthal. We'll move to our next witness now Alyssa
11 Keil from New Destiny Housing. When the Sergeant
12 says begin, please start your testimony. Thank you.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin Miss.

14 ALYSSA KEIL: Thank you for the opportunity to
15 testify today regarding the effect of COVID-19
16 pandemic on domestic violence in New York City. My
17 name is Alyssa Keil and I am the Director of Housing
18 Link at New Destiny Housing Corporation. A 26 year
19 old nonprofit committed to ending the cycle of
20 domestic violence and homelessness by connecting
21 families to safe, permanent housing and services.
22 And with Chair Rosenthal's comments about really
23 boiling it down, our main concerns right now with our
24 clients and for survivors as a whole in New York City
25 is that their options prior to COVID, which included

1
2 shelter and still does include shelter and also
3 included staying with friends and family temporarily
4 if they weren't in danger in their home. Those are
5 now limited and less safe. Going to stay with
6 friends or family now could put everyone at risk for
7 the virus.

8 And while shelter beds are still available as
9 Mr. Fields just mentioned, there still available,
10 they are historically difficult to access for
11 families, single folks, and larger families. So,
12 they are not always an option for everyone and our
13 bigger concern is what happens after shelter and why
14 is shelter the only option right now.

15 So, our bigger concern is permanent housing both
16 right now, getting people into safe housing during
17 COVID, but also having that available to people after
18 this pandemic has ended. So, there are two programs
19 right now that currently exist that we believe could
20 be expanded. The Homeless Set Aside program and
21 Augmented CityPHEPS are two innovative programs
22 [inaudible 4:07:38] certain New Yorkers experiencing
23 homelessness with affordable housing units around the
24 city.

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2 However, only those individuals in a DHS
3 homeless shelter system are granted access to these
4 programs. All other shelter systems including the
5 HRA domestic violence shelters are excluded. And
6 again, those programs are the homeless set aside
7 placement unit which is managed by HPD and DHS and
8 puts people into units that are predetermined during
9 the development process of a building to go to
10 homeless New Yorkers and Augmented CityPHEPS which is
11 very new and allows people in shelter, only in DHS
12 shelter to move into higher income affordable housing
13 units and have their CityPHEPS voucher payments
14 increased.

15 And as affordable housing units remain some of
16 the few apartments still consistently leasing new
17 units in these times, it is more important than ever
18 that the domestic violence shelter system [INAUDIBLE
19 4:08:33] receive equal treatment under city housing
20 programs.

21 While many people have never experienced the
22 housing and financial instability caused by COVID-19,
23 low income survivors of domestic violence face these
24 challenges every day. The pandemic has only
25

1
2 amplified their challenges and decreased their
3 options.

4 Now is the time to act to ensure survivors are
5 not forced to shelter in place with a person who is
6 harming them and expand options for them to find long
7 term housing even after the pandemic has hit.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

9 ALYSSA KEIL: Thanks for this opportunity and I
10 welcome any questions you have.

11 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: We do not have any
12 Council Member questions at this time. So, we will
13 move to the next witness. Before we call the next
14 witness, these are the witnesses that will come after
15 the next person. Raquel Singh, Quadira Coles, Cama
16 boxed and Morgan Siegel.

17 So, the next witness is Sylvia Morris, you may
18 be begin when the Sergeant at Arms tells you the
19 clock has begun.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

21 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Is Sylvia Morris from
22 SCO available? Okay, the next witness, we'll move to
23 the next witness which is Raquel Singh.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You can go ahead.

25 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Is somebody speaking?

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RAQUEL SINGH: Hi, can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yes.

RAQUEL SINGH: Okay, great, thank you. Good afternoon. I'd like to take this time to thank Chair Rosenthal and Chair Richards for creating this space for survivors of domestic violence to share their voice today.

My name is Raquel Singh, I am the Executive Director of the Voices of Women. VOW is made up of community organizers who are survivors of domestic violence and witnesses of domestic violence. We work to reform and revolutionize domestic violence policy; its implementation and the services survivors turn to for safety justice and assistance.

We continue with our mission to organize intensely to protect survivors and their children. For survivors of domestic violence and their children, COVID-19 has not only rattled their existing methods of surviving an abusive relationship, it has destroyed them in many ways. The Administration's current response to survivors is not enough and they have not fully evolved to meet survivors needs.

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2 We still don't know what happens when a survivor
3 needs support or when a survivors use their work,
4 errands, and general outside time as a refuge from
5 their abusers. As you know, social distancing is a
6 form of isolation, and isolation is a primary tactic
7 of abusers.

8 Survivors are trapped with their abusers and no
9 where else to go. Imagine having to live like this
10 and now think about it as a parent attempting to
11 homeschool your child. We have deepening concerns
12 about ACS interaction with survivors where the entry
13 point is educational neglect.

14 City agencies particularly ACS and DOE are using
15 the same guidelines as they did pre-COVID-19 to
16 engage survivors of domestic violence. The systems
17 must increase their understanding of domestic
18 violence, change how they do their work or they will
19 revictimize survivors. There also needs to be better
20 guidance from the Administration to these agencies on
21 how to engage survivors in need.

22 We recognize that calls to the domestic violence
23 hotlines may go up and down. What you are seeing is
24 the nature of a domestic violence relationship in
25 real time. When calls are down, it does not mean

1
2 that violence in some form is not present. It could
3 actually indicate a rising incidents of domestic
4 violence in conjunction with a seriously concerning
5 inability on the part of the survivor to reach out
6 for help due to the stay at home order. We recommend
7 DV responses as the come readily available to chat,
8 text and develop other touch points for survivors to
9 reach out for help.

10 If they do not, survivors will remain in grave
11 danger.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you for your
14 testimony. We do not have any Council Member
15 questions and we'll move to the next witness, Quadira
16 Coles.

17 QUADIRA COLES: Hi.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

19 QUADIRA COLES: good afternoon Chair Rosenthal,
20 Chair Richards and members and staff of the City
21 Council. My name is Quadira Coles and I am the
22 Policy Manager at Girls for Gender Equity. GGE is an
23 anti-generational organization based in Brooklyn
24 committed to all around development of girls and
25 young women. GGE challenges structural forces

1 including sexism, racism, gender based violence,
2 transphobia, homophobia, and economic inequity. We
3 do this work in direct services, advocacy, and
4 culture change. GGE has been a leader in a
5 conversation around gender based violence including
6 sexual harassment and abuse for close to two decades.
7 We are offering testimony today because we want to
8 raise awareness about the ways gender based violence
9 has impacted the young people of color during COVID.
10

11 During this pandemic, GGE has continued to
12 center the health and wellbeing of our young people.
13 Our program has been conducting ongoing safety
14 assessment, wellness checks and building safety plans
15 with our young people especially those young people
16 who have trauma. Our girls, our sisters in the
17 program which support survivors of child sexual
18 abuse, sexual violence and gender based violence has
19 [INAUDIBLE 4:14:50] as survivors develop care while
20 sheltering in place, safer partner relationships
21 during COVID and how to stay social while social
22 distancing.

23 Demands around social distancing, shift
24 outlearning introduced all kind of conflict. In one
25 situation we learned early on of a series of acts on

1
2 Facebook and social media in which inappropriate
3 harmful photos were released to young people across
4 New York City.

5 Our young people were heavily impacted by this
6 moment. They shared with their facilitators that
7 this disruptive and triggering event had scarred them
8 and made them concerned about this new moment where
9 interactions are forced online and girls bodies are
10 easily exposed. GGE staff immediately responded. We
11 held space holding restorative circles and offering
12 tools for young people to engage in self-care and
13 address concerns.

14 Additionally, our team has shifted the
15 curriculum and built a module to educate participants
16 about cyber safety and how gender based violence
17 appears in the digital realm.

18 We continue to offer support about how to
19 navigate boundaries in online spaces, GGE filled
20 critical gaps in services in the case while, in this
21 case, while young people's schools were ill prepared
22 or unequipped to respond to a trauma informed healing
23 centered way.

24 Since March, our programs have adjusted to
25 convene, educate, support, and organize young people

1
2 virtually. We offer counseling services for all
3 young people by our staff social workers. In these
4 one on one sessions staff are addressing the impact
5 of grief and isolation on sleep and our emotional
6 states.

7 We have linked young people to meditation and
8 wellness apps and teletherapy support and 24 hour
9 hotlines. Additionally, our social workers have
10 provided consultation on how to navigate parental and
11 sibling relationships, especially when there is
12 history of conflict, including a history of emotional
13 abuse.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

15 QUADIRA COLES: As the events of a young persons
16 gender expression sexuality enforcement of unfair
17 gender roles with the family system as young girls
18 are expected to be household care givers instead of
19 completing your schoolwork.

20 GGE services have always been essential for New
21 York City's most vulnerable youth and now COVID-19 is
22 exposing what our young people have always known,
23 that GGE fills the critical gap, critical service
24 gaps that the most vulnerable youth experience due to
25 systemic failure. We must ensure that the young

1
2 women's initiative and other City Council efforts
3 which meet the needs of youth survivors are preserved
4 and protected. They remain essential during these
5 difficult times.

6 Thank you.

7 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: We do not have any
8 Council Member questions, so we will move to the next
9 witness. The next witness is Nokema Boxed[SP?] from
10 the Met Council. You may begin when the Sergeant
11 give notice.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

13 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Ms. Vox, I think you
14 are on mute or we just couldn't hear your volume.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: No, we don't hear you, please
16 unmute yourself.

17 It looks like she may be having some
18 difficulties with her audio, maybe we should go to
19 the next witness please.

20 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Okay, Ms. Vox from the
21 Met Council, we can't hear you, so we'll go to the
22 next witness. Please let us know if you need help.
23 Morgan Siegel.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Go ahead.

25 MORGAN SIEGEL: Yes, I'm here.

1
2 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Please begin with the
3 Sergeants notice.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Go ahead, you may begin.

5 MORGAN SIEGEL: Good afternoon Chair and Council
6 Members. My name is Morgan Siegel and I am the
7 Assistant Director for Case Coordination at Northern
8 Manhattan Improvement Cooperation. On behalf of
9 NMIC, we would like to thank you for inviting us to
10 provide testimony.

11 NMIC has served survivors of domestic violence
12 since 1998 through its community based domestic
13 violence project. We serve primarily immigrant
14 survivors of Latin America who live below the poverty
15 line, speak limited to no English and have deep fears
16 due to immigration status. DVP at NMIC is comprised
17 of a team of bilingual and bicultural counselors,
18 attorneys and advocates who provide holistic support
19 and expertise. All services are trauma informed no
20 cost confidential and long term.

21 DVP at NMIC has been responsive and adapted
22 services to continue to provide access to support for
23 survivors via platforms such as WhatsApp, text,
24 email, and other safe forums. The team has been able
25 to provide virtual support groups in Spanish which

1
2 foster community and allow for information sharing
3 and connection during a time of physical distancing.
4 [INAUDIBLE 4:20:22] provide virtual trauma focused
5 therapy via telephone and video, work closely with
6 community partners to conduct outreach, and provide
7 crisis intervention.

8 Since survivor safety and dependence is directly
9 related and linked to having access to essential
10 basic needs, DVP at NMIC continues to address
11 economic empowerment linking survivors to benefits,
12 emergency grants, food pantries and other resources.

13 Survivors of domestic violence are vulnerable to
14 experiencing additional life threatening risks
15 related to coronavirus. Isolation, increased risk
16 for abuse and susceptibility to contracting COVID are
17 impacting survivors increasingly as times goes by.
18 Not only are immigrant survivors coping with ongoing
19 and past trauma, often triggered by the current
20 pandemic, but they are faced with a multitude of
21 systemic and contextual barriers that place them in
22 the eye of the storm within the center of the
23 pandemic.

24 Social distancing practices can often keep
25 survivors in a home that is unsafe and further

1
2 perpetuate a batterers ability to isolate and control
3 victims.

4 I would like to share with you a story of one of
5 our clients we will Maria. This name and other
6 identifying information has been changed for privacy.

7 Maria is an undocumented immigrant with her four
8 children living in the Bronx. A short walk over the
9 bridge to Washington Heights. A victim of
10 strangulation, verbal abuse, and coercive control.
11 She had decided this past winter she would separate
12 from her abusive partner after many years of abuse.
13 She found new employment and felt emotionally
14 stronger to cope with being a single parent.

15 Shortly after New York on pause, quarantine
16 began her abusive partner returned to the home after
17 he lost his job. Their children insisted that he be
18 allowed to return temporarily and Maria felt a sense
19 of compassion and obligation. They met in Columbia
20 as teenagers and as the father of her children, she
21 felt compelled to let him return during this time.

22 Life during quarantine has been tense, painful
23 and frightening for Maria. Her abuser forced her to
24 quit her job out of jealousy, also making her feel
25 guilty for potentially placing the family at risk.

1
2 He controls all of the finances and has begun to
3 drink heavily. He is extremely jealous and berates
4 her for being on her telephone accusing her of
5 speaking to other men.

6 As a father, he constantly undermines her
7 authority and disparages her in front of her
8 children. Maria has decided against entering shelter
9 fearing that her childrens health and removing them
10 from the only home they have known.

11 Maria and her counselor at DVP at NMIC have
12 arranged for code words and safe times to call to
13 provide safety planning, counseling, and support.
14 Maria has reached out in crisis during escalating
15 arguments and her counselor stayed on the phone as
16 she waited for the police to arrive. She is working
17 with our family law attorney's -

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

19 MORGAN SIEGEL: Oh, sorry, okay. Sorry, I know
20 I went over time. I'll just finish about Maria. She
21 is working with our family law attorney to discuss
22 seeking an order of protection and other legal
23 rights. She has been assessed for an immigration
24 attorney to explore new visa petition. We're also
25

1
2 addressing economic concerns by linking her to public
3 benefits that might support her during this time.

4 She is learning how to mitigate the risk, open
5 with feelings and safe re-plan for a new beginning.

6 Once again, thank you for the opportunity to
7 submit testimony and wish you and your families much
8 health and safety.

9 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you for your
10 testimony. We do not have any Council Member
11 questions at this time. Ms. Boxed from the Met
12 Council again.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Go ahead.

14 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Ms. Boxed, we can see
15 you speaking but we can't hear you. Just a reminder,
16 when you registered, you had an opportunity to upload
17 testimony. You can also email it to
18 testimony@council.nyc.gov and it will be added to the
19 record, your full testimony. We are still having
20 technical difficulties and can't hear you Ms. Boxed.
21 You are on mute if we could unmute you.

22 Unfortunately, Ms. Boxed, we still can't hear
23 you. I'm going to move to the next witness. The
24 next witness is Enrique Jerves.

1
2 ENRIQUE JERVES: Hi. I am here, can you hear
3 me?

4 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Yes, we can hear you.

5 ENRIQUE JERVES: Hi everyone. Good afternoon
6 Council Member Rosenthal and also Corey Johnson.
7 Thank you for your time and thank you for letting me
8 speak today. I will try to be as much concise as
9 possible.

10 [INAUDIBLE 4:25:13]. I am the Legal Victim
11 Assistance Program Director at HANAC. I work in the
12 program about seven years already. I do the similar
13 work that you do. I just wanted to let you know what
14 we are doing to navigate the pandemic. We used to
15 provide forums about human trafficking and domestic
16 violence with a single way we can encourage and
17 educate the community about what is available in New
18 York City. Unfortunately, due to the funding, there
19 is always a problem with the funding, we had to
20 switch or make changes with the workers. So,
21 generally I was invited to the radio for an
22 interview. It was good. Actually, I had a chance to
23 provide services in the radio on Saturday, so we
24 decided to work on Saturdays in the Bronx to provide
25 information about divorce or custody rights,

1
2 visitations, and also domestic violence resources.
3 We used to go every Saturday to the Bronx to provide
4 this information. Waking up at five o'clock
5 entertainment for us and that way we can educate the
6 community about it. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 came
7 up, we cannot do that anymore.

8 So, we did [INAUDIBLE 4:26:43] in three hours of
9 work. We recycled material that we had in the
10 office. We created a HANAC community radio that we
11 have providing - so we are educating the community
12 online. So, we are inviting guests from different
13 organizations of New York, psychologists that provide
14 available services for COVID-19, survivors, domestic
15 violence survivors.

16 So, pretty much, that's what I do to outreach
17 and also educate teams and domestic violence
18 survivors. I think this is possible, I am not an
19 expert, I am not an engineer. I told you my field is
20 management and also provide services but I learned
21 this and I had to learn this. I had to put it in
22 place so we educate the community. Our outreach
23 right now is 2,000 followers per radio and we are
24 doing the same thing on Facebook.

1
2 We are recording these platforms and are
3 uploading to Spotify, Pandora and [INAUDIBLE 4:28:03]
4 so the followers can listen later on.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

6 ENRIQUE JERVES: We post information about the
7 social services. So, I am up for questions if you
8 want to.

9 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: We do not have any
10 Council Member questions. We will hold for one more
11 minute as we try to address a technical difficulty.

12 ENRIQUE JERVES: That's fine, it can wait. So,
13 while you do that, yeah, I think this can be part of
14 services outreach and also, in the beginning of
15 today, we were speaking about techs needed in the
16 field.

17 So, I think this can be done. Actually, we can
18 invite other organizations and Council Members to
19 share resources to these. It is free, it's online,
20 we created even a player the listeners can listen
21 [INAUDIBLE 4:29:03]. We are working with domestic
22 violence survivors trying to help them and empowering
23 them to learn this technology field so in case in the
24 future, they will try to learn or find jobs about it.

1
2 They learn about how to do this so this is an
3 alternative that we are doing so far.

4 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: Thank you very much
5 for your testimony. We do not have any Council
6 Member questions. If there is anyone, we missed
7 inadvertently who was signed up to testify and you
8 have not been called, please use the raise hand
9 function at this point in the participants panel and
10 we will call on you in the order that hands have been
11 raised.

12 So, this is the end of our list of witnesses who
13 are present. If we have inadvertently missed you,
14 please raise your hand. Through Zoom, the raise hand
15 function.

16 Okay, we are going to try to return to Ms.
17 Boxed, Council Member Rosenthal, Chair Rosenthal, did
18 you have a question?

19 Oh, you're on mute Council Member, Chair
20 Rosenthal.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, just real quick to
22 Ms. Boxed, one thing that can often help is if you
23 leave the Zoom and then you log back in. I don't
24 know if you already did that. I just really want to;
25 I'm looking forward to hearing your testimony but

1
2 that was all I was going to say. We'll see if this
3 works.

4 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: We'll just give it one
5 moment, several staff members are also working with
6 her, so we'll try to work out the technical
7 difficulty before we close the witness portion of the
8 hearing. Again, if there is anyone that we
9 inadvertently left off and who wish to testify who is
10 on the list and has not been called, please use the
11 raise hand function in Zoom. Raise your hand now and
12 we will call on you in the order that you raised your
13 hands.

14 Okay, we're going to wait 30 seconds. We think
15 that this is being addressed. Please stand by. Ms.
16 Boxed?

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I think you are unmuted.
18 Ms. Boxed, can you hear us? Can you start your
19 testimony? Yeah, yeah, no.

20 COUNSEL BRENDA MCKINNEY: We're going to close
21 this. So, Chair's Rosenthal and Richards, Chair
22 Rosenthal, we'll move back to you. This concludes
23 the witness portion of the hearing.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much to
25 Committee Counsel Brenda McKinney. You handled that

1
2 beautifully. I think it was four hours, four and a
3 half hours of testimony. Thank you for pulling
4 through so smoothly. You really did a great job, I
5 appreciate that.

6 Council Member Richards, would you like to make
7 a closing statement. I have a very short one but
8 would you, I'll defer to you.

9 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Sure, and I want to thank
10 you Council Member Rosenthal for your leadership on
11 this issue. To Speaker Johnson, to my Counsel Daniel
12 Ades who oversees the Public Safety Committee, to
13 Matthew Thompson to Nevin Singh and to my Legislative
14 Director Tiffany Eason. I just want to say thank
15 you. There is a lot more work to be done around
16 this. We want DV victims to know that they should
17 report. If you feel silence, if you feel scarred at
18 this moment, we are hear for you. You should know
19 that you can contact our offices. That you should
20 call 911 and that we are here to work directly with
21 you to ensure you are getting the services that you
22 need.

23 So, don't be afraid, we are here for you. You
24 have people who have your back 1,000 percent and this
25 is why we had this hearing today and we look forward

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2 to following up with the NYPD specifically on a lot
3 of the things discussed today. I want to thank
4 Council Member Rosenthal and the Women and Gender
5 Equity for their leadership here and look forward to
6 our continued partnership.

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much Chair
9 Richards. It's always a pleasure sharing a hearing
10 with you. You just have been extraordinary in making
11 sure that oversight on the NYPD is constant and I
12 really appreciate your work.

13 I want to thank all the advocates; we've spoken
14 with and worked with over 50 advocates over the last
15 few weeks in preparation for this hearing but we
16 really want to thank you for the good work that you
17 are doing. You know, Council Member Richards, thank
18 you for reminding people if you need help now, all of
19 the city's hotlines and the nonprofit hotlines, they
20 are up and running. The shelters are available to
21 you. Medical treatment is available to you. The
22 city's hotline, the citywide hotline 24 hour hotline
23 is 1-800-621-HOPE H-O-P-E and then they can refer you
24 to other hotlines and other services particularly in
25 a language that is not in English. VIP is in

1 Spanish, there are many hotlines out there in
2 multiple languages.
3

4 And I really want to of course thank all the
5 City Council staff for your hard work in pulling this
6 together. This was a terrific hearing. The two
7 pieces of information that I find very concerning
8 that I want to reiterate, is number one, there's a
9 real disconnect between the number, the real drop in
10 the number of complaints, DV complaints issued,
11 reports taken. Whether they be on rape, felony, or
12 misdemeanor, all DV reports complaints are down to a
13 meaningful extent and arrests are down as well. and
14 I'm looking forward to hearing from the PD as they
15 look into the, looking at the body cam or whatever
16 other metrics they are using to assure themselves
17 that something is not a miss here.

18 And to the Administration, you know, I was
19 really disappointed to hear that the COVID text line
20 652-652, they have only put out four DV related texts
21 in the seven weeks that we've been in this pandemic.
22 The first one came, it took until April 7th, we heard
23 from provider after provider today about the need for
24 more robust and culturally competent messaging. I
25 think the city needs to step up its game. There is

1
2 no time like the present to do that and lastly, I
3 don't hear from the Administration about a thoughtful
4 plan with meaningful resources behind it for when the
5 pause is lifted and we see people coming out really
6 needing help. Counseling, legal services, shelter,
7 whatever it may be, we want to let survivors know
8 those services will be available to them but we don't
9 want to see the city scrambling to make sure they are
10 available. That type of preparation can be happening
11 right now. So, we look forward to hearing a lot more
12 from the Administration on this.

13 Lastly, I'll say that the Council, due to
14 Speaker Johnsons very good leadership, Council
15 Members now have social media tools, we'll be getting
16 those out all next week going forward to try to get
17 the word out to all of our constituents that
18 resources are absolutely available to DV survivors.

19 I hope everyone is staying safe and staying well
20 and getting the help that they need. They know they
21 can come forward and with that, I'm calling this
22 hearing to a close. [GAVEL] Thank you.

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25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date April 1, 2018