

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS

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February 27, 2012

Start: 1:14 p.m.

Recess: 4:13 p.m.

HELD AT:                   Hearing Room  
                              250 Broadway, 16th Floor

B E F O R E:                   MATHIEU EUGENE,  
                                  Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
                              James Sanders, Jr.  
                              Vincent Gentile  
                              Fernando Cabrera  
                              Daniel Dromm  
                              David G. Greenfield  
                              Albert Vann

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Terrance Holliday  
Commissioner  
Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs

Leticia Lamott  
Military Liaison, Service Coordinator  
Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs

Denny Meyer  
American Veterans for Equal Rights

Judy Schaffer  
Founder, President  
Heroes to Heroes

Wesley Poriotis  
Founder  
Veterans Across America

Lionelle Hamanaka  
Military Families Speak Out

Audrey Carr  
Director of Immigration and Programs  
Legal Services NYC.

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2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Good afternoon  
3 and welcome to this meeting of the Committee on  
4 Veterans. My name is Mathieu Eugene and I Chair  
5 the Committee on Veterans. The Committee on  
6 Veterans is here today to conduct and oversight  
7 hearing on the services available for veterans  
8 after leaving the armed services to assist them in  
9 transitioning into civilian life. About 2.2  
10 million of the nation's veterans have served in  
11 the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In New York  
12 City in 2009, the estimated number of veterans  
13 between the ages of 18 and 29, those likely to  
14 have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, was 10,123.  
15 As veterans return from Iraq and Afghanistan, they  
16 meet challenges in many areas, including  
17 employment, mental health and housing. For  
18 example, for those surveyed since 2001, the 2010  
19 unemployment rate was 13.1% for those who are 25  
20 to 34 years old, and 20.9% for those 18 to 24  
21 years old. There are also growing concerns that  
22 veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan will  
23 experience mental health problems. Data from the  
24 post deployment health reassessment, which is  
25 administered to service members 90 to 120 days

1  
2 after returning from deployment, indicate that 38%  
3 of army soldiers, 31% of marines, and 41% of  
4 national guard report experiencing psychological  
5 symptom. Mental illness and unemployment are also  
6 factors that contribute to higher rates of  
7 homelessness among returning veterans. According  
8 to the RAND Center for Military Health Policy  
9 Research, nationally, homelessness among veterans  
10 is four times higher than in the general  
11 population. The government sponsored initiative  
12 to assist veteran upon their return. The federal  
13 government provides many benefits, including  
14 healthcare, funds for education, insurance and  
15 transition assistance. It also works with New  
16 York City to provide shelter for homeless  
17 veterans. New York State has a Division of  
18 Veterans Affairs to assist returning veterans in  
19 obtaining employment and housing and getting  
20 access to medical care. New York City also has a  
21 Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs, the MOVA, that  
22 assists veterans with issues including education,  
23 retraining, medical and rehabilitation services,  
24 and employment. In addition, there are private  
25 institutes and organizations that provide services

1  
2 for returning veterans. Today the Veteran's  
3 Committee will hear testimony about services  
4 available to the recently returning veterans,  
5 including services that address unemployment,  
6 mental illness and homelessness. The Committee  
7 hopes to hear testimony from veterans describing  
8 their experiences, and from service providers  
9 regarding what is needed to ensure that City's  
10 veterans receive the services they need to help  
11 them transition to the civilian life. Finally, I  
12 just want to take a moment to thank all the  
13 veterans joining us today, in today's hearing.  
14 Thank you very much all of you, for your service  
15 to your country, and all the sacrifices you have  
16 made to protect our country and preserve our  
17 values of freedom and democracy. And to each one  
18 over here also, thank you for coming.  
19 Commissioner Holliday thank you very much, it is a  
20 pleasure seeing you. And Miss, thank you very  
21 much for coming. You may start any time, please.

22 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Right, thank  
23 you. Thanks very much, sir. Good morning, good  
24 afternoon, Chairman Eugene and members of the New  
25 York City Council's Veterans Committee. My name

1  
2 is Terrence Holliday and I am the Commissioner for  
3 the Mayor's Office of Veteran's Affairs. With me  
4 today is MOVA's Military Liaison and service  
5 coordinator, Ms. Leticia Lamott [phonetic]. Thank  
6 you for the opportunity to come before you to  
7 discuss services available to New York City  
8 Veterans after leaving the armed services to  
9 assist them in transitioning to civilian life.

10 The Mayor's Office of Veteran's Affairs, MOVA, was  
11 established by Local Law 53 in 1987, and advises  
12 the Mayor on issues and initiatives impacting the  
13 veteran and military community. MOVA works  
14 closely with the United States Department of  
15 Veterans Affairs, the New York State Division of  
16 Veterans Affairs, City agencies, veterans  
17 organizations, area military commanders and other  
18 stakeholders to assist active service members,  
19 veterans, their area military commanders,  
20 dependents and survivors. MOVA is only one of a  
21 handful of city-level veterans offices in the  
22 United States. The Veteran community in New York  
23 City is extremely diverse and complex, with over  
24 207,000 veterans living within the five boroughs.  
25 The veteran community consists of those who served

1  
2 during World War II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars,  
3 Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield, Iraqi  
4 Freedom, as well as the current conflict in  
5 Afghanistan. Each veteran has concerns and issues  
6 unique to their particular experience. The  
7 current combat operations in Afghanistan and those  
8 concluded in December in Iraq, witnessed the  
9 largest mobilization of the United States Military  
10 Reserve forces since World War II. The New York  
11 National Guard and the reserve units located in  
12 the Greater New York Metropolitan Area, will  
13 present a demand for reintegration support.  
14 Reintegration is a process that is not always easy  
15 or natural. It is a process that requires time  
16 for the deployed military member to adapt to a  
17 different pace of life. The member needs to  
18 readjust from the high intensity demands and  
19 rigors of deployment, family separation, and  
20 combat engagements. Likewise, the families and  
21 employers of the returning veterans have to make  
22 reciprocal adjustment. Reintegration for the  
23 veteran family must begin long before a service  
24 member bids his or her family farewell on the  
25 tarmac or the dock. It should start during the

1  
2 pre-deployment phase and be coupled with the  
3 established Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.  
4 This program is designed to provide deploying  
5 service members and families a robust support  
6 network of information and services available from  
7 county, state, federal and private outreach  
8 organizations upon their return home. The family  
9 support centers sponsor Yellow Ribbon Programs.  
10 Employment and workplace return are significant  
11 issues addressed at these events. Yellow Ribbon  
12 events are held at 30- and 60-day intervals  
13 subsequent to a unit's return to home station.  
14 Family support programs are--also host pre-  
15 deployment events. Members are required to attend  
16 and encouraged to bring their families. These  
17 events are held at non-military family-friendly  
18 venues. In 2011, MOVA participated in Yellow  
19 Ribbon events hosted by the New York National  
20 Guard, the United States Naval Reserve and the  
21 United States Marine Corps. Approximately 1,500  
22 New York City residents and their families were  
23 served. The next Yellow Ribbon events are  
24 scheduled for June 2012. MOVA's presence at these  
25 events is to inform and reassure New York City

1 residents of the services available and the  
2 constituent services role that MOVA is prepared to  
3 fill. The response by members and families has  
4 been positive. MOVA undertakes projects to bring  
5 awareness of benefits and services available to  
6 the new generation of veterans returning from  
7 deployments from combat in hostile areas of the  
8 world. MOVA partners with city agencies, non-  
9 profit and not-for-profit organizations to promote  
10 services available to veterans in the employment,  
11 housing, mental health and education fields, and  
12 to facilitate civilian transition. MOVA's  
13 partnership with America's Works has been  
14 successful in assisting veterans with employment  
15 training, housing for homeless veterans and access  
16 to public benefits. America Works has placed over  
17 400 veterans into employment since their program  
18 began in December 2008. On January 19th, 2012,  
19 MOVA hosted an America Works job fair at Veterans  
20 Memorial Hall that was attended by more than 550  
21 veterans as well as a number of vendors. And I  
22 should say employers. The MOVA website provides  
23 information about federal, state and city  
24 benefits, specific events, job opportunities and  
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2 other information relevant to the veterans  
3 community. As a constituent services agency, MOVA  
4 provides advocacy, referral and short-term case  
5 management services in an effort to ensure that  
6 veterans, including those who choose not to access  
7 VA services, are not aware of their VA  
8 entitlements, or are ineligible to receive VA  
9 benefits, have access to New York City health,  
10 mental health, and social services. Veterans may  
11 reach MOVA directly via the NYC.gov website, phone  
12 or mail, or are also referred by 311 and other  
13 veterans service providers. MOVA has an active  
14 and informative social media presence on facebook  
15 and twitter, with accounts that are frequently  
16 updated. MOVA often operates as a conduit and  
17 coordinator for veterans in need of the many  
18 services provided throughout the city. For  
19 instance, MOVA works very closely with the  
20 Department of Homeless Services, DHS, in creating  
21 short-term and permanent housing specifically  
22 tailored to the unique needs of veterans and their  
23 families. DHS, in partnership with the Veterans  
24 Administration, established a multi-service  
25 center, an MSC, at the Project Torch facility in

1  
2 Brooklyn. At this one location, veterans can  
3 access their federal benefits, obtain homeless  
4 services, and receive an education and employment  
5 assessment to ascertain whether adult education is  
6 needed, and to determine skill level for job  
7 placement. In operation since May 2008, the MSC  
8 has proudly served homeless veterans and assisted  
9 them to move into permanent housing with federal  
10 HUD VASH Section 8 vouchers, which pair rental  
11 subsidies and VA services. These come from single  
12 adult, family, and adult family services--  
13 facilities, excuse me--or are connected to street  
14 outreach. Veterans not eligible or found  
15 inappropriate for HUD VASH are referred to veteran  
16 supportive housing as well as other appropriate  
17 housing. Veterans are able to avail themselves of  
18 a host of HRA services through the HRA center  
19 located on site at the MWR. Similarly,  
20 development of veterans-only short-term housing is  
21 now complete with the opening of a new facility by  
22 the Doe Fund Veterans Program. Veterans at this  
23 facility spend 9 to 12 months in a supervised  
24 residential work program, and receive life skills  
25 and job preparation classes, on site adult

1 education, GED preparation and computer classes.  
2 Many of the veterans in the program also are in  
3 the DOE Fund's Ready Willing and Able Program,  
4 which focuses on job training and placement into  
5 permanent housing. These programs are designed to  
6 provide housing, but in providing these social  
7 services, veterans are receiving much-needed job  
8 training, and placement, thus ensuring that the  
9 cycle of veteran homelessness ends. New York City  
10 veterans may have posttraumatic stress disorder,  
11 traumatic brain injury, and military sexual  
12 assault diagnosis, which will require mental  
13 health services to facilitate their transition to  
14 normalcy. MOVA refers veterans to mental health  
15 and mental health care providers to address these  
16 issues. The US Department of Veterans Affairs,  
17 the New York City Department of Health and Mental  
18 Hygiene, and the Rosen Family Wellness for Law  
19 Enforcement, Military Personnel and their  
20 Families, the Weil-McLain College coordinates a  
21 DOD funded program to work with service members  
22 suffering from PTSD. Weill Cornell developed  
23 tele-medicine treatment providing services to  
24 members in remote areas of the state and country.  
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2 Some of the many New York City resources available  
3 to veterans are, the Veterans Courts in Queens and  
4 Kings County, helping veterans to survive non-  
5 violent criminal charges; City Bar Justice  
6 provides free legal assistance for qualified  
7 veterans needing assistance with VA benefits  
8 claims; Family Justice Centers provide legal  
9 assistance to veterans with foreclosures and other  
10 legal issues; the City University of New York;  
11 Human Resources Administration, with a one-shot  
12 deal food stamps and Medicaid; the Department of  
13 Homeless Services, particularly Project Torch; the  
14 small business services and Workforce One;  
15 Consumer Affairs vendors license; the DCAS for  
16 City employees, where we talk about the extended  
17 military buyback program; the Department of  
18 Finance with property tax exemptions; motor  
19 vehicle, with disabled parking permits and  
20 registration fee waivers when qualified. But most  
21 importantly, the Uniform Services Employment and  
22 Re-employment Act, New York Department of Labor -  
23 - for returning service members. I must add,  
24 that's federal, that's not New York City. It is  
25 important to note that addressing the issues

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2 associated with reintegration, such as potential  
3 unemployment, must begin when a member of the  
4 military receives deployment notification. The  
5 earlier the member begins to think about  
6 deployment and redeployment, the smoother the  
7 transition from military to civilian life will be  
8 for the individual, the family and the society to  
9 which he or she returns. With the approval of  
10 local command authority, updates of available  
11 benefits can be provided as part of military  
12 ancillary training, which is received and  
13 coordinated by the unit. I will be participating  
14 in that training for the reserve units in the area  
15 by agreement with the commanders. I look forward  
16 to continued dialogue with the veterans  
17 organizations, the military community, and their  
18 families, in ensuring that they receive the  
19 services and respect that they have earned. I  
20 look forward to working with you in the future.  
21 Thanks for the opportunity to testify.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
23 much, Commissioner. Let me mention that--I forgot  
24 to acknowledge Council Member Gentile, who is also  
25 a very strong advocate for veterans. He's doing a

1  
2 wonderful job. He's a big asset for me, you know.  
3 Thank you, Council Member Gentile, for everything  
4 that you're doing for the veterans. Thank you  
5 very much. Thank you, Commissioner for your  
6 testimony.

7 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Sure.

8 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Reintegration  
9 is a process that is not always easy or natural.  
10 It is a process that requires time for the  
11 deployed returning member to adapt to a different  
12 pace of life. And you said also, likewise, for  
13 the family and employer of the returning veteran  
14 have to make reciprocal adjustments. Could you  
15 tell us what MOVA is doing to facilitate and to  
16 help the veterans, the returning veterans, to go  
17 through this process?

18 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: MOVA is a  
19 constituent service. We try to match people up  
20 where we can with various programs. In this area,  
21 our greatest opportunity is with the reservists  
22 who are returning. So what we want to make  
23 certain is that those reservists, when they are  
24 getting ready to deploy, the reservists and the  
25 families understand what benefits are available

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2 for them, what services are available to them, so  
3 that in the event that something happens while  
4 they're deployed, their family has some recourse  
5 other than trying to reach out to the family  
6 member who may be some place in Afghanistan. So,  
7 what we try to do at MOVA is if someone calls us  
8 and says, hey, they're foreclosing on my house,  
9 I'm a veteran, what can you do for me? We try to  
10 get them to the right place. What we also do--  
11 when I mentioned USERA, USERA is the biggest tool.  
12 That's the Uniformed Servicemen's Employment  
13 Reemployment Act. It's important that those  
14 protections are very well understood by all of the  
15 reservists, or at least someone acting on that  
16 reservist's behalf, so that the job that they  
17 left, the job will be there when they come back,  
18 that they're not denied, they haven't denied  
19 promotions, they haven't been denied contributions  
20 to retirement funds, those types of things. So,  
21 it's important that they know these things.  
22 Sometimes we'll step in and make sure they have  
23 this information, they know where to go to file  
24 that claim, and what to do. When the reservists  
25 come back, it's important to note that the

1  
2 reintegration takes place in three steps. When a  
3 reserve unit, actually anybody who is returning  
4 home, they go through this. They'll have  
5 something that they call a honeymoon period where  
6 everybody gets together, they haven't seen each  
7 other in a long time. And about 30 days or so  
8 afterwards, reality again begins to sink in that  
9 before they left on deployment, whether that  
10 individual is active duty or reservists, the  
11 things that were going good are probably still  
12 going good or need to be tinkered with; things  
13 that were going bad, whether it's in a  
14 relationship or job or something else, are still  
15 going bad. Okay? At the 60-day level, that's  
16 where MOVA and a lot of these other agencies get  
17 involved. So we showed up, I was in Uniondale,  
18 NY, I was up in Tarrytown. We were meeting, like,  
19 these National Guard folks, and they have an  
20 opportunity to meet a lot of these profit, not-  
21 for-profit, and non-profit agencies that can help  
22 them. They have these family support offices that  
23 direct the flow of traffic so that people who need  
24 help, you know, get that help. And about 90 days  
25 after, at the 90th day, the only people who are

1  
2 involved in that are the mental health folks, and  
3 no one like MOVA or anyone else is involved in  
4 that. So, where we can, we direct the traffic.  
5 We've had situations, we've had about three  
6 situations that have come to us where people have  
7 been charged; they've either gone through the  
8 arraignment process or they're on their way to  
9 going through the arraignment process, for charges  
10 that probably could be resolved in the Veterans  
11 Courts. And we reached out directly to the  
12 Veterans Court in Queens, in both instances, and  
13 we were able to keep that person out of the  
14 criminal justice system. So, we're doing things  
15 individually, but we're also providing information  
16 to large groups of people when we're going out to  
17 talk to them about that.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Could you tell  
19 us, I don't know if you keep the records, how many  
20 veterans MOVA has assisted going through the  
21 process of reintegration? How many veterans? Do  
22 you have the number of veterans that benefit from  
23 that program?

24 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Sir, we don't  
25 have a number on that. The only thing that I can

1  
2 tell you is that the reintegration process is  
3 something that's new to the military. Now, we  
4 have records on a number of things, but what we're  
5 doing at this point is that we're reaching out to  
6 provide the information to tell people where to  
7 go. And in some instances they'll reach back to  
8 us and say we need some assistance. So, I guess  
9 I'm really talking about the troops who are  
10 deploying, who were deployed to Iraq and came  
11 back, the troops who were deployed to Afghanistan  
12 and are still going out, what we're doing is  
13 supplying that information to them. So, the  
14 numbers that we would have would be raw numbers,  
15 and it would be basically in information that  
16 we're providing to them. And the only way that we  
17 would track it is if they got back to us, say by  
18 the way, I need your help. Something along those  
19 lines. We can go through it. We have a  
20 constituent basis--database--that we can go back  
21 and take a look at it. I don't know that we've  
22 broken it out that fine.

23 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So that means  
24 you don't keep the records when a veteran goes to  
25 MOVA and says I want assistance with respect to

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2 reintegration? You determine, identify veterans  
3 who may need assistance to be reintegrated; you  
4 don't keep--

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TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: [Interposing]

6 We will identify it. We identify everybody, but  
7 we'll identify the type of assistance that we're  
8 giving, but our records reflect a veteran--we can  
9 categorize some of them, between World War II,  
10 whether it's Iraq or, you know, whatever; but when  
11 we talk about the reintegration, I think  
12 reintegration has much more of an impact right  
13 now, about the 18 to 29-year-olds who are coming  
14 back from Iraq and Afghanistan, and are coming  
15 back into the system. When we talk about  
16 reintegration, because I believe reintegration is  
17 a somewhat more refined definition today to the  
18 military than it was when I was in Saudi Arabia  
19 and I came back. All right? So we can do it on a  
20 case-by-case and we can do it by subject; I don't  
21 think we have--we don't have a category of  
22 reintegration.

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I see. But

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how do you quantify or evaluation if the

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reintegration process or the technique, whatever

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you're doing through MOVA--

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: [Interposing]

Right.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --to assist

those veterans, how do you qualify that the process is correct or effective?

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Well, we close out. On everything that we do, we close out our records, okay? So we will close it out. If someone is having a housing problem, we'll go ahead and take care of it, and at that point we'll close it out. I don't know that I'm making myself clear, but it's just that we don't have a specific--we have not categorized anything specifically that, yes, this has to do with reintegration. You know, we help of the people, of the 550 or so vets that participated in the Veterans Work Fare that we had on January 19th, I would assume that--because we took everybody, all of the vets who came in, and if these were veterans who were seeking a better job, okay, or if they were veterans who were just coming back and looking for a job that they lost while they were deployed, well, they would be reintegration

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2 and the other ones wouldn't, but we would all lump  
3 them together in terms of the job search process.  
4 So, maybe what we can do is make certain that we  
5 fine tune that a little bit.

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You mentioned  
that reintegration process is a new system to  
military. How new is it? How new is  
reintegration? How many years since it has been  
integrated?

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TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: I can't tell  
you specifically, but I do believe that they have  
begun to refine the process. When you take a look  
at this Yellow Ribbon program, I would have to go  
back and I can tell you this, when they began to  
start the Yellow Ribbon Program, I would say that  
as we began to get more involved in Afghanistan  
and Iraq and the longer the period was in, I think  
that's probably when you began to see it, because  
you're having military troops, reservists, and  
active duty personnel who were in multiple  
deployments, and that's taking its toll on a  
number of other issues within the social life of a  
family. And the military began to realize that  
they had to really work on that. And I'm going to

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2 say that that probably happened within like the  
3 last five years or so, five to seven years.

4 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Before I ask  
5 my next question, I just want to mention that we  
6 have been joined by Council Member Al Vann. You  
7 mentioned in your testimony also that family  
8 support program also hosts pre-deployment events.  
9 Members are required to attend and encouraged to  
10 bring their families. Could you give us a little  
11 bit more details about those events? What exactly  
12 do you provide through those events?

13 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Well, yes, sir.  
14 The Yellow Ribbon, it comes under the banner of  
15 Yellow Ribbon. And what they do is--pre-  
16 deployment means you're getting ready to go  
17 someplace. Your unit is getting ready to go or  
18 you as an individual military member, you're  
19 getting ready to go. Now, previously when a  
20 military member was getting ready to deploy, let's  
21 even say going back to Gulf I, you did it by  
22 yourself, you did it with your unit. Okay, and  
23 the things you took care of were your Will; okay,  
24 you took care of your Will, you made certain that  
25 your insurances were in order, that the correct

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2 beneficiaries were there; if there were forms that  
3 had to be completed they were taken care of. If  
4 you had to leave a Power of Attorney with someone,  
5 if you were a single parent you had to make  
6 certain that the children--that the children that  
7 you had taken care of were--so you would go  
8 through this whole litany of things. Today in  
9 these Yellow Ribbons, they bring everyone in, and  
10 they have about two days of briefing from their  
11 command, you know, basically thanking them for  
12 their services, telling them what they can expect,  
13 telling them what their job is going to be like,  
14 and that doesn't involve anyone like MOVA. And  
15 then by the second day, they bring in a number of  
16 other agencies. Okay, so by this time the family--  
17 the family is encouraged to be a part of all of  
18 this, so the family is now beginning to understand  
19 more--most importantly, how much that person is  
20 making. That person may have a white-collar job  
21 outside, a white-collar job in industry and may be  
22 making, let's say \$50,000 a year. But they're  
23 going on active duty as a non-commissioned  
24 officer, maybe making \$30,000. Okay, so now they  
25 know there's a difference, so now they begin to

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2 understand that there are things that they have to  
3 pay attention to. If you're a New York City  
4 employee, we have something called an extended  
5 military buy back. Okay. So the family now knows  
6 that they've got to get this thing in the works.  
7 Even if you're not a city employee, a lot of  
8 employers will pay the difference between what  
9 you're making in the military and what you're  
10 making on the outside. So, the family begins to  
11 understand these. So, that gives them an  
12 opportunity to add up everything that they've got  
13 coming in, in terms of revenue, and at that point  
14 they may be able to understand, you know, this  
15 three-bedroom apartment that we have down here in  
16 Battery City Park, we may not be able to pay that  
17 with this. You know? So then they can go to New  
18 York City agencies and stuff like that to begin  
19 getting some help. So it gives them, in pre-  
20 deployment, it gives them an opportunity to find  
21 out where they are. Because remember, after that  
22 pre-deployment, some 30, 60 days after that, the  
23 member is going to be someplace. Today it's  
24 Afghanistan or the horn of Africa. Okay? They're  
25 gone, and you might be able to get them on Skype

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2 or you might be able to get them on email, but you  
3 can't get them for these other things. So, it  
4 gives them an opportunity to really understand  
5 what they have. And I'll just give you--just one  
6 other thing. There's something called the  
7 Servicemen's Group Life Insurance, okay? And  
8 you've probably all had questions about this. But  
9 with the Servicemen's Group Life Insurance,  
10 whomever you place as the primary beneficiary,  
11 that person gets the money. So, you're in love.  
12 You put a boyfriend or girlfriend on there and you  
13 forget about it. Ten years later, you get  
14 married. You know who gets the money? The  
15 boyfriend or girlfriend. Okay? And I believe  
16 that it's \$600,000 that you can get right now.  
17 And there are plenty of cases. Okay, now you've  
18 got a family, you've got a mother--okay--you've  
19 got a spouse back home with two or three kids,  
20 somebody gets killed--whether it's in combat or  
21 non-combat--and the government has got a check for  
22 \$600,000. Okay? And somebody, the wrong person's  
23 name is on that. So you're going to have to get a  
24 really good-hearted person who's going to say, let  
25 me sign this check for \$600,000 over to you.

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2 Chances are it doesn't happen that way. So that  
3 gives you at pre-deployment an opportunity for the  
4 person that you're leaving behind to take a look  
5 at this thing and say, you've got the wrong  
6 beneficiary on there, would you change it before  
7 you get on that plane? That's what pre-deployment  
8 does for you.

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You know, you  
10 mentioned about--you have been talking about the  
11 legal preparation of the veteran before they  
12 deploy.

13 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

14 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And I believe  
15 they have been prepared physically also; that I  
16 have no doubt about. What about the mental  
17 preparation? You know, to let the veterans know  
18 what they're going through. Is there any  
19 evaluation to ensure that they are prepared to  
20 face the challenges they are going to face during  
21 the war, and to let them know also all the detail  
22 and the challenges and the toughness of the job  
23 that they are going to do in terms of mental  
24 preparation of the individual?

25 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Sir, I can't

1  
2 speak to that. But what I can say to you is that  
3 during Gulf War I, I was assigned to a KC 135  
4 unit, a tanker unit. All right? And we knew we  
5 were going to war. All right? They got the  
6 operation unit together, and these were these big  
7 planes, these KC 135s, that refuel our aircraft.  
8 And that gives us a tremendous reach militarily.  
9 We got all these people together. They were  
10 national guardsmen out of New Jersey, and we were  
11 already flying missions. Okay? We were flying  
12 missions over there, but now you're talking about  
13 January--you're talking about January 1991,  
14 commander got up and said, listen, before we go on  
15 this, they're expecting to get 40% casualties in  
16 us. Okay? You shoot one of those planes down and  
17 you limit our combat reality. Two people went to  
18 the commander--three people went to the commander  
19 afterwards and begged out. Everybody else was for  
20 it. Now, I'm not saying that's the same in every  
21 case. Okay? But people are trained, they're  
22 ready to go, and by the time they're ready to go  
23 and do what you have to do, you assume that they  
24 are. And you don't know until it happens. But I  
25 can't speak, I really can't speak to that. I

1  
2 assume that if they're putting a weapon in  
3 somebody's hands or they're sending them some  
4 place they understand the mission. Okay? Because  
5 they get briefings that we don't get. All right?  
6 They know--like those SEALs, they knew what was  
7 happening. All right? So they get these  
8 briefings that we don't get, and you assume that  
9 they're prepared and ready to handle it. But  
10 something happens and maybe they can't. I don't  
11 know, but that's just an opinion. Sorry.

12 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay, thank  
13 you very much. We have been joined by Council  
14 Member James Sanders. I want to recognize Council  
15 Member Vincent Gentile for some questions.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you,  
17 Mr. Chairman. Thank you so much for you and your  
18 staff organizing this important hearing and this  
19 Committee meeting today, given the fact of the  
20 number of returning veterans that we will have  
21 here in New York City. Commissioner, I had a  
22 question. You mentioned in your remarks, you  
23 talked about Reservists, you talked about National  
24 Guard and the active military members. I'm just  
25 unclear, is there a different education process

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for each of those groups in terms of what's available to them and what they can ask for when they get back?

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Sir, what we do is we reach out--I reach out to New York City residents. I try to identify within those communities that we talked about, who are likely to be New York City residents. Now, when I went up to Tarrytown, NY, I got a number of reservists, New York National Guard People, because they all come from different units and they form one big unit. So, if they come from Westchester, Broome, or Greene County or stuff like that. I just tell them, like, who I am from New York City. They don't need that little pamphlet that I gave you, but we give them some other things for the veterans, for the VA and stuff, that's very generic. So I just tell them, like, look, this is what we do in New York City, but when you go to the VA, the State, there are some other organizations that you can reach out to. I just provide that information to them, and it's helpful to them but I focus on New York City. I focus on the New York City residents, but I don't ignore--

1  
2 in fact I even--the people who even live--what I  
3 also do, okay, is that if I see somebody with  
4 stripes, a lot of stripes and a star, meaning  
5 they're a First Sergeant or, like, a little bit of  
6 a wreath, which means they're a Command Sergeant  
7 Major, or if I find somebody that has some rank, I  
8 say, do me a favor, take this card for me; because  
9 you're going to run into a situation where some  
10 young man or young woman may need some mentoring  
11 or some help while you're overseas, and you just  
12 might--okay, and if it it's a New York City  
13 resident, please reach out to me. So they were  
14 giving my cards to their wives to put up on their  
15 refrigerators and stuff like that. So, I don't  
16 forget them. The level of training that they  
17 have, whether it's active Guard--they get the same  
18 amount of training. Okay? The level of intensity  
19 on a day-to-day basis depends upon what your  
20 orders are. Military is going to get it every  
21 day. The Reserves, every once in a while, but  
22 they train to the same standards. You know, but  
23 that's it.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: So, it  
25 sounds to me somewhat dependent upon your efforts,

1  
2 which have been excellent. But it seems to me  
3 somewhat dependent upon your efforts to get the  
4 word out there to whether it be National Guard,  
5 Reservists, about the existence of MOVA and what  
6 MOVA can do for those people. There's no  
7 systematic way that these military men and women  
8 know about what MOVA has to offer them?

9 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Other than  
10 inviting them to take a look at our website and  
11 facebook... We pump a lot of information out there.  
12 And just by letting folks know who we are and  
13 where to look, it's sort of like you can lead a  
14 horse to water, but you can't make it drink. The  
15 commanders for the National Guard, the Commander  
16 for the 6th Com at Floyd Bennett Field, the Navy  
17 up in the Bronx, and I even went out to  
18 Farmingdale to the Naval Reserve Center, and I  
19 will be taking about five minutes on the  
20 Commanders' programs, it's called Ancillary  
21 programs where they talk about, you know, don't  
22 drink while you drive, wear your seatbelt, here's  
23 somebody from the Mayor's Office of Veterans  
24 Affairs, they'd like to speak to you for about  
25 five minutes. So you know, we'll just get that

1  
2 information out there. And we will try to keep  
3 getting the information out, but in terms of a  
4 systematic way, I think if we keep--and we keep  
5 sending things out to these veterans service  
6 organizations as well too. We cannot forget,  
7 Chairman Eugene sort of mentioned it in his  
8 remarks, but we can't forget the contributions  
9 that these veterans service organizations make  
10 that are out there--the IAVA, the Iran Iraq  
11 Veterans Association, the Catholic War Veterans,  
12 the American Legion, you know Jewish War Veterans.  
13 There are a bunch of them out there and you can  
14 always go to a national website to begin filtering  
15 down and doing something. But to find something  
16 locally--but if you come back locally, sometimes  
17 it's like you need a cup of coffee with somebody  
18 who's walked that way once before. And that's  
19 what those organizations can do very well for you.  
20 So, it's not necessarily talking about MOVA, it's  
21 making certain people understand that there are  
22 things available, just ask the question, and  
23 somehow you'll get the answer.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Now you  
25 mentioned the Yellow--it's called the Yellow

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Ribbon Programs.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, Sir.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Run by the Family Support Centers. Now, who sponsored that?

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Now, the ones that I generally do--DOD, I'm sorry.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Oh, it's DOD.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yeah, the Department of Defense does it. The ones that I have been dealing with that I found very effective are the New York National Guard, because that's my market in this area. The market in my area, the New York National Guardsmen, who are deploying. There's a--I don't know that they call it the Yellow Ribbon at the 6th Com--6th Communications Battalion--over in Floyd Bennett, but I deal directly with the person who administers that. So, I get phone calls from the Commander that say hey, we've got a plane that's coming in, I just found out at 2:00 in the morning at JFK, do you want to meet them? I didn't meet that one, but I met other ones. Okay? But the thing is, the people who deal directly with the people who need

1  
2 help know how to get us. Okay? And then with the  
3 Navy, I just deal directly with the Commander up  
4 in--the Commander and the XO up--the Executive  
5 Officer--with the Navy. I make certain that their  
6 people know about jobs, okay, because Reservists  
7 only work there two days out of the months for the  
8 most part, so they're still looking for jobs. I  
9 make certain that they know about their jobs and  
10 the benefits, but the people that administer to  
11 those programs know how to get us and help us in  
12 getting the word out. Now the Yellow Ribbon  
13 program, the Yellow Ribbon program is a DOD  
14 program, so the programs that I may be dealing  
15 with with the Marines and the Navy may be Yellow  
16 Ribbon, I don't know. Or, they just may be like a  
17 personnel type thing.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Now, how  
19 does an ancillary group, an outside group, a non-  
20 profit group, get into that Yellow Ribbon Program  
21 so that veterans would have that access, people  
22 would know through this Yellow Ribbon program that  
23 here are the lists of organizations that can be  
24 helpful to you?

25 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Sir, I can send

1  
2 you the contact number for the folks that I deal  
3 with, but what you also have to do is, you have  
4 to--I believe, I'm sure there's a vetting process.  
5 Because what you have to do is reach out to them  
6 and say, look, we want to participate in the 60-  
7 day program that afternoon, setting up a table  
8 with information, do whatever; they want to make  
9 certain that you're as good as you can be. Okay?  
10 Some of the problems that we're running into--not  
11 running into--well, it's a problem. It's out  
12 there now. New York City, we're working with the  
13 Consumer Bureau--the name escapes me right now,  
14 but we're talking about predatory colleges where  
15 they get people to sign up for these degrees that  
16 don't mean anything. Okay? And then they tap  
17 into veterans benefits and stuff like that too.  
18 So, they want to make certain on the family  
19 support side, say, the New York National Guard  
20 Family Support people want to make certain that  
21 these are organizations that add quality to the  
22 lives of their returning service members. So,  
23 what I will send to you is the link and the  
24 contact to the New York National Guard people and  
25 I believe--I just told them whatever I needed to

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2 do and they asked me who I was. And I told them  
3 that and they said you can show up. So, I have to  
4 have their approval to be there, and they have  
5 certain rules that say you can't sell things, you  
6 can't do certain things. But as long as you're  
7 providing information about services and whatever,  
8 you can go ahead and do it. And the ones that  
9 I've been to I've seen 25, 30 different  
10 organizations up there too.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: And that's  
12 the 30-day program?

13 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: 60-day.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: 60-day  
15 program.

16 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: 60 days, yeah.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right.

18 Now, you also mentioned the Doe Veterans--Doe Fund  
19 Veterans program and several others, and they talk  
20 about GED preparation and computer classes. So,  
21 it seems that there are a number of programs  
22 available to those coming back who might need the  
23 GED prep or the computer class or the homeless  
24 services. But, I'm curious about the veteran who  
25 has certain skills or may have acquired certain

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2 skills while still in the military. Are there  
3 services that we know of now that try to integrate  
4 what the--if someone is of a higher skill level or  
5 has gained certain skills in the military, to find  
6 that person some type of employment?

7

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: You know, I'd  
8 like to have Ms. Lamott Answer some of that, but  
9 let me just say that we partner with a number of  
10 organizations that I like to take it simple--I  
11 like to look at it very simply; this is a person  
12 who comes back from a deployment, whether it's a  
13 combat deployment, non-combat--the person just  
14 needs a job. Let's say they don't need a house,  
15 they don't need housing. So, we can connect them  
16 with certain organizations and they go for  
17 themselves. There are some other things that we  
18 do where we have people--we put jobs on our  
19 facebook site. Okay? And what we do is we take  
20 MOVA out of being the middleman, and we will post  
21 the job and just say go directly to the employer.  
22 Okay? So, just some things. Go ahead.

23

LETICIA LAMOTT: Yes. Also, the  
24 Department of Labor was set up with Workforce One,  
25 that, you know, deal directly with the veteran.

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2 And, like again, these skills that you have  
3 mentioned could place our veterans. They assess  
4 them and place them with jobs that fit their  
5 skills. Also, with résumé building and being able  
6 to transfer military life to civilian life. So,  
7 the Department of Labor is great for that. Also,  
8 our connection with the community with  
9 corporations like Chase Bank and Citi Bank and  
10 Verizon, they always send us information on jobs  
11 that they have available for our veterans that are  
12 ready to go into the civilian workforce. And we  
13 connect, especially with our constituents; we  
14 connect the constituent to the jobs.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: And  
16 that's, I think, a good thing. I'm just curious,  
17 because there is an organization that you'll hear  
18 from--and hopefully you can stay--it's called  
19 Heroes to Heroes. You'll hear them.

20 LETICIA LAMOTT: Yes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: And they  
22 actually take the skills of, well, I'll let them  
23 explain it, but it's trying to use the skills  
24 gained in the military and apply that in civilian  
25 life. Other than that group that I've heard

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2 about, is there any kind of organization that does  
3 that, takes skills that someone may have gained in  
4 the military and apply that to civilian life in a  
5 job situation?

6 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Well, yes, sir,  
7 there are. Well, the Veterans on Wall Street does  
8 it. There are a number of other organizations  
9 that do something very similar. Some may do it  
10 better than others or not. But everyone  
11 understands that commanding a squad someplace in a  
12 hostile environment is probably not that much  
13 unlike supervising a line at a factory, or  
14 providing direction, providing direction and  
15 supervision and making certain that a particular  
16 profit unit is making profit or whatever. So,  
17 it's just a question of translating those skills.  
18 There are a number of folks who do it. The  
19 Department of Labor, I believe, does that for us.  
20 America Works does that for us. It's a whole--  
21 they all sit down and do it, so there are a  
22 number--

23 LETICIA LAMOTT: [Interposing]

24 FDNY.

25 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: FDNY. So there

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2 are just a number of people who take a look at  
3 that. I think if we broaden that a little bit, I  
4 think everybody benefits from that. But there are  
5 just a number of other--there are a number of  
6 other employers that do that. And I think that as  
7 we begin to see more people coming back,  
8 particularly when we see this draw down--there's a  
9 draw down coming up and we're going to begin to  
10 see those numbers in about 15 months. So, I think  
11 we probably need to become more understanding of  
12 those military skills, military to civilian  
13 skills. And I think people are understanding that  
14 now. But, you know, we can always do a better  
15 job.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right.  
17 And I think the military to civilian skills,  
18 especially those at the level you mentioned--those  
19 who have commanded units, those who have been in  
20 positions of supervisory type positions in the  
21 military--really need, I think, some attention as  
22 to how those skills match or can be translated  
23 into civilian life. So, hopefully we'll expand on  
24 that too.

25 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, thank you.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you for your--thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you. Thank you, Council Member Gentile. Before I ask my next question, let me mention also we have been joined by Council Member Greenfield. He had to leave because he has another hearing, and also I want to take the opportunity to thank Barbara, the Counsel, for the wonderful job, you know, that she's doing to make this happen also. And also Robert Cornegy, the Policy Analyst, and my staff Jonah Rudolph [phonetic]. They have been working very hard on that. Before I recognize, you know, Council Member Vann, I just have to ask the Commissioner one question. We know, and Council Member Gentile mentioned it, the veterans that developed skills and knowledge, you know, that can be used in the civilian life, but is there any issue also because they are veterans, any situation or any issue that could prevent them also to have jobs? Just because they are veterans? Is there anything that can, you know, prevent somebody to hire them just because they are veterans?

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2 LETICIA LAMOTT: Well, mainly the  
3 stigma of PTSD. We've seen that in the last years  
4 that I've been working at MOVA, the stigma of PTSD  
5 and brain injuries--normally when a veteran comes  
6 home, employers, the first thing they thing is,  
7 oh, they're coming home with some issues. And so  
8 we've seen cases where veterans did not get hired  
9 just strictly because they are veterans. And with  
10 MOVA providing education to employees and the  
11 veteran, I think--especially with the City; the  
12 Mayor had adopted Executive Order 110, which has  
13 each agency had to select an agency liaison that  
14 assists MOVA with veteran needs, whether they're  
15 employees or constituents. And our job with these  
16 veteran liaisons is to pass our information,  
17 information such as stigmas in regards to veterans  
18 coming home, and providing a gentler environment,  
19 again, for reintegration, and passing out  
20 information for our families. So, that might be  
21 instances where veterans might not get hired;  
22 there's just a stigma of them coming home and  
23 having issues.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So you do  
25 address that issue.

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LETICIA LAMOTT: Oh, absolutely.

Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Providing information to the employers and also to the veteran.

LETICIA LAMOTT: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you. You answered my second question also.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: We had a training where we brought in the Department of Labor where we had USERA classes, and we did it I think in November or December. It was November, I think. And but we basically opened it up for the agencies, the New York City agencies. And we're planning to do it again--we were trying to do it in March, and it still might, but it's either going to happen in March or April. We're going to do a USERA training, and what we're doing is reaching out to like a lot of the other employers who have been reaching out to us, and attending some of these job fairs, to have the USERA training, so that they understand the benefits of returning vets. So, that's like a little bit of a service that's not costing me anything except in

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2 doughnuts, probably, to come in to get this  
3 training, so they understand how returning  
4 veterans and how military service folks will have  
5 an opportunity to come work for them, come back to  
6 their jobs and do whatever, and all they're doing  
7 is obeying the law. So we'll let you know about  
8 that as well. And we did it. It was about a two-  
9 hour class from the Department of Labor, and  
10 people absolutely--they liked it, they went back,  
11 and it was a very positive thing, so it will be  
12 pretty much the same thing.

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
14 much. I want to recognize Council Member Al Vann  
15 for some questions.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Thank you,  
17 Mr. Chairman. Yeah, very briefly, just basic  
18 fundamental understanding of things, I guess I  
19 should know and other should know. If a New  
20 Yorker is in reserve, for instance, and his unit  
21 is activated and he or she goes into a war zone,  
22 whatever--and or if a person is employed in New  
23 York and out of patriotism they join one of the  
24 branches and they go into military service and go  
25 to war and then they come back, what does the law

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provide for them in terms of being able to reclaim the position, the jobs that they had before they left, or is there such a...?

LETICIA LAMOTT: Yes, that's USERA. We spoke briefly, the Commissioner spoke briefly about that. It's the Uniformed Service Employment Reemployment Act. And it has specific guidelines on the reintegration of a veteran coming home from deployment. And yes, their position is supposed to be held. And also, if there was any type of promotion, the veteran is entitled to those promotions also.

COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: So, if I had a job, whether with a private entity or the City, doesn't matter, and the situation you just explained, when I come back, whatever promotions were made, whatever I have that job and whatever promotions have occurred during the period of time I was away.

LETICIA LAMOTT: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: That's whether I went to war or not? Is this only during a wartime veteran?

LETICIA LAMOTT: No.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Peacetime

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veteran as well?

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LETICIA LAMOTT: Absolutely.

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TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: And sir, not

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to--I'd have to go back and check on this. The

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size of the company has something to do with it as

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well, too. So, I think companies under, say, 25

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persons, may not necessarily fall within all of

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the aspects of USERA, but generally if you leave a

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job that job should be there when you come back,

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and if you got raises in between, okay, you're

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supposed to get those raises. You also have an

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opportunity to make contributions to a 401k when

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you're gone.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Right.

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TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: And the company

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is supposed to spell that out. There's another

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issue that you probably deal with every day, and

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you know, your staff does, that if you're a

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reservist and you have your weekend duty or--no

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one can force you to take--you can take leave

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without pay to complete that duty, but they cannot

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force you to take your annual leave or your

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vacation to do that. And they cannot deny you an

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opportunity to comply with the orders to attend a drill or do something else.

COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Right.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Those are very basic things in USERA that people just don't understand.

LETICIA LAMOTT: All of that is regulated through the Department of Labor. If you have any questions, you always can go to their website, and they have a posting of USERA regulations.

COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Right. Are there still any preferences for veterans if they take exams for city jobs and so forth, fire department, police department, whatever? As a veteran, are there any preferences on the exam still? Or is that something of the past?

LETICIA LAMOTT: Yes. There's still the five point and the ten-point preference. Ten-point preference would be for those that are disabled, and the five point--you know, there's stipulations--if you was in a theater of war and what theater you was in, but yes, they are still afforded to our veterans.

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2 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: I also believe  
3 that--not also believe--effective March 3rd, I  
4 might be off by a day or so, we're going to have a  
5 one-time fee waiver for veterans taking civil  
6 service exam.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Oh. Go get  
8 Burkhart. Unemployment, pretty high, even though  
9 we are seeing some changes; the economy seems to  
10 bet getting better and unemployment is less. But,  
11 by and large, is unemployment among veterans the  
12 same as general unemployment population?

13 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: No, sir.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Greater than?  
15 Do you have some...?

16 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: It's greater.  
17 Unemployment for veterans is greater. I think--  
18 okay. I think veterans unemployment is running in  
19 the New York City area about 4% higher than we  
20 have, than our national average. But there was a  
21 rate--what do we have on that? It's 4%.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: How about the  
23 citywide average?

24 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: It's like 4%,  
25 but--for ages 18 to 29 you had a much higher

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percent. Okay? I saw that in some of the literature that we have. I just don't have that, you know, off hand. But it is higher.

COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: You said 4% higher than the national average.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: How about the citywide average? Would you have that number with you?

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: I'll have to get that for, sir. It escapes me at this point.

COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Because that might be skewed. That might not be an accurate reflection. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to get those.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you, Council Member Vann. Commissioner, we know that unemployment among veterans is higher, you know, than the general population. If we want to try to identify and to know why exactly, what is the main reason, what is the main reason why the unemployment is higher among the veterans?

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Sir, I couldn't give you an answer that you can go to the bank on,

1  
2 on that. I think there are a lot of other issues,  
3 there are a lot of issues that you may have. You  
4 may have, you know, you may have people--if I'm a  
5 young man and I just spent an extended period of  
6 time on duty and I came off and they gave me a  
7 lump sum, do I have to go back to work right away  
8 or can I file for unemployment? I don't know.  
9 So, I don't really know. There are just so many  
10 other factors that are involved in that. PTSD is  
11 one. Some of the discrimination that you have  
12 with veterans. And we have a very poor job market  
13 too. You know, and then you have people who  
14 thought that they could always get a job. And,  
15 you know, that's not the case anymore. You know  
16 there are skills that are changing. We're talking  
17 about going into a green economy. You know, if  
18 you have people who don't know how to handle  
19 computers--but, you know, like I don't know.  
20 There are just certain things that I don't know.  
21 I'm sorry.

22 LETICIA LAMOTT: There's also we  
23 have a lot of veterans, because of the new GI  
24 bill, we have a lot of veterans making the  
25 decision to just go to school because there is so

1  
2 much more money afforded to them now with the GI  
3 bill that can take care of them and their families  
4 while going to school. They just decide when they  
5 get out they're going to collect unemployment and  
6 go to school, get their degrees and then look  
7 further into the job market when it becomes more  
8 available for all. So, yeah, we're seeing a lot  
9 of that.

10 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I don't know.  
11 That may be part of the answer, but we are  
12 assuming.

13 LETICIA LAMOTT: Yes.

14 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Right.

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: There is no  
16 survey, scientific answer to that. But I believe-  
17 -I could understand that, and I would accept that  
18 the veterans, you know, the unemployment among  
19 veterans and the general population are the same  
20 or very close, but to have the veterans to be  
21 penalized again, and be the one facing the higher  
22 unemployment, I think that, you know, that brings  
23 us to our responsibility and our quest and our  
24 efforts to help the veterans get jobs. I think  
25 that we may have to conduct a survey and find out

1  
2 exactly why the unemployment is higher among the  
3 veterans. And after that we may probably be able  
4 to be in the right position to know exactly what  
5 should we do to better help the veterans. And my  
6 office will contact you, Commissioner, we probably  
7 would - - to do that together with the City  
8 Council, and try to find out what exactly is the  
9 problem.

10 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Now, I want to  
12 recognize Council Member Sanders.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Thank you.  
14 Thank you. That'll work. Thank you, Chair. Good  
15 afternoon, Colonel. Good afternoon, Ms. Lamott,  
16 how are you?

17 LETICIA LAMOTT: Good.

18 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Fine, sir.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Good,  
20 good. Not too hot in that hot seat.

21 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: No.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Oh, is  
23 that right? Let me heat it up, then. Is that  
24 right? No, no.

25 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: I'm an old man.

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take it easy on me.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Colonels  
never get old.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yeah, I got  
you.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Everybody  
knows that. I just want to have a humble  
disagreement with you, Colonel. I understand your  
search for an analogy where you were comparing a  
squad leader to a very worthy line leader in a  
factory plant or whatever. And of course one  
major difference is the squad leader has a life  
and death decision that they have to make, and  
that is a qualitative difference that is not being  
picked up by the civilian market, I would say.  
That that type of decision-making, that type of  
thinking is, I would argue, even more valuable  
because it's at a higher level. And I would  
remind all of us that it is a rare veteran this  
day and age that does not have a high school  
degree. You--it may be conceivable getting in  
with a GED, but it's very rare that you're not  
going to--it's a different military this day and  
age. It's very rare when you don't have a high

1  
2 school degree of one type or another. How you got  
3 it is of course a different question. I just  
4 wanted to put in a plug for the DAV, Disabled  
5 American Veterans. They helped me a great deal,  
6 so while you were going through your list, I  
7 didn't hear one of mine. I wanted to also  
8 encourage our Chair and remind them that MOVA is  
9 woefully underfunded. And I'm sure that they are  
10 willing to do more if they had more. And this is  
11 the budget season that we are going in, and this  
12 is the time that we, that the Chair, can request  
13 an upgrade, a promotion for MOVA, a budgetary  
14 type, thanks to the budgeting of the City Council.  
15 I would also remind all of us that under Chair  
16 Monserrate, a billion years ago, we had some  
17 programs that were created that would be very  
18 useful to have for veterans out there. These  
19 programs helped veterans to get into school, to  
20 get into work and things of that--and other  
21 things. I just wanted to of course remind all of  
22 us that this is the budget season. This is when  
23 we can make a difference and therefore give MOVA  
24 the firepower that it needs to wage this campaign.  
25 I thank you very much, sir.

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2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You're very  
3 welcome, Council Member Sanders. Let me just  
4 mention that, I don't know if you are a psychic or  
5 whatever, but I started the discussion already  
6 with the Speaker's Office maybe two or three weeks  
7 ago, probably a month, trying to see how much  
8 funding we can bring for veterans, because we  
9 think that the veterans, they have been short-  
10 changed, underserved, and we're talking about a  
11 million dollars of funding for all types of  
12 services. You know, I think it is fair, it is  
13 fitting, to try to get some reasonable funding  
14 for, you know, deserved, created for veterans.  
15 I'm talking with the Speaker, she's very  
16 receptive. So, we don't know. We're going to see  
17 what's going to happen.

18 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Thank you very  
19 much.

20 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You're  
21 welcome. Let me recognize Council Member Dromm  
22 for some questions.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you.  
24 Thank you, Mr. Chair. I also want to applaud Mr.  
25 Commissioner for the job that you're doing; I've

1  
2 seen a lot of changes since you've come in and a  
3 lot more priority placed on these issues, and I  
4 think you've been doing a very good job, so I  
5 thank you. I'm just curious to know, do you do  
6 any outreach, are there any services provided for  
7 the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender  
8 veterans that come home? Are you aware of that or  
9 has your office done any outreach in that area?

10 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: To be honest  
11 with you, we haven't done anything really  
12 specifically. What I'm trying to do is to reach  
13 out to all of the veteran service organizations.  
14 I want to make certain that I open up a dialog  
15 with anybody who wants to talk to me and provide  
16 service for veterans. And I sort of recently  
17 begun with the AVERNY, in fact I think they're  
18 here today, he's testifying. And I want to make  
19 myself available--I've asked them. We had a  
20 presence prior to my arrival at MOVA of Lesbian,  
21 Gay--who is it? Of a group. However, they  
22 haven't been there. So I've got an empty desk.  
23 And MOVA is really a live with a lot of things  
24 that's happening, so I've reached out to them, and  
25 we're sort of doing an arm wrestle to see if

1  
2 they'll take a desk to at least make certain that  
3 people are there. We can get a place for them to  
4 get their mail and to really be a part of  
5 everything that we're doing. What I intend to do  
6 is to represent the veteran service organizations  
7 and fight for them, and fight against them if I  
8 need to, okay, but I need to be their voice and  
9 we're going to work together and do a lot of  
10 things. So, yes, I am reaching out to them, and  
11 will be reaching out even more, you know, to  
12 whatever extent they want me to.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you.  
14 It just hits me as I'm looking out into the  
15 audience as well that I do see Denny Meyer here  
16 from AVERNY, I guess is how you say it.

17 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: That's exactly  
18 who I was talking about, yes.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: But maybe  
20 something like an outreach fair at the Lesbian and  
21 Gay Community Services Center in Manhattan at one  
22 point, because more and more I think especially  
23 since the military has relaxed or eliminated its  
24 policy on Don't Ask Don't Tell, I see LGBT  
25 veterans coming out and being more open about

1  
2 their sexuality, etc. And I just think it would  
3 be a good idea to do some more outreach, for MOVA  
4 to do some more outreach in that community, and  
5 I'd like to work together with you on that as  
6 well.

7 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: You know, one  
8 of the things--we all got together at a round  
9 table with stuff that we're doing, is that we're  
10 getting out to the VSOs in the area. We needed to  
11 get out to the vet centers, because as far as I'm  
12 concerned, that's the first line of defense. When  
13 people come in they need to get to these vet  
14 centers for the assessment. And we're beginning  
15 to see where there's a need, there's a greater  
16 need to service that part of our veterans  
17 community. And I want to make certain that we're  
18 there. So, whatever we can do, you know, whatever  
19 we can do we're going to do it. We're going to  
20 give it a shot. We'll give it a shot.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you.

22 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

23 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
24 much, Council Member Dromm. Commissioner, we know  
25 that the New York State Department of Labor

1  
2 operates a one-stop career center for veterans.  
3 What is the participation of MOVA or partnership  
4 with MOVA and the Department of Labor? Have you  
5 been referring veterans to benefits or to receive  
6 services from the one-stop career center from the  
7 New York State Department of Labor?

8 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Sir, I can  
9 probably best answer that. I'm meeting with the--  
10 March 1st I'm meeting with the New York State  
11 Director of Veterans Affairs, so I'm going to talk  
12 to them about, you know, a bunch of those things.  
13 As far as the--much of what we've been doing has  
14 been directed to the Department of Labor and the  
15 VA. That's taken 100% of our effort. I need to  
16 maybe take a harder look at what we're able to do  
17 with the Department of Labor. And I can get back  
18 to you with an answer on that. But I'm meeting--  
19 in fact, the meeting that I'm having with Bill  
20 Krause from the New York State Department of Labor  
21 on the 1st, it was something that we sort of--I  
22 started getting emails from Nassau County and from  
23 Yonkers, and I said why don't we get together.  
24 And what I've been advertising on the MOVA  
25 facebook have been jobs from Westchester and from

1  
2 Nassau County, so I said, why don't we get  
3 together and talk about these things? So, what  
4 New York State does is when they have something  
5 where they need to have personal contact with  
6 something and it's within New York City, they  
7 reach out to us to get us to do something because  
8 we're here, because they have the same kind of  
9 resources that we do. So as far as the one stop  
10 shop, I'll get back to you on that and be more  
11 specific about where we are. But have we--do we--  
12 we just haven't made; we make those referrals, but  
13 I got to go back and--I'm dancing. Okay? So, I  
14 have to give you a better answer than I'm giving  
15 you right now on that. We do, but it's basically  
16 on the federal level that we're doing that,  
17 because that's where we're getting the really  
18 impact.

19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: We know that  
20 some PTSD is more common among veterans who have  
21 been served, you know, multiple tours, who have  
22 been deployed and redeployed, but is there any  
23 programs in place for this category of veterans  
24 who have been sent several times to the war zone,  
25 to prepare them and to help them with the PTSD?

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2 Because we know, the fact is, you know, the  
3 percentage of veterans who are suffering from PTSD  
4 is higher among those who have been deployed  
5 several times. We know that. This is a fact.  
6 Yes or no.

7 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Oh yeah.

8 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But is there  
9 anything in place, just to ensure that, you know,  
10 those people, they are more prone to develop PTSD.  
11 IS there anything in place to help them with their  
12 disease or the pathology of PTSD?

13 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: When vets come  
14 back I need for them to go to the veterans center.  
15 About ten days ago Ms. Lamott and I met with the  
16 wives of the senior leadership of the Army,  
17 because that's where you've got these kids who are  
18 driving, you know, on these convoys and stuff with  
19 the IEDs, and everything else like that. That's a  
20 big thing. So, what we've done is we said you  
21 need to get these young men and women into the  
22 veterans centers throughout the country, not just  
23 New York City, but to get them into the vet  
24 centers, so they can get this assessment. So that  
25 they can get assessment for their mental health

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2 needs and everything else. And the vet center is  
3 a really good place to start. I have been looking  
4 for a nugget and I couldn't find it. The Vice  
5 Chief of Staff for the Army just left, General  
6 Chiarelli, Peter Chiarelli. And he's been and  
7 advocate for doing more for our people who come  
8 back suffering from PTSD than the Army is already  
9 doing. And I'm looking for this. I know I heard  
10 it and I found it, and I'm trying to look for  
11 something like that. So, I think there's more  
12 than can be done as they make the transition this  
13 way, but there are some things that we have out  
14 there.

15                   LETECIA LAMOTT: However the vet  
16 center was adopted specifically for combat  
17 veterans, reason being the vet center is smaller  
18 and they don't have the same reporting status as  
19 the VA, whereas the VA would have to report  
20 certain things into your--especially if you're  
21 still in service, to report things to your  
22 commander. The vet centers, they don't have those  
23 type of restrictions. So, getting, like the  
24 Commissioner said, it's very important when we  
25 hear about a unit coming back that we, you know,

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we tell them to go to the vet center because they have been adopted for that particular thing, PTSD, and also for their family members.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: And--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [Interposing]

We--I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Commissioner.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: The VA, we're finding all of these mobile, people who have mobile units, like the New York City Food Banks, the VA, I think social security, but I'm not sure about that. But what we're doing is that we've connected the Navy and Fort Hamilton with the VA to get their mobile van out to those bases when they have particular things going on, they can register people right there. So that sort of like gets them involved. And now there are other non-profits. I mentioned the Weil-McLain, Weil-McLain, that's something else--that's a fuel burner. That's furnace thing. Weill Cornell, sorry. But Weill Cornell has this telemedicine thing, and they are a DOD hub for this telemedicine for PTSD, and they've been very successful. So we advertise that on our facebook and we also have that on our website, and we

1  
2 direct people to them, and we partner with them,  
3 okay, and we need to increase the partnership with  
4 things that we're doing out there with that. And  
5 I would say there's also something else that I  
6 read that we are enlisting people who are already  
7 coming in with PTSD problems. So, I think when  
8 you have that person that comes in with PTSD and  
9 has multiple deployments, you're just increasing  
10 what we're getting back. So, we really need to  
11 gear up and make certain that we're here. Now, in  
12 the booklets that I gave you, there's a vet  
13 center--it's probably about a ten-minute walk from  
14 here--so maybe if you ever get a chance, just walk  
15 on in and look around and see what you have to  
16 see. And that's specifically what we're talking  
17 about.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: What I'm  
19 talking about, I'm talking about two categories of  
20 veterans, two populations of veterans; those who  
21 have been deployed one time, or those who have  
22 been deployed several times. Because in medicine,  
23 suppose we have somebody who comes in with high  
24 blood pressure for one time, after evaluation we  
25 see that person has high blood pressure because he

1  
2 put too much salt or because of a stress  
3 situation, and after that, that's it. But we have  
4 a different protocol to treat people who have  
5 chronic high blood pressure, this is aggressive,  
6 this is something serious. So, because of the  
7 consequences of the high blood pressure, heart  
8 attacks, stroke and everything, we have to use a  
9 specific protocol for those people. But PTSD is a  
10 very, very serious pathology. So, what I want to  
11 know, if the treatment is the same for those  
12 veterans who suffer from PTSD that have been  
13 deployed one time, or if you have another protocol  
14 designed for those veterans that we are going to  
15 send back again, because we know that they are  
16 going to be prone to PTSD. That means the PTSD  
17 among them will be higher. So, let's say the  
18 first time somebody comes back--he was deployed  
19 one time--second time, but he'd going to deploy a  
20 third time, what do we do in terms of helping  
21 preventing that person to face the situation of  
22 PTSD or to decrease the consequences of the PTSD  
23 in that person?

24 LETECIA LAMOTT: That's really a  
25 mental health--

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [Interposing]

I'm talking about in-between.

LETECIA LAMOTT: Right. That's really a mental health question. Because PTSD, you can receive PTSD in a non-combat situation. So, yeah, that's basically should be addressed by Mental Health.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So you don't know this--

LETECIA LAMOTT: [Interposing] We wouldn't.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But I think this is very important that we, you know, elected officials, the State Department, the federal government, to put something in place to do the study and to do the survey and see what can be done. Because in medicine we do research. You know, we put the resources to prevent things to become worse. And I think PTSD is such potent disease. I think they should put something in place to see how they can prevent or decrease the incidence of PTSD among those people who have been deployed several times. And I think--  
Commissioner, I'm sorry about that. We love you

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over here. That's the reason that we keep you so long. But we are going to release you and let you go.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But you said that--you mentioned about--in your testimony you say that on January 19, 2012, MOVA hosted an America Works Job Fair at the Veterans Memorial Hall that was attended by more than 550 veterans. And as well as number of vendors. I was there.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And that was a wonderful, wonderful event. I commend MOVA--

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: [Interposing]  
Thank you, sir.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --and yourself for that. That was a wonderful event. But it was packed. That was great. That was great. But my question for you is when are you going to do another one and what are you going to do to reach more veterans to ensure that they know such event is taking place? Because I think that more veterans can benefit from that. To tell you honestly, I was there that was a wonderful event.

1  
2 But most of the time we know that when there is  
3 some benefit or some opportunities, not everybody  
4 knows that. So, I want you to tell us if you put  
5 in place an outreach program to ensure that more  
6 veterans benefit from the job fair.

7 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Sir, we're  
8 talking to Workforce One. We want to partner with  
9 Workforce One on the next one that we're going to  
10 have. We're meeting with them in the next week or  
11 so--I don't know exactly what the date is.  
12 Actually, I think we'll meet with them this week,  
13 about Thursday. We'll meet with them on Thursday.  
14 We're laying out the parameters of what we do,  
15 because this thing just doesn't exactly happen.  
16 We have to find the right day to have it. There  
17 are just a number of things that we need to do  
18 with that, but we probably want to do something.  
19 You'll probably see it either by the end of March  
20 or early April. We'll do that again. And then I  
21 want to partner up again with America Works, okay,  
22 to give them an opportunity to get involved in  
23 that as well too. And then it's just a question  
24 of getting the word out. We found--what I found  
25 in terms of a marketing thing, there were ways

1  
2 that we were trying to do things in 2011--and we  
3 were successful in 2011--but we knocked the doors  
4 off on January 19th. So, we want to employ some  
5 of the same things that we did on January 19th to  
6 get the kind of numbers. Now, we're reporting 550  
7 people; there were more than that. We ran out of  
8 wristbands at 548. Okay. And I went downstairs  
9 to see where we are, and the lobby was packed with  
10 people and it has about another 75 to 100 people  
11 down there. So, but I'm going to stick with the  
12 number that we can validate, but we did that. And  
13 we are getting reports back now, and people are  
14 getting hired that we haven't heard getting hired  
15 before, strings of eight to ten jobs, training  
16 jobs here. And we'll start to get the final  
17 numbers on this, but these are going to be good  
18 jobs with benefits that people are going to have  
19 two years from now, three years from now. You  
20 know, so it was very gratifying. But it was sort  
21 of like the experiment, oh man, I don't believe  
22 this happened. You know, and we need to go back  
23 and say, okay, let's go for a little bit more than  
24 that. So.

25 LETECIA LAMOTT: We're also looking

1  
2 to put together some PSAs so we can start getting  
3 more--not just for employment but just getting out  
4 MOVA exists, we're here. Our Commissioner is  
5 working with that as well.

6 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You know, and  
7 the next time you are going to have a job fair,  
8 you can also reach out to my office and we can try  
9 to reach out to some of the veterans. Let me  
10 mention also, my office has been working on  
11 putting together a job fair also.

12 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Okay.

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Several months  
14 before, even before yours.

15 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But I was so  
17 glad that you did it, but we are still planning to  
18 have a job fair in Brooklyn. Correct? And we are  
19 working on that and we would like to partner with  
20 you, and we would like to see how you can help us,  
21 also join us to make sure we have a very  
22 successful--as successful as yours--

23 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: [Interposing]

24 Yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And try to be

1  
2 more successful, because we have to make  
3 improvements. So we are going to reach out to  
4 your office and we can work together on a job fair  
5 also in Brooklyn.

6 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir. Sir,  
7 and I just want to just share one other thing with  
8 you. March 12th, over in Queens in the Veterans  
9 Court, they're having a graduation of veterans who  
10 are going through this thing, and they're taking  
11 them off of the--they're not going to enter--  
12 they'll have their records, their criminal--the  
13 charges against them will be expunged because  
14 they've graduated from the program. It's really  
15 good. There's a Supreme Court Justice, Marcia  
16 Hirsch. It's her deal, and it's really a pretty  
17 good thing. So, I'll send the details to you and  
18 if any of you--it's like 9:00, 9:30 in the  
19 morning.

20 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I would love  
21 to attend, please, please send the information to  
22 my office.

23 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: I'll certainly  
24 do that.

25 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes. Oh, yes.

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Could you send it to all the members?

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Not a problem.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Just send it to me and I will invite all the members of the veterans committee. - - we can have that as a hearing, Barbara. Can we? Please. Send it to Barbara also.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: I'll send it to you, and it's in Kew Gardens.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Very good.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Okay, yeah. March 12th, and I believe the time is 9:30 in the morning. I'll double-check. I'll get that out to you later today or tomorrow.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Commissioner, as I said, we appreciate that you're here, but I'm sorry, I've got one more question, maybe two more.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: We know that many veterans, they may need or they may want to instead of going to work for somebody, but open a business.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Right.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: A small

1  
2 business, you know? And what do you have in place  
3 to assist veterans to open their own businesses,  
4 like small businesses? Is there anything in  
5 place? Is there anything MOVA is doing to assist  
6 veterans open their businesses, or if not MOVA  
7 what is available from the State Department or  
8 federal department--government, I mean--in terms  
9 of assisting the veterans to open a small  
10 business?

11 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Sir, we just  
12 began a partnership, if you will, with the Small  
13 Business Administration right down here on 26 Fed.  
14 And so we're actively involved with them and we  
15 have someone coming to meet--excuse me. I have  
16 requested that we have someone to meet with us at  
17 the next Veterans Advisory Board to talk about  
18 that. A concern was that veterans are applying  
19 for loans, and that the loans are slow in coming  
20 to us. So, I raised that question specifically  
21 and I need to find out. One of the things that  
22 we're doing is we're talking--we're dealing with  
23 the New York State Small Business--something or  
24 the other. I've got to get you the name. We're  
25 going to meet with them. We're having something

1  
2 at MOVA on March 14th where we're going to talk  
3 about franchising. So, they're getting the horses  
4 together for this thing to talk to us about  
5 franchising. We're bringing a couple of people on  
6 board that can talk about franchising, and just  
7 trying to help out in that way. But that's a  
8 wide-open area. That's a wide-open area because I  
9 think self-employment is a way that will get  
10 veterans to help each other out a lot more. But  
11 March 14th is definitely on the books.

12 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Commissioner,  
13 we have to move on, but this is the last one.  
14 There is a big issue, a very complex issue, street  
15 vendors permit, you know for veterans.

16 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

17 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: We on the  
18 Veterans Committee, we have been trying to address  
19 that, but you probably are aware of that also. I  
20 know that the veterans, they are facing so many  
21 challenges in terms of street permits, you know,  
22 street vendor permits. What MOVA can do, what  
23 MOVA is planning to do? Is there anything that  
24 MOVA or the City Council or the veterans committee  
25 can do together to help those veterans who are

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facing so many challenges in terms of street vendor permits?

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Sir, this is something that crops up periodically and has not been handled as effectively--from my standpoint--just hasn't been handled as effectively as we need to now. Now, the Deputy Commissioner Clarice Joynes is very much involved in this, and--no?

LETECIA LAMOTT: We started some dialog with Consumer Affairs. And a few of the head leaders of veteran organizations that have taken charge of veteran vendor license issues, we sat down and had a meeting. Myself, Deputy Commissioner Clarice Joynes, and the Director of Vendor Licenses. We sat down and had an open dialog and identified what were the issues that the veteran community needed or needed to address. And with the next--they're planning another conference, bringing in NYPD, but the conversation has started, so MOVA has initiated that conversation.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes. Can we join forces? Because united we are stronger and we'll have more success. Because we from the

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Veterans Committee, we want to be part of the discussion. And also, we from the City Council, we want to be part of the discussion and see how we can work together and help our veterans. Can you let us know, keep us posted and inform us about the next event--

LETECIA LAMOTT: [Interposing] Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --in the discussion? We would like to be part of that.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. Thank you, Commissioner, and thank you Miss. Thank you very much.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: That's it?

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: See you next time.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Sir, I'll get those books back tomorrow. Okay? I'm going to hold mine.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Judy. Judy Schaffer, please? Is that Denny Mayer [phonetic] or Meyer? Thank you very much. Audrey Carr. Wesley Poriotis? Is that Wesley? Is Wesley here? Oh, sure. Yes. How many we put together? There

1

2 are five. Two panels. We'll do two panels. Mr.  
3 Wesley, can you be part of the next panel? You--  
4 yes. You're okay with that? You're okay with  
5 that? Thank you. So we have Judy Schaffer. We  
6 have Denny Meyer. And Audrey. Very good.

7

[off mic]

8

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay, one  
9 panel. So, we're going to do five together,  
10 right? Let's call all the five together. Okay,  
11 let me see.

12

BARBARA B. BUTLER: She's the one  
13 person you haven't mentioned.

14

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Lionelle.

15

Please.

16

BARBARA B. BUTLER: He was that  
17 person I thought you said he was simply going to  
18 hand out the materials.

19

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: No, no. We'll  
20 call him together. Mr. Wesley, I'm sorry. Could  
21 you please come also? And thank you.

22

[off mic]

23

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Can we have a  
24 chair for...? Thank you. We are going to start and  
25 I am going to ask Council Member Sanders--

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COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS:

[Interposing] I want to hear.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Oh, you want to hear. I thought you have a comment. Very good. So, let me first and foremost thank you, each one of you, for coming, and I want to thank you and commend you also for what you are doing on behalf of our veterans. Thank you so much. You may start any time, and please remember to mention your name for the record. Judy, Ms. Schaffer, would you please start, since I know that you have an issue, you've got to go. Would you please start, please?

JUDY SCHAFFER: Actually, Denny has Access-A-Ride waiting for him, so--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [Interposing] Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I didn't know that. I know that somebody has a health issue. Thank you very much. Denny, I'm sorry about that.

DENNY MEYER: No worries.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I heard that Ms. Schaffer--okay, you had a health issue. All right. Denny, would you please? And thank you for coming, despite your physical challenge, and

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you are here. Thank you so much.

DENNY MEYER: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: That's when you are really true veterans. A hero. Thank you, Denny.

DENNY MEYER: Can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes, sir.

DENNY MEYER: Okay. It's not on?

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.

DENNY MEYER: It's on? Oh, okay.

I'm Sergeant First Class Denny Meyer. I represent American Veterans for Equal Rights, the national Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender veterans association, serving our veterans since 1990. And I'm the National Veterans Affairs Officer, as well as the president of the New York Chapter. When the heroes from America's greatest generation returned home victorious from World War II, and Korea, no effort was spared to enable them to transition to civilian life. Our nation was transformed as housing was built for them and they went to work building our interstate highway system. They married, moved to suburbia, started families, manufactured American-made goods, and

1  
2 became the American middle class, living the good  
3 life that they had earned by fighting for freedom  
4 around the world. Of course, back then in the  
5 1950s, American minorities were left out and not  
6 afforded equal benefits, due to old biases and  
7 assumptions about their personal worth, even  
8 though they had fought just as valiantly as other  
9 Americans. The Vietnam era veterans were the  
10 children of that World War II generation.

11 Somehow, however, we were left out to battle our  
12 own transition to life without war. The benefits,  
13 such as they were, were at least more equal than  
14 they had been a generation before. And now, the  
15 children and grandchildren of the Vietnam era  
16 veterans are returning from the hell of war.

17 Perhaps because we the Vietnam veterans have not  
18 forgotten, we want them to have every opportunity  
19 to transition to as healthy and successful a life  
20 as possible, after they stepped forward to serve  
21 our nation. And yet once again there is a newly  
22 enfranchised minority not getting equal benefits  
23 due to old biases and assumptions about their  
24 worth. As of last year, patriotic gay, lesbian,  
25 bisexual Americans can serve openly, proud to

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2 serve our nations. They can even marry their  
3 partners in states where that's legal, including  
4 here in New York. But when it comes to equal  
5 benefits for service members and veterans, their  
6 families are left out without recognition. The  
7 Defense of Marriage Act, DOMA, prevents the  
8 Department of Defense and the VA from providing  
9 the same family benefits that any other veteran  
10 would get. The question here today is when it  
11 comes to veterans benefits and programs provided  
12 by the State of New York and the City of New York,  
13 where discrimination in housing and employment are  
14 prohibited by law, is there a proactive program  
15 ensuring equal family benefits for our LGBT  
16 veterans? Is it enough to assume that such  
17 benefits are available and provided equally, or  
18 should legislation and program guidelines ensure  
19 equality by stipulating in writing that they  
20 should be provided and how that can be  
21 facilitated? Finally, New York State and City  
22 officials are urged to advocate for equal benefits  
23 for all of our veterans. As the New York City  
24 Council was the first in the nation in 2005 with a  
25 City resolution, a City Council resolution

1  
2 advocating the end of Don't Ask Don't Tell,  
3 instigated by AVER. We now urge advocating the  
4 end of DOMA. That's the end of my prepared  
5 remarks. I just wanted to add that when you ask  
6 the Commissioner, he did spend an hour with us  
7 this past weekend at our meeting, and is working  
8 with us, and in fact trying to get us to take  
9 space with the other veterans groups. When I met  
10 him just before Christmas at a veterans event, he  
11 hadn't given any thought to our existence, but  
12 once I brought it to his attention, he did very  
13 proactively move forward in working with us. So.

14 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
15 much, Mr. Meyer. Thank you very much. The next  
16 speaker, please?

17 JUDY SCHAFFER: Thank you. Is this  
18 on?

19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Mr. Meyer, you  
20 can leave any time if you want.

21 JUDY SCHAFFER: Is this on?

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes. Thank  
23 you for your testimony. Thank you.

24 JUDY SCHAFFER: Okay. Thank you  
25 Chairman Eugene and members of the Committee for

1  
2 your concern about and actions on behalf of our  
3 veterans. Special thanks to Councilman Gentile,  
4 who has been a friend of Heroes to Heroes from our  
5 beginning. It's--

6 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [Interposing]  
7 Excuse me. Could you please move a little?  
8 Wonderful. Thank Mr. - - Thank you.

9 JUDY SCHAFFER: The idea for Heroes  
10 to Heroes Foundation began in December 2009. As  
11 part of a group that included Councilman Gentile,  
12 I traveled to Washington, D.C., to visit our  
13 soldiers in Walter Reed Army Medical Center.  
14 During this visit, we delivered holiday gifts and  
15 necessities to the soldiers and their families.  
16 We had the opportunity to spend time with soldiers  
17 from all over the country, and their parents.  
18 During the visit, I kept hearing the same line  
19 from the soldiers: I want to get back to my Unit.  
20 I saw the sad reactions of the families and knew  
21 that as an American I had to do something. Also,  
22 I was raised in a family with two generations of  
23 veterans, World War I, World War II, and then  
24 Korea, which was that same generation. My father,  
25 who spent almost four years serving our country in

1  
2 Europe during World War II, and in later years  
3 during his retirement volunteered to help disabled  
4 veterans, perished as a result of a car accident  
5 on his way to a Jewish War Veterans meeting. It  
6 is in my blood to give back to our veterans. After  
7 our visit with the soldiers and their families,  
8 the idea for Heroes to Heroes was born. At first  
9 I researched the various veterans organizations  
10 with the idea of volunteering and incorporating my  
11 ideas with an existing corporation. It was on a  
12 plane to Israel, where I spoke to with the Israeli  
13 sitting next to me, when most of the program came  
14 together. We discussed programs in Israel for  
15 wounded veterans. PTSD victims in particular. I  
16 took copious notes, and upon landing began my  
17 research. The Heroes to Heroes Foundation is the  
18 result of that research and the open arms of so  
19 many who are happy to help our most vulnerable  
20 veterans. The Heroes to Heroes mission is to give  
21 our veterans on 100% disability due to PTSD a  
22 lifeline and chance to improve their lives. Our  
23 goal is to make sure they know that they matter.  
24 We form a team of ten veterans from the same  
25 geographic area. Our first team, which formed in

1  
2 September, is from the--80% are from the New York  
3 City area. The team is run by a coach, a veteran  
4 who has experience working with his or her peers.  
5 All team members commit to a one-year program  
6 where they meet quarterly, support one another,  
7 and agree to use what they learn to help their  
8 fellow veterans. The coach works with the team  
9 individually and as a group. The program begins  
10 with a ten-day trip to Israel. Why? First,  
11 Israel has a citizens' army. Our first team of  
12 veterans were immediately comfortable with the  
13 population. Many opened up the first day when  
14 they felt understood by almost everyone they  
15 encountered. Second, Israel has recognized,  
16 studied, and worked with PTSD for both their  
17 veteran and civilian populations, mainly children,  
18 for decades. Due to the size of the country,  
19 they're able to provide services that reach 100%  
20 of their population that suffer from PTSD. Since  
21 there is no central government program such as the  
22 VA, most organizations are created by and led by  
23 disabled veterans. Our veterans saw how wounded  
24 Israeli veterans created programs to help  
25 themselves to provide the basics outside of a

1  
2 government system. Third, Israeli PTSD therapy  
3 includes a significant amount of physical therapy  
4 in the form of exercise. Our participants  
5 bicycled, swam, played tennis, went sailing and  
6 took small hikes. Many had not had a significant  
7 amount of physical exercise since they returned  
8 from their recuperation and from the service, and  
9 were proud of themselves for getting on a bicycle,  
10 taking a swim, or going sailing. Fourth, due to  
11 the fact that Israel has a civilian army, our  
12 veterans learned how Israel uses military  
13 experience for civilian employment. They learned  
14 how accommodations are made for people with  
15 disabilities, including PTSD and traumatic brain  
16 injury. Finally, Israel provides spiritual  
17 opportunities that allow our veterans to explore  
18 that spiritual side as a healing side, as they  
19 visit holy sites of all major religions. All  
20 teams travel with an Israeli team, staying  
21 together and meeting each evening to review the  
22 day and their individual goals. For some, goals  
23 are simple and basic. Others get inspired and  
24 return home to work on major project. At the end  
25 of the ten-day Israel journey, all participants

1  
2 are responsible for developing goals and working  
3 with their team to stick to those goals. Our  
4 veterans were hosted in the Knesset, Israel's  
5 Parliament, by the Speaker of the Knesset, Reuven  
6 Rivlin, five members of Knesset, and many of  
7 Israel's generals and wounded veterans. They were  
8 overwhelmed and honored by the reception. They  
9 also met with the American Ambassador to Israel,  
10 Daniel Shapiro, and were particularly interested  
11 in hearing military strategy from Israeli generals  
12 who took the time to speak with them. Our first  
13 team developed wonderful relationships with their  
14 Israeli and American counterparts. Aside from  
15 developing life-long friendships, their Israeli  
16 friends are there when needed--due to the time  
17 difference, even in the middle of the night--with  
18 ideas and words of support. Our most vulnerable  
19 no longer need to feel alone. The results of our  
20 first team of ten are as follows. One team member  
21 found full employment with a Heroes to Heroes  
22 sponsor. Two team members secured funding to  
23 start non-profits, thanks to another Heroes to  
24 Heroes sponsor. Two team members are working on  
25 building a kibbutz-like community for veterans,

1  
2 wounded veterans, in South Dakota. One team  
3 member is starting a committee to build an  
4 organization to mimic Israel's Beit Halochem, the  
5 Home of the Warriors, they want to build that in  
6 New York City. Two team members have joined the  
7 Heroes to Heroes Board to help other veterans have  
8 the experience that changed their lives. All team  
9 members have connections with one another as well  
10 as their Israeli counterparts. Due to the time  
11 difference in Israel, they now have a lifeline 24  
12 hours a day. The Heroes to Heroes goal is to have  
13 five teams per year participate in the program.  
14 Since we are looking for veterans who have, quote  
15 unquote, fallen through the cracks, we are relying  
16 on contacts at the VA, the various military  
17 branches, Department of Defense, and people like  
18 you to refer veterans. Our organization is funded  
19 largely through private donations. The Israeli  
20 organizations do not charge our veterans for  
21 participation in their programs. The Heroes to  
22 Heroes foundation brings a lifeline to those who  
23 are truly alone. It is hard to feel as if you  
24 matter when you are unable to work, unable to  
25 participate in activities with your peers, and

1  
2 uncomfortable leaving your home. The Heroes to  
3 Heroes foundation opens a door to those in need.  
4 Thank you for your time and support.

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
6 much. Next panelist? If you want to.

7 WESLEY PORIOTIS: Okay, thank you.  
8 Is this on? I thank you for pronouncing my name,  
9 on a note of levity, as Wesley Poriotis because in  
10 a similar situation when I testified in front of  
11 the Senate Veterans Committee, there was a senator  
12 from South Carolina who looked at my name quickly  
13 and introduced me as Mr. Psoriasis.

14 [laughter]

15 WESLEY PORIOTIS: So, I have to  
16 tell you. Everybody broke up laughing. So,  
17 again, my name is Wesley Poriotis. And I have to  
18 say it.

19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Mr. Poriotis,  
20 let me say, I know you very well. As a matter of  
21 when you have a piece of paper, we're trying to  
22 figure out what is that exactly. And let me take  
23 the opportunity to commend you for the wonderful  
24 job that you are doing for Veterans Across  
25 America. I went there and I know about what

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you're doing. It's a pleasure to have you here today, thank you much.

WESLEY PORIOTIS: Thank you. And I'll try to live up to the name Poriotis and not Psoriasis, but. Let me just say as the founder of Veterans Across America, I would like to first acknowledge not only the commitment but the passion, by you the Chairman, and your dedicated staff--I think sometimes they're overlooked--David Suarez, and Jonah Rogoff, to enhancing the economic wellbeing of all of our veterans in New York City. You, Councilman, as the Chair of the Veterans subcommittee, I think you bear witness to the notion that your work on behalf of veterans is not just a job, but an emotional constant that in my experience has been unwavering to provide every opportunity to this cohort of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, who will become America's next greatest generation. I, like all of us in this City Council hearing, have an emotional inspiration behind having forged Veterans Across America's innovative services, to have reached an unprecedented 65% job creation success record in this economy for veterans, 65%. Especially for

1  
2 the underserved enlisted servicemen and women, who  
3 are often so tragically in this city and  
4 throughout the nation at, near, or below the  
5 poverty level. And this unemployed or deeply  
6 under-employed status persists despite their  
7 diligently sending out hundreds and hundreds of  
8 résumés, via job boards and internet portals, to  
9 all too often a depressing and numbing silence.  
10 The brutal reality is very evident to those of us  
11 who are in the hand-to-hand combat in the veterans  
12 employment trenches. People hire people.  
13 Computers do not hire people. I'm sure almost  
14 everyone in this room got a job somewhere in their  
15 career through a network, an introduction, a  
16 casual meeting, a friendship, or through a chance  
17 linkage at a social gathering. Based on this  
18 networking premise, Veterans Across America has  
19 formalized the, quote, who you know, quote,  
20 approach to job creation, through champion  
21 mentoring. If you in New York City are an  
22 unemployed or under-employed veteran, Veterans  
23 Across America will pair you with a champion  
24 mentor, a businessperson or a professional who  
25 will aggressively unleash their personal and

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2 business networks built up over many years, to not  
3 teach how to network, but to provide you with an  
4 actual network. Our best champion mentors are  
5 both veterans as well as non-veterans, who want to  
6 give back and who intensively court their own  
7 networks on behalf of veteran job creation. My  
8 own inspiration stems from a World War II veteran  
9 who was the first soldier to set foot on soil  
10 during the famous Anzio Beach invasion. From 1995  
11 to 2008, he participated and was also an observer  
12 of my work with the Joint Chiefs of Staff,  
13 personal meetings with President Clinton, and four  
14 House and Senate testimonies on the need to market  
15 military service aggressively to America's  
16 employers, and create innovative solutions to the  
17 massive problem of veteran chronic unemployment  
18 and under-employment. He said, we GIs return from  
19 overseas combat with limited education, few  
20 transferrable civilian skills, but, Mr. Chairman,  
21 he said we have PSD degrees. So I said to him--  
22 and he was my father, he just passed away--I said,  
23 Dad, what is a PSD degree? He said, we were Poor,  
24 Smart, with a deep Desire to make it. He said  
25 those were the degrees we had. We were poor,

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2 smart, with a deep desire to make it. Someone  
3 gave us a shot. We learned a business, we learned  
4 a trade, and we became what Tom Brokaw calls the  
5 Greatest Generation. Then this humble Greek  
6 immigrant, proud to be an American soldier simply  
7 said, do the same thing for these kids. He called  
8 them kids. And create America's next greatest  
9 generation. We WW II GIs, like these young  
10 veterans had no business or professional network  
11 to stand on to get a job. It was who you know, or  
12 who could introduce you to someone they know who  
13 could give you an opportunity. So, and he said in  
14 a chiding way, while it's nice for Veterans Across  
15 America to be intellectual and interact with all  
16 these top people, get back to basics and formalize  
17 job creation through who you know, and the  
18 networks they can provide. So, on September 11th,  
19 2009, Veterans Across America launched its  
20 Champion Mentoring Program. Like 5,000 other  
21 World War II veterans who die weekly in our  
22 country, this WW II veteran died several weeks  
23 ago. But he had the satisfaction of knowing that  
24 Veterans Across America created jobs for, as he  
25 called them, the grunts--the privates, corporals

1  
2 and sergeants, like Sergeant Scott Sheridan, who  
3 lived in a cargo container with three other  
4 soldiers when the temperature reached 140 to 150  
5 degrees in Fallujah. They had no running water  
6 and no electricity. When he came back and we  
7 connected him with a mentor, he tore our guts out  
8 because he said, and I quote: How could I be  
9 entrusted to defend the United States against  
10 terrorism in Iraq and now I cannot be entrusted to  
11 hold a job in my own country. We have been proud  
12 to help hundreds of other veterans like Scott, but  
13 I can tell you that there are over 3,000 young  
14 African American and Latino veterans whose  
15 unemployment, regardless of statistics, may reach  
16 up to 70% to 80%. There are lies, there are more  
17 lies, and then there are statistics. And the  
18 statistics belie the fact of the last 162 veterans  
19 we have seen personally, 55% have been Latino.  
20 35% have been Hispanic and the rest have been  
21 women. These individuals have a 90% unemployment  
22 or under-employment, and strive desperately to  
23 connect to the private sector, through résumés,  
24 interview counseling, and other employment cycle  
25 processing. The processing doesn't work. The job

1  
2 portals don't work. The internet, usually,  
3 doesn't work. It's who you know. We need to  
4 embed our Veterans Job Development Corp and our  
5 Champion Mentoring Hubs in all the boroughs to  
6 reach them, because you can't reach them unless  
7 you are on the ground close to them. We need to  
8 provide our Veterans Across America services. We  
9 should do this, and I'll close by saying, we know  
10 full well these veterans, once we embed them in  
11 the workforce, will like their WW II counterparts,  
12 create the next greatest generation. So, I thank  
13 you. Those are my prepared remarks. I would say  
14 a couple of thoughts with regard to Chairman  
15 Holliday. One, we do know why there is deep,  
16 deep, unemployment; the statistics lie. Young  
17 veterans, it could be 31% to 40%. It may rise to  
18 60% to 70%. And the ones that are under the radar  
19 screen who have high school degrees in this  
20 competitive market where those with MBAs are  
21 downsized--we've done the studies for Congress  
22 which show that military service as a brand has  
23 lost much of its equity with America's employers.  
24 It's now coming back. But the value that was once  
25 there 60 years ago has been diminished. Plus, if

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2 you're over 50 years of age and you're an  
3 employer, you have that deselective bias against  
4 veterans because you may think of them as your  
5 father's Oldsmobile, and you may have the residue  
6 of post Vietnam deep in your DNA. For those under  
7 35, hardly ever do they ever connect with a  
8 military person. They may be an alien to them.  
9 So, our military--and it's changing; we're on the  
10 verge of a new social movement, like the women's  
11 movement and the civil rights movement. We can  
12 see it throughout the country. But we're just at  
13 the beginning, and that beginning social movement  
14 has to take course before we change the behavioral  
15 makeup of America's employers to embrace this  
16 cohort of people as they have others. Women,  
17 people of color have fought their battles, and the  
18 military today are the newest demographic,  
19 regardless of whether they're of color, women,  
20 transgender, or Caucasian. So, we're fighting  
21 that fight. But I would say that the Commissioner  
22 should perhaps--and it's unquantifiable--  
23 articulate the notion that there are some very  
24 good reasons why there's such a deep unemployment.  
25 It's more subliminal and subconscious and

1  
2 behavioral. That will change. And I'll close by  
3 saying, yours is a brilliant idea, Chairman  
4 Mathieu, and that is--Eugene, and that is to do a  
5 survey. No one has ever done a survey to try to  
6 quantify the raison d'être, the behavioral makeup  
7 of why employers balk and don't bring that veteran  
8 across the employment threshold. Many are chosen  
9 to interview and very few are selected to be  
10 closed on in terms of hire, and that's why we  
11 created Champion Mentoring, to create someone who  
12 could be your mentor during that process, to help  
13 in the courtship and closing phase that's all-  
14 important. It's the last 100 yards in the  
15 marathon. For those of you who are athletes and  
16 runners, you know that that last 100 yards is the  
17 longest yard. And that's the longest yard in  
18 employment. They need champion mentors. Thank  
19 you.

20 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
21 much, Mr. Poriotis. Not the other word, right?  
22 Thank you very much. I appreciate that. Please?

23 LIONELLE HAMANAKA: My name is  
24 Lionelle Hamanaka. I'm a member of Military  
25 Families Speak Out, a national group of families

1  
2 related to soldiers who have served since 9/11,  
3 and we oppose the war in Afghanistan, and also the  
4 buildup to war in Iran. What I did was a little  
5 survey. I asked veterans from Afghanistan and  
6 from Iraq what their wish list would be in terms  
7 of veteran aftercare. And these are the  
8 responses. One is reintegration back into  
9 society, veterans are seeking identity--and these  
10 are not my words; these are their words. There  
11 ought to be a program for that, because now many  
12 veterans are left to seek help out on their own or  
13 with elders. Many veterans are homeless for two  
14 years or more, partially due to being radicalized  
15 by experience, and are consequently estranged from  
16 the military. In other words, they leave these  
17 small towns or farms and they go to the war and  
18 they're totally different people when they come  
19 back. They feel distant and would not feel  
20 comfortable with their family. They suggestion is  
21 to have a counselor, listener, an individual or  
22 group sessions, for three to five sessions, once a  
23 week the first month after discharge, with the  
24 opportunity to extend, followed by family  
25 counseling, so that if they come to a better

1  
2 understanding of their own identity and where  
3 they're at, then they can go back and make some  
4 kind of healing session with their own families.  
5 Many veterans want to get away from the Veterans  
6 Administration, because it has a militaristic  
7 aura. This is just when the first come back. So,  
8 they may not want to go to the VA. Some of them  
9 rush right there. So, a suggestion was to use an  
10 alternative site in their communities, like the  
11 Senior One Stop Centers, as an alternative place  
12 to the vet centers, because there is a high  
13 percentage, according to the Army Times, of  
14 soldiers who don't agree with the missions, so  
15 they feel estranged from the military. Two is:  
16 career development counseling would be a big deal,  
17 right now the typical veteran spends time at  
18 unemployment talking to the veterans  
19 representative there. The veterans  
20 representative, they do a little bit of that;  
21 mainly they just try to help you find a job, but  
22 not training. This guy said, the VA is a  
23 humungous resource, the reinforcement needs to be  
24 given that the Veterans Administration is not part  
25 of the military, it is a resource for us as

1  
2 veterans. The VA had the aura of military, so at  
3 first he didn't go there, but now he's grateful to  
4 it. And he cited some innovated program like the  
5 Farmer Veterans Coalition, because I told him  
6 about a veteran in my buildings who wants to be a  
7 botanist, and he's looking for a program to hook  
8 up with, and then you mentioned the vendors  
9 licenses--a lot of them want to be self-employed.  
10 Three: daily stress reduction practices like  
11 meditation or yoga. Usually these communities  
12 give classes for free to veterans. They build the  
13 internal mechanism to regulate behavior and  
14 reactions. In the military, soldiers are trained  
15 to react, and they are never trained not to react.  
16 So, that if they have some PTSD, they have to  
17 struggle with their impulses, and this helps them  
18 learn an alternative mechanism. Four: diet and  
19 nutrition, what you eat affects the ability to  
20 control impulses, dramatically affects your life,  
21 learning how to cook foods that reduce stress.  
22 Resources could be cooking classes or nutritional  
23 consultation. So what these people, the veterans  
24 describe, is a sort of village approach as opposed  
25 to one aspect, dealing with one aspect. Instead

1  
2 of crisis intervention hotlines, and the IAVA  
3 nationally has counseled 20,000 veterans on their  
4 crisis hotline. These veterans suggested having  
5 veterans support groups, bi-weekly crisis  
6 prevention, instead of intervention. Weekly or  
7 bi-weekly struggles to deal with their problems.  
8 Community forms such as AA or NA. At Chicago's VA  
9 they have a battlefield experience leader of the  
10 PTSD department, and it has made a tremendous  
11 difference. Also, they hire and train  
12 paraprofessional counselors who are veterans with  
13 war experiences, who make about \$25,000 a year The  
14 most successful programs for PTSD have been Vets  
15 for Vets. IVAW has a program at Fort Hood with  
16 soldiers who are not currently deployed, they're  
17 on base. They have a coffee shop there and they  
18 deal with thousands of veterans. They've taken  
19 surveys. They got the commander in chief of the  
20 fort to have a town hall to address grievances  
21 about these issues so that they can be dealt with  
22 and not shoved under the rug. At the DOD, within  
23 the Department of Defense auspices, they sometimes  
24 ignore or cover up problems by stuffing soldiers  
25 with anti-depressants, which sometimes cause

1  
2 suicide. We had a veteran in San Francisco who  
3 was a sergeant who was on eight medications, some  
4 were contra-indicated, which doctors don't know  
5 about. Usually pharmacists know about contra-  
6 indications, and he died because of the medicine  
7 that he was on. And then they redeploy these sick  
8 soldiers and they avoid therapy by taking these  
9 drugs. There may also be a year-long waiting list  
10 to get counseling. And then I talk about the IAVA  
11 crisis intervention hotline, and their motto, take  
12 some time to add the Veteran Crisis Line to your  
13 phone, and visit them on line for a confidential  
14 chat. So, the veterans that I talked to preferred  
15 crisis prevention as opposed to intervention. And  
16 I've been in situations where we've had a meeting  
17 and, like, 20 veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan  
18 just couldn't make it because they went to Walter  
19 Reed hospital because someone was having a PTSD  
20 attack. So, they really care about their own and  
21 the fact that they reinforce each other prevents  
22 problems that, you know, let's say happened in  
23 Colorado. I know New York doesn't want a problem  
24 where people act out because of PTSD like they did  
25 in - - Housing is very important, because they

1  
2 found in Los Angeles, which has the highest rate  
3 of veteran homelessness, that it centers people  
4 whether they're on drugs or not, whether they have  
5 PTSD or not, and it allows them to be treated for  
6 all other problems, including not having a job.  
7 So, and this--veterans told me when they are  
8 discharged they are not told that they are  
9 eligible for unemployment insurance. And also,  
10 other veterans told me that when they are--you  
11 know, in order to fill out the form about whether  
12 or not you have PTSD when you leave the army or  
13 wherever you are, you have to fill out the form.  
14 But the person, the battlefield commander or  
15 superior can just waive that by signing off we're  
16 too busy, we've been deployed. So, they don't  
17 even have to take the survey when they're in the  
18 service. They're not aware that food stamps are  
19 available. The reason I mention this is because  
20 if you don't have any money when you come out of  
21 the service and you don't know that you're  
22 eligible for unemployment and food stamps, you  
23 know, if you have a little bit of money you could  
24 rent a room somewhere, and that would prevent  
25 homelessness. And also, we worked on a law in New

1  
2 York State, which was passed in 2010 to get  
3 veteran preferential housing, and I happen to know  
4 that, like, where I live, two people who are  
5 veterans were passed over even though they were  
6 supposed to be taken first. So, it's not  
7 necessarily being enforced. And I thought, you  
8 know, well, if I went down to the shelter that  
9 MOVA has and talked to all the people there and  
10 just like wrote down names of people who would  
11 like to have an apartment who are maybe employed  
12 but live at the shelter, then I could find people  
13 who would be eligible for these Mitchell Lama  
14 houses and apartments and hook them up with  
15 things, and then with individual buildings, and  
16 then maybe they would be able to get out of there.  
17 There should be counseling available to families,  
18 because right now families are the main counselors  
19 for returning veterans. And I know this because  
20 I've talked to many family members and you know,  
21 for like in any crisis they'll call up and they'll  
22 say, oh, my son or my brother is staying up all  
23 night, I don't know what to do, I don't know  
24 what's going to happen. And then, like, two weeks  
25 later I'll get another call. And so I know that

1  
2 the families are the ones that are providing most  
3 of the counseling now. They don't have, really,  
4 any help, and they deserve help. If they're going  
5 to be taking the job of this society and help  
6 reintegrate the veterans, then they should be  
7 getting some kind of--even if it's just a handout,  
8 to say you are not alone, you know, you deserve  
9 some--you are not alone, this can improve, there  
10 is light at the end of the tunnel. And there is  
11 light at the end of the tunnel. And the last  
12 thing I have to say is that if we end the war in  
13 Afghanistan as soon as possible, because most  
14 soldiers, maybe they are 17 years old, they go  
15 into the military, they become disillusioned  
16 because they don't agree with the mission like  
17 Secretary Robert Gates, and they don't think it's  
18 worth dying for or whatever, so that when they  
19 come back they are full of guilt. So, I know  
20 Selena, who testified for you, her friend  
21 committed suicide and she was really so upset  
22 about it that she dropped out of school. So, you  
23 know, we could cure a lot of these problems by  
24 preventing the redeployment and multiple  
25 redeployment. And I personally am for instituting

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the draft, because it widens the pool and it prevents multiple redeployments.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much, MS. Lionelle, thank you very much. Next panelist, please?

AUDREY CARR: Thank you. Good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Good afternoon.

AUDREY CARR: My name is Audrey Carr, I'm the Director of Immigration and Programs at Legal Services NYC. I thank the Committee this afternoon and other Council Members for hosting this hearing to address the needs of veterans adjusting to civilian life. Legal Services NYC is the largest provider of free legal services for the poor in the country. With offices in every borough, our attorneys and advocates have long-represented low-income veterans who have a variety of civil legal needs. In October 2011, we created the Veterans Justice Project, or VJP, to better serve this population, including military service members who would be returning to New York with the end of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The

1  
2 project aims to provide legal services to prevent  
3 homelessness and to preserve economic security for  
4 veterans and their families. Advocates in our  
5 project partner with veterans healthcare and  
6 social services facilities to provide legal  
7 services in locations frequented by veterans. We  
8 screen clients to identify barriers to stable  
9 housing and economic security, and gaps in social  
10 support services. We represent veterans, military  
11 service members, and their families, to prevent  
12 evictions and foreclosures, obtain federal rent  
13 subsidies and other federal and state benefits,  
14 avoid abusive debt collection, address child  
15 support challenges, and apply for naturalization.  
16 Through our citywide hotline, veterans and their  
17 family members can be connected to the legal  
18 services office in the borough where they live.  
19 To date, we have responded to over 170 calls both  
20 in English and in Spanish, and we have served more  
21 than 300 veterans, service members, and their  
22 families. Of these, 42% required assistance with  
23 housing problems, 19% needed help in obtaining  
24 public assistance, and the rest required help with  
25 employment, consumer debt, family and other

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2 problems. As an example of the types of cases we  
3 see, we recently prevented the eviction of a 78-  
4 year-old Korean War veteran when his landlord  
5 refused to accept rent payment from a charity  
6 willing to provide him an advance. As Council  
7 Members know, under City law a landlord cannot  
8 discriminate against a renter based on his income  
9 source. Our advocate representing the client  
10 wrote a demand letter to the landlord, who then  
11 accepted the veteran's rent payment provided by  
12 the charity. In another instance, Legal Services  
13 represented a 64-year-old disabled veteran who was  
14 scheduled for eviction. The veteran had a rent  
15 subsidy through the HUD VASH Section 8 program,  
16 and allegedly owed less than \$700 in back rent.  
17 Unfortunately, due to his disability, the veteran  
18 could not get to court by 11:00 in the morning,  
19 because he is unable to walk until his medication  
20 takes effect. Because he did not appear in court  
21 on time, the court ordered the judgment in warrant  
22 of eviction. Our advocate successfully stayed the  
23 eviction and presented defenses demonstrating that  
24 the veteran does not owe the alleged arrears. In  
25 addition to our direct service work, we provide

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2 training to both veterans and VA social service  
3 staff and healthcare providers to help them  
4 identify and address problems that can be solved  
5 without a lawyer. We also work in partnership  
6 with others in the City's advocacy community. We  
7 collaborate with the City Bar Justice Center's  
8 Veterans Assistance Project, and the Urban Justice  
9 Center, by making cross-referrals on issues  
10 including VA benefits and PTSD. Through our  
11 partnerships with the VA and our other service  
12 partners, we receive regular referrals of veterans  
13 who need legal help. Despite the availability of  
14 Legal Services through our Veterans Justice  
15 Project, there are many barriers that hinder  
16 veterans' transition into civilian life. For  
17 instance, our advocates have repeatedly heard that  
18 housing options for female veterans are limited,  
19 as is housing for veterans with children. Income  
20 problems are often frequent, as low-income  
21 veterans and service members often have their bank  
22 account frozen or their wages garnished because of  
23 unaffordable debt. And finally, veterans, service  
24 members and their families often need to draft  
25 healthcare directives, wills, power of attorneys,

1  
2 and guardianship agreements, but there are no  
3 organizations that provide veterans with  
4 assistance of this type in the city. Additional  
5 funding is needed to allow legal service providers  
6 to expand services to address these needs and the  
7 broad range of other legal problems faced by low-  
8 income veterans and their families. We applaud  
9 the Committee for addressing the concerns of  
10 veterans as they adjust to civilian life. We are  
11 committed to working with the Committee and other  
12 programs to help those who have served our country  
13 make a smooth reintegration into civilian life.  
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
16 much. Do you have questions? Okay. Thank you  
17 very much, all of you. And let me recognize  
18 Council Member Gentile. He has to go, so he has  
19 some questions.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you.  
21 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you all, for all  
22 the work that you do for veterans. I'm just  
23 curious, Ms. Carr. So right now you're saying  
24 that legal services that you provide really are  
25 limited to eviction proceedings and things related

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to homelessness?

AUDREY CARR: Yeah, I mean, that's the majority of the cases that we see. When veterans call our hotline, they tend to have-- they've been evicted or they're being threatened with eviction, and that's the vast majority of cases that come to us, although we will help in other civil legal service needs. So, for example we do have veterans who call who for example since they've come home from the war they have diminished income. So prior to maybe going to the war they had--they were making a certain amount of money, they were responsible for child support; they come home, they elect not to go back to the job that they have and they find another job that maybe they don't earn as much and they need to modify their child support. So we have requests for assistance with that too.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: And you're able to handle those?

AUDREY CARR: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right.

AUDREY CARR: And a lot of folks, veterans applying for public benefits, trying to

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get on unemployment, getting food stamps. So, we try to handle those cases as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: And are you funded through the City of New York?

AUDREY CARR: No, we're not. We're funded through the Robin Hood Foundation, but it's only a two-year grant. So, money will run out.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: So you don't know what happens after that. Okay.

AUDREY CARR: No. We would love to be funded by the city.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Okay. But you are a 501 c 3, right?

AUDREY CARR: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Okay, that's good. You should knock on our doors then, okay?

AUDREY CARR: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: That's great. Ms. Schaffer, I don't always have the opportunity to see an organization come together from the very, very beginning, but in your case and the case of Heroes to Heroes I've had that. I was blessed with the opportunity to see Heroes to

1  
2 Heroes come together, and I must congratulate you  
3 for your dedication. Having been on that trip  
4 with you to Bethesda and to Walter Reed, to know  
5 the impact it had on you, it had on me--but it  
6 also had on you, that you went out and you really  
7 put this organization together as a result of  
8 having that trip, and meeting those disabled  
9 veterans. I'm curious though, and I'm not sure  
10 this mic is working, but I'm curious though as to  
11 what the Israeli military personnel imparted to  
12 the soldiers that you brought over?

13 JUDY SCHAFFER: Well, it was  
14 remarkable. First of all, our soldiers needed  
15 attention. The people we took over--it was a  
16 combination of people with PTSD. Some have the  
17 ability to work. One of the gentlemen had never  
18 left his home, and just to get him to pick up the  
19 phone and call me was--he grew leaps and bounds  
20 just to pick up that phone.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I'm just  
22 curious; how do you find those veterans? If  
23 someone is that reclusive and that affected by  
24 PTSD, how would you find someone?

25 JUDY SCHAFFER: Through other

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veterans.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Okay.

JUDY SCHAFFER: Through the VA. We now have the VA mental health service people who were interested in the program and who would like to refer people to us. Some people in the Department of Defense--our coach was from the Department of Defense this last team, so that opened up--people in the Wounded Warrior portion of the Department of Defense are very interested. We also have people from the Air Force Wounded Warriors who they want to do an Air Force program with us specifically. When we were in Israel, there were so many things--part of the program is to throw many emotional experiences at these veterans and give them an idea of--help them grow, help them go to the next level, help them to understand, PTSD is where they are for the rest of their lives; it's not going away. What was imparted to them--the big takeaway I think for most of them from what Israel does--Israel is a very physical country. They see your emotional following your physical. You've got to get physically healthy. You've got to keep physically

1  
2 active. So, if you're physically active, your  
3 emotional is going to follow. So, when treating  
4 PTSD they're very physical. We put them on  
5 bicycles. They did not just go sailing; they  
6 helped sail. There is a sailing program for PTSD  
7 that they also use for children who are autistic  
8 that works very well. They're finding that  
9 there's a lot of commonality between treating PTSD  
10 and autism. So, we were able to witness some of  
11 those programs. What was imparted to them--I  
12 can't--you know, I'm just trying to get the most  
13 important. Number one, was all of the mental  
14 health professionals are veterans. That was very  
15 comforting to them. A lot of what came out was, I  
16 got to the VA, for example--quoting a veteran--I  
17 go to the VA--and I got a call last week--can I  
18 call the Israeli therapist? Because a lot of  
19 them--there are a few therapists over there that  
20 said, whenever you want, we're a lifeline, call  
21 us. He said, I need his number again, I need to  
22 Skype, I need to talk to him. He said, I just go  
23 back from the VA and my therapist asked me--  
24 started telling me something about how I'm like a  
25 rape victim. And he said to me, I don't even get

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2 what she's talking about, I don't know why she's  
3 bringing that up. And he ended up calling the  
4 therapist in Israel, who is a veteran, and he was  
5 able to work it through with him. So, a bit thing  
6 they learned there was the comfort of being among  
7 veterans, being in a country where probably 95% of  
8 the citizens are veterans, so they were very  
9 comforted there. The people involved in the  
10 health care, the programs that were set up were  
11 set up by veterans and run by veterans. So when  
12 they walked into a program, it made sense. Beit  
13 Halochem, we have a group of people who are coming  
14 back, they want to build this Beit Halochem in New  
15 York. It means Home of the Warrior. It was  
16 created and built by wounded veterans in Israel.  
17 You walk in, it is a community center, and their  
18 deal is no veteran should ever have to have a meal  
19 alone, no disabled veteran, it's fully for  
20 disabled veterans. And our guys found it  
21 remarkable that when they walked in there were  
22 people in wheelchairs playing cards, having a good  
23 time. There was a guy in a wheelchair playing  
24 tennis with a guy with one arm, and they started  
25 joking with our veterans, saying, so which do you

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2 think is worse, being in a wheelchair or having  
3 one arm? And they're having a great time in that  
4 realm. They felt so at home. And they said, we  
5 need this. There's no music playing. It's  
6 perfectly comfortable for people with PTSD. They  
7 were able to play ping-pong, there's a shooting  
8 gallery in the basement.

9

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I'm  
10 curious. How has that changed their lives now?

11

JUDY SCHAFFER: Okay. They've  
12 gotten motivated, gotten involved. We have two  
13 people who said, you know what? Why not have,  
14 like, a collective community here of wounded  
15 veterans who can't work? What if we set up a  
16 kibbutz-like structure? And they found land in  
17 South Dakota.

18

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: In South  
19 Dakota, right. Okay.

20

JUDY SCHAFFER: They're doing this  
21 on their own.

22

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Great.

23

JUDY SCHAFFER: I connected them  
24 with the kibbutz council in the southern Negev.  
25 They're back and forth, working on plans to build

1  
2 this community so they can all work, they can feel  
3 like they matter, they can be part of a community.  
4 Two of our most--our veterans who have the most  
5 severe PTSD were so excited by the program that  
6 they asked to join our board. And they're going  
7 to work as assistant coaches on our future trips.  
8 They want to help other veterans. They do want to  
9 go back and have another Israel experience.  
10 They're also looking at other programs over there  
11 that would be great to bring more of our veterans.  
12 I think the biggest takeaway was that they can do  
13 it, that, you know, veterans around the world--and  
14 I think we need to show this off a bit more in  
15 this country--veterans with severe PTSD have done  
16 remarkable things over there and it's showcased.  
17 They don't have this central government program  
18 like we do, so the veterans go out--and it started  
19 because they had nothing, and they felt empowered,  
20 and it's about empowerment. And that's a lot of  
21 what our program does, is provide that empowerment  
22 and show them that veterans just like themselves  
23 are empowered. It gives them a buddy system.  
24 People who--they'll say, well, I didn't get that  
25 from the VA. The guy in Israel is going, what are

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you talking about? Just get up and do it.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right. It changes lives.

JUDY SCHAFFER: Okay, this is how you do it.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Yes.

JUDY SCHAFFER: And they're getting support from people who aren't in the same trap.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right. I understand.

JUDY SCHAFFER: And so, we found the spouses call me and say, Judy, I don't know what you guys did in ten days, but he's smiling and laughing.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Mr. Poriotis, I know you want to say something. I want to ask you also--

WESLEY PORIOTIS: [off mic]

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right. And whether or not, how you deal with PTSD.

WESLEY PORIOTIS: Yeah. It's fascinating. Gosh. We see individuals, we just interviewed an enlisted service person, a marine and his wife, both serving, and they said after

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2 two and a half years of unemployment, this was  
3 their last stop. This was their last stop. I  
4 must tell you that with 18 suicides a day, with  
5 five attempted suicides a day, I'm very perplexed  
6 as to why there hasn't been a separate PTSD silo  
7 called employment. What this wonderful lady is  
8 doing is incredible. When you study--the Rand  
9 Institute and everything they've done to  
10 ameliorate PTSD with service dogs, horses, no one  
11 has ever surveyed the before and after, those who  
12 come in near suicide, deeply depressed, deeply  
13 distressed, and the before and after. We now see  
14 them, six and eight and ten months after  
15 employment, with a whole new outlook on life. I'm  
16 not a clinical psychologist, so I can't define  
17 that the PTSD has gone away, but anecdotally and  
18 experientially, out of several hundred cases, it  
19 certainly has evaporated and the symptoms have  
20 gone away. I would say that Councilman Eugene's  
21 survey on unemployment and the reasons for  
22 veterans unemployment, you could add one more  
23 factor, and that is the exacerbation of PTSD  
24 through long-term chronic unemployment, or the  
25 reverse. How much does chronic unemployment

1  
2 contribute to PTSD? In fact, all of our work and  
3 all of our studies on this show that there's no--  
4 in the employment cycle, there's no clinical  
5 psychiatrist or PTSD training to enhance that  
6 process for interviews--it's mostly for the mental  
7 part of it, and it's not intertwined with the  
8 employment side. I have to tell you something,  
9 that a quality job for Marcus Intrazile  
10 [phonetic], an African American E3, who literally,  
11 Councilman, walked 11 miles to our office because  
12 he didn't have the money for transportation, he  
13 walked 11 miles for an interview. He was so  
14 deeply distressed as being near homeless with his  
15 wife and child living somewhere else, that now he  
16 walks in six months later, after employment  
17 through Champion Mentoring--and I'm being long-  
18 winded, but forgive me--a different person. The  
19 PTSD has gone away.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Great.

21 WESLEY PORIOTIS: We have at least  
22 100 cases like that. And if we could complement  
23 the PTSD work, because many of the people that  
24 come in don't acknowledge PTSD, but you can see it  
25 on their faces, and it sure changes with

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employment.

JUDY SCHAFFER: And just to bring up the employment that we learned there, and I think this is the most remarkable thing, the one thing we forget about in this country, when you go--I have a son who just graduated, he's going to HR people--we're ignoring the education of the most important people in this process. It's not the veteran's fault. In ever college, every corporation should be required to put their HR people through an education on the military, because our vets can sit there and say, you know what, I led 300 people and bombs were flying, and I got them out of it. And this 25-year-old is going to go, yeah, but you never moved a group from one place, you never planned a meeting. You never did an agenda.

WESLEY PORIOTIS: I would add that military--you know, the process says, this is your military occupational specialty; translate it into an employment and applicable civilian billet. And you know, there's 85% of the transitioning military are enlisted. 23% are college degree holders. But the vast bulk are high school

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2 graduates whose military to civilian skills reap  
3 them very little translatable positions. Many  
4 don't want to translate those military skills into  
5 civilian--they want something else. And  
6 unfortunately, I've seen the ladder leaning  
7 against the wall in terms of programs in the  
8 public sector to help these individuals, and  
9 they're leaning against the wrong side of the  
10 wall. One needs somebody to wrap their arms  
11 around them, and sometimes we get three or four  
12 mentors for someone to push them into creative  
13 opportunities beyond their imagination. They come  
14 out thinking, if they're enlisted in lower level,  
15 security, fireman, NYPD, as opposed to filmmaking,  
16 as opposed to some of the other opportunities that  
17 are opened up because a small business person  
18 says, well, they call us and say, we have failed  
19 as Champion Mentors, but guess what, we're going  
20 to hire the young man or woman to learn our  
21 business, which was very analogous to post World  
22 War II.

23 JUDY SCHAFFER: I think we need to  
24 make it more of the businesses' responsibility to  
25 learn about our military too. And I think that's

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2 where--we keep trying to fit people in different  
3 things, and ultimately you come in and you don't  
4 have responsibility, you don't have the--not the  
5 responsibility--you don't have the experience.

6 WESLEY PORIOTIS: It will take 25  
7 years.

8 JUDY SCHAFFER: It will take 25  
9 years. Because at the same time--

10 WESLEY PORIOTIS: [Interposing] If  
11 you think of 1949, 1950, 95% of the Harvard  
12 graduating class had served, 92% of congress had  
13 served. Today it's probably 4% to 6%. So, this  
14 thing called military is an alien in their own  
15 land. They're a stranger in their own country.  
16 And she's right.

17 JUDY SCHAFFER: We've got to teach  
18 the HR people. That's got to be a requirement as  
19 part of a corporation, Fortune 500 corporations.  
20 Teach their HR people about the military instead  
21 of having it be the opposite.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: The  
23 opposite.

24 WESLEY PORIOTIS: Many companies  
25 talk the talk about employment, we want to hire

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2 veterans and you're very right. The veteran sits  
3 there and articulates leadership and discipline  
4 and project management, and it falls on deaf ears,  
5 because in many companies the leadership is that  
6 person who makes the most money or has the most  
7 people under their command. It's not the people  
8 who've had true leadership. The only true  
9 leadership training in the country is from the  
10 military.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right.

12 WESLEY PORIOTIS: It's the last  
13 bastion of merit-based leadership, but it falls on  
14 deaf ears because they're told by the public  
15 sector, go in and talk about your leadership--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:

17 [Interposing] Right.

18 WESLEY PORIOTIS: --and your  
19 discipline. You know what? It has a rebound  
20 effect. I say do the reverse. Walk in and we  
21 have a whole different program that says something  
22 different. Forget my leadership, my progress, my  
23 project management, my discipline; you know that.  
24 Let me talk about another side. But if you have  
25 someone talking about it for you--I would imagine

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2 anybody in this room, as I said in my prepared  
3 testimony, probably connected with someone to get  
4 a job.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right.

6 WESLEY PORIOTIS: Had a, you know,  
7 social linkage, who you know. And what the public  
8 sector has never done is formalized the who you  
9 know in a networking process that transfers the  
10 network to an individual, as opposed to the  
11 laborious, numbing--this is how you interview.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right.

13 WESLEY PORIOTIS: As opposed to--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:

15 [Interposing] Well, that's the good work that your  
16 group does. Ms. Carr, did you want to say  
17 something?

18 AUDREY CARR: Yes. Well, just to  
19 add to what's already been said, I mean, when we  
20 were starting this project at Legal Services, one  
21 of the things that we did was we asked our staff  
22 who's been in the military. And, or even if you  
23 hadn't been in the military, do you know someone  
24 that's been in the military, because we thought  
25 that it was really important that we get people

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2 invested in the project who had knowledge about  
3 the military. And the other thing we did is we  
4 trained everybody who was going to be involved in  
5 the military on military culture, and to be  
6 competent in military culture. So that when--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:

8 [Interposing] Very good.

9 AUDREY CARR: --the vets started  
10 calling our hotline we had some understanding of  
11 their needs, their insecurities, what they were  
12 looking for, their frustrations from calling all  
13 over the city and not being able to get help. And  
14 we wouldn't be turning somebody away, we would  
15 say, okay, yes, come to us. We maybe not be able  
16 to help you with a specific issue, but we know  
17 someone who can, and make sure we link up that  
18 person. For example, we have a bankruptcy  
19 project. When I hear there's a referral in the  
20 Bronx, from our office in the Bronx to our  
21 bankruptcy project, I physically get up and go to  
22 the director of the bankruptcy project and say,  
23 Bill, we have to have your intake person call this  
24 vet back today, so that they don't feel that  
25 they've been given hassle and a runaround. And I

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2 think it's very true that after World War II,  
3 almost everybody knew someone who had served, and  
4 that's what's lacking today.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: That's  
6 lacking today.

7 WESLEY PORIOTIS: The New York City  
8 Council could be the hero in this city forever and  
9 ever. The New York City Council could tap the  
10 untapped desire by New Yorkers to do something.  
11 The reason I say this is people were told by  
12 President Bush, go out to shop, do things normal  
13 after 9/11. And now you see the sticker, We  
14 Support Our Troops. But there's no tangible  
15 things that most New Yorkers can do.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: That's  
17 true. Right.

18 WESLEY PORIOTIS: And, you know, we  
19 have been surprised. The best Champion Mentors  
20 are the women in small and mid-sized businesses  
21 who had to strive twice as hard as their male  
22 counterparts to make it up the ladder.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right.

24 WESLEY PORIOTIS: They've had to  
25 work harder, longer, and the non-veteran women

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then take a young veteran under their wing and move heaven and hell with their process, to open up interviews, and then to relentlessly pursue that person--what have you done lately? So we have a protocol on both sides.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: And that's why the mentoring program has been so--

WESLEY PORIOTIS: [Interposing] But the mentoring is probably a misnomer. Ours is about job creation as opposed to the warm and fuzzy thank you for your service. And I tell you, New York City Council, through its communications PSA could say, hire a veteran, or mentor one.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right.

WESLEY PORIOTIS: We don't want to push placement, because we know there's a rebound effect. We want to push your getting to know someone, because 80% of the hire is chemistry. Once that chemistry ensues, you then open up that network.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: That's true.

WESLEY PORIOTIS: You call your friend and you say, John, we play poker every

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2 Friday night. You need a new car like a hole in  
3 the head, you've got to see this 22-year-old kid  
4 who I've met, and you're going to spend time with  
5 him--

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COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:

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[Interposing] Right.

8

WESLEY PORIOTIS: --and you're

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going to move heaven and hell with your network to  
10 open up a job.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: And it

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does--one on one.

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WESLEY PORIOTIS: It works.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Let me

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just say that we have great leadership of our

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Chairman here, and so I have great hope that we

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will lead the pack in issues related to veterans

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and working with the Commissioner Holliday, who

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you heard here today, hopefully we can do that

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survey and do some other things related to helping

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those veterans. And Mr. Chairman, I do have to

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run, but I do want to say, is, one of the good

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things about holding a hearing that you've done

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here today is that you have not only the City

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Commissioner, but the groups here today that may

1  
2 have not met each other before, but met each other  
3 here now for the first time and that can share  
4 their expertise and offer each other help. So,  
5 I'm hoping that that's the case that you can do  
6 that. And really, for the benefit of our  
7 veterans, really.

8 WESLEY PORIOTIS: Thank you. And  
9 most of us are non-profits, but it's totally  
10 unintentional.

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
12 much.

13 WESLEY PORIOTIS: With your help we  
14 can go, we can take the next step.

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very  
16 much, Council Member Gentile. You may observe  
17 that, you know, I didn't interrupt, I let you  
18 talk, and I let you go to your--because I believe  
19 that we have so much to do for our veterans and we  
20 need so much information. And it will require all  
21 of us together to make sure that we provide to our  
22 veterans the best services possible. And I want  
23 to learn from you, that's the reason I was  
24 listening, very quiet. I had a lot of questions  
25 for you, but that was very instructive. You know,

1  
2 as to - - what you have been saying. And again,  
3 to all of you, I want to thank you for the  
4 wonderful job that you are doing. But I just--I  
5 do have some very quick questions, because it's  
6 getting late. As a matter of fact, jobs for our  
7 veterans, jobs, jobs, jobs. We have to come  
8 together as a strong power, a full powerful team,  
9 to create jobs for our veterans, to give them  
10 access to housing. It doesn't make sense that  
11 unemployment is higher in the veteran population.  
12 It doesn't make sense that joblessness is a--I  
13 mean homelessness is higher among veterans. It  
14 doesn't make sense. And if this happens, we've  
15 got to know why, what's going on. And we have to  
16 try to correct it. And that's the reason I  
17 believe, as you mentioned, that reinforce--you put  
18 advisors on that also. It is very important that  
19 we conduct surveys. Let's find out what's going  
20 on. If there's a problem, we've got to find out  
21 what's going on. We cannot sit back, sit back and  
22 say, yeah, you know that is higher among veterans.  
23 No, no. This is wrong. And I guarantee you, with  
24 my colleagues and with the City Council, I'm going  
25 to advocate. I'm going to make sure that we

1  
2 conduct surveys to know why the unemployment, the  
3 homelessness, are higher among veterans and what  
4 is exactly the right solution. We have to do  
5 that. And I believe that we have everything that  
6 it takes to make a difference, but we have to be  
7 more aggressive and proactive. Ms. Schaffer? It  
8 seems that your organization, Heroes to Heroes,  
9 you don't provide service directly to the  
10 veterans.

11 JUDY SCHAFFER: We do, yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: If you do, let  
13 me ask you, for PTSD, do you have medical  
14 professionals being part of your organization?  
15 Because you have been talking about the prevention  
16 of PTSD and other type of services.

17 JUDY SCHAFFER: We work with PTSD.  
18 By the time we get them, they have PTSD, and it's-  
19 -

20 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [Interposing]  
21 Yes, absolutely, that's what I know. Okay.

22 JUDY SCHAFFER: It's lifelong. We  
23 work with a group of professionals in Israel.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You work with  
25 a group, or you have professionals in your team?

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Are you--

JUDY SCHAFFER: [Interposing] Well, they work as part of our team when we're overseas.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. So you partner with them.

JUDY SCHAFFER: We partner with them overseas. And we've found our veterans were very comfortable with them.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay.

JUDY SCHAFFER: Because they're all veterans themselves.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So, that means your partners, those medical professionals, they are overseas. They are not in the United States?

JUDY SCHAFFER: Right. In the United States, we insist that they continue with the VA, with their program that they're currently in.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Oh, you send them to the VA.

JUDY SCHAFFER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But you don't have staff members--

JUDY SCHAFFER: [Interposing] We

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don't have on our staff.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay.

JUDY SCHAFFER: We have advisors,  
we have people who--in advisory board.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay, good.  
How many people that you have served, how many  
veterans, through your...?

JUDY SCHAFFER: We had our first  
team. We're a brand new organization. We've  
served 11 veterans--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [Interposing]  
11 veterans.

JUDY SCHAFFER: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. All  
right. Thank you very much. And thank you for  
what you're doing, you know, for our veterans.

JUDY SCHAFFER: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.  
And Mr. Poriotis. I'm not going to say the other  
word, the word they may have used at the federal  
government.

WESLEY PORIOTIS: It was a great  
leavening effect.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So we have met

1  
2 several times, and again, I want to thank you on  
3 what you're doing on behalf of the veterans. I  
4 want to thank the Veterans Across America, I know  
5 that you are doing a wonderful, wonderful job.  
6 And you mentioned in your testimony that Veterans  
7 Across America have been creating about 60% jobs.

8 WESLEY PORIOTIS: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Right? Can  
10 you give us a detail about what type of jobs they  
11 are?

12 WESLEY PORIOTIS: Yes, yes. Well.

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Very briefly  
14 because we're running out of time.

15 WESLEY PORIOTIS: Briefly. These  
16 jobs are not so much about placing people in an  
17 open job, Councilman, because so many hundreds of  
18 veterans will apply for that one job. We realized  
19 that having started this in 1996, that the best  
20 way to create a job was to introduce someone to an  
21 individual who had a vast network and could work  
22 that network. So, the jobs that are being  
23 created--I'll give you an example, one high school  
24 degree-holder, a Ranger with 11 deployments, 11--  
25 you talked about multiple deployments. At 31-

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years of age with three children, his mentor at  
CBS--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [Interposing]  
Say it again? How old did you say?

WESLEY PORIOTIS: 11 deployments,  
31-years of age.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: 11?

WESLEY PORIOTIS: 11, yes. Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: This is...

WESLEY PORIOTIS: I couldn't  
believe this.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Wow.

WESLEY PORIOTIS: 11. His mentor  
is another Ranger at CBS who broke all the bones  
in his body, who was near death in Walter Reed,  
and vowed that he would dedicate his life in  
helping veterans. He's now the head of the tax  
department, and the general counsel at CBS. He's  
taken this young man who's got a high school  
degree, and he's teaching him the tax business.  
So, totally unrelated to this Army E7 Ranger's  
background, which was some esoteric occupational  
specialty. So it ranges from tax to risk  
management, to filmmaking. Many of the jobs that

1  
2 are created connect to the passion of the  
3 individual or the avocation, not so much the  
4 military occupational specialty. They want  
5 something beyond that. So they're across the  
6 board. New York Stock Exchange mentors are  
7 creating jobs, it's on and on. The level of jobs  
8 and the creation of jobs for 65% of those people  
9 who are paired with a mentor, sometimes we have to  
10 pair them with two or three, go beyond their  
11 military occupational specialties.

12 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You have  
13 something available or do you have a setting also  
14 for disabled veterans?

15 WESLEY PORIOTIS: Oh, yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Have you  
17 serving disabled--

18 WESLEY PORIOTIS: [Interposing] We  
19 not only serve disabled veterans, but we serve  
20 their family members. As many of us know in this  
21 room, the single mother family caretaker becomes a  
22 dependent of the person she's taking care of.  
23 Most recently, one US Marine, whose spine and neck  
24 was shattered with a sniper's bullet, his mother  
25 was driven into poverty. There was no money

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2 coming into the home. They were impoverished.  
3 So, we connected the daughter to a mentor who  
4 opened up an opportunity for her at Univision in a  
5 marketing capacity to drive some income into the  
6 family. So, yes, the disabled veteran and their  
7 family members. Sometimes it's not the veteran  
8 who can work, it's the family member to drive  
9 income, so we'll match them with a mentor.

10 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. You  
11 mentioned approximately 16 or 18 suicides among  
12 veterans. Those happen in the war zones or in the  
13 United States? I'm not too sure.

14 WESLEY PORIOTIS: Repeat that  
15 again?

16 JUDY SCHAFFER: Suicides.

17 WESLEY PORIOTIS: 18 suicides a  
18 day.

19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: A day.

20 WESLEY PORIOTIS: A day.

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Inside United  
22 States or in the war zone?

23 WESLEY PORIOTIS: Mostly in the US.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: In the US.

25 WESLEY PORIOTIS: Yes. I don't

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know the breakdown between that 18. There are 5 to 10 attempted.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Do you have the number for New York?

WESLEY PORIOTIS: I do not.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You don't know.

WESLEY PORIOTIS: No.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. All right.

WESLEY PORIOTIS: That's an abominable number.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: It is.

WESLEY PORIOTIS: When I heard it for the first time, I thought the person was using the wrong number, but then again, that's...

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: My question to the Commissioner is to try to tell us exactly what would be the reason for the higher unemployment among veterans. But it's simple, we didn't have an answer for that, as you know, because there is no scientific survey or research with respect to that, but you have been trying to give us explanations about why, about why, you know, the

1  
2 unemployment among veterans, among veterans is  
3 higher. But my question to you is, what do you  
4 think, based on what you said, what do you think  
5 could be done or should be done to decrease the  
6 number of unemployment among veterans? I know  
7 that this is a topic, this is very dear to you.

8 WESLEY PORIOTIS: Well, it's very  
9 dear to me, and I would say that we need the New  
10 York City Council's outreach in terms of  
11 communications to ask each and every business  
12 person, each and every New Yorker that wants to  
13 volunteer as a Champion Mentor to do so, and to  
14 ask each and every veteran who is under-employed,  
15 unemployed, or has been seeking work--and many  
16 seek it desperately--to come through the City  
17 Council's central resource to be connected. You  
18 could lower--there's what, 865,000 official  
19 unemployment--out of the 242,000 veterans in New  
20 York, I think there may be as much as 40% to 50%  
21 under- or unemployed, and among young veterans its  
22 terrifically high and no one has the true  
23 statistic. So I would say you could really attack  
24 it by three to five percentage points and lower  
25 the unemployment for veterans down to 2% to 3% by

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2 connecting them with someone, who again, has the  
3 passion and the network to move heaven and hell.  
4 Because everything we've talked about in 20 years  
5 of public service help for unemployment has  
6 resolved around résumé writing, interview counsel,  
7 dress for success. But as one general said to me  
8 who ran the recruitment command--he's from Texas--  
9 he says, well, he says, I walk into a room dressed  
10 for success with great interview counsel, and my  
11 résumé is written, damn it, I need to know  
12 somebody; I ain't going to walk into a room and--  
13 you know, he was saying, enough of charm school, I  
14 need to have a connected linkage.

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay.

16 WESLEY PORIOTIS: So, New York City  
17 Council and the New York City government could  
18 lower unemployment and under-employment and  
19 enhance this City and give back to New Yorkers who  
20 want to do something. It's not onerous. We  
21 thought it would be; most New Yorkers we've  
22 tapped, will you spend time and manage the  
23 process, they said yeah.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Right.

25 WESLEY PORIOTIS: And it's the non-

1  
2 veteran who spends a lot of time because they want  
3 to do something. So, a long-winded answer to your  
4 question, we could lower unemployment and under-  
5 employment by connecting. Everybody in this room  
6 has a rolodex and a connective linkage, and if we  
7 just multiply this by, you know, 200,000 times,  
8 we've lowered it.

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: With respect  
10 to the survey, I do believe that we have to have a  
11 survey, we have to conduct research, we have to  
12 have an understanding of what's going on if we  
13 want to resolve it. So will Veterans Across  
14 America be willing, or would you be willing to be  
15 part of the team to help conduct a very--

16 WESLEY PORIOTIS: [Interposing] We  
17 did this for Congress back in '06.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: All right.

19 WESLEY PORIOTIS: And the result  
20 was we brought together the Vice Presidents of  
21 Consumer Package Goods Marketing from Kraft and  
22 the giant companies that they know, Proctor and  
23 Gamble, and the result was they said, military  
24 service as a brand, like an equity brand, has been  
25 lowered to such an extent that it's lost much of

1  
2 its value. And there are a lot of reasons for the  
3 deep under-employment. But, you are absolutely on  
4 point, because no one has ever done a definitive  
5 analysis as to why. We keep doing the same thing,  
6 like insanity, year after year, expecting  
7 different results, and no one knows the reason  
8 why. And a lot of it is what this lady has said,  
9 a behavioral vacuum among those on the employers'  
10 side as to what this thing called military person  
11 is.

12 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: All right.  
13 Thank you, Mr. Poriotis. Thank you for your  
14 service. Thank you for what you continue to do  
15 for our veterans. Thank you very much for your  
16 testimony. Thank you. Ms. Lionelle? Excuse me.  
17 I have to take the opportunity also, even though  
18 we are running out of time, you deserve it. Thank  
19 you also. You are a strong and powerful advocate  
20 for our veterans. I see you, you know, at all the  
21 hearings. You always come. I don't know where  
22 you get the strength and the energy to fight so  
23 much. Thank you very much. I commend you for  
24 that. I commend you for that. Let me ask you one  
25 question very quickly. You said that many

1  
2 veterans want to get far from VA. Could you  
3 explain to us very briefly why? Because I think  
4 that, you know, VA provides services that would  
5 probably want to go to the VA.

6 LIONELLE HAMANAKA: Well sometimes-  
7 -right, yes. I think there's a split in the  
8 population of people who are getting out of the  
9 service and they do not want to associate with the  
10 military because they don't--they want to get away  
11 from the atmosphere and they want a civilian life.  
12 And they don't understand the many things that the  
13 VA can do for them. And I've found this true of  
14 young people and a person who is 80-years old.  
15 So, it's across the board. Just because you've  
16 been around for a longer time doesn't mean you  
17 know any more about what an agency can do for you.  
18 So it's possible that, you know--but some people  
19 are really disillusioned by their experience.  
20 They're very depressed. They want to get back to  
21 what they call normal life, and they're just sort  
22 of lost. A lot of people, I think.

23 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I see.

24 LIONELLE HAMANAKA: Especially the  
25 young kids.

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Is that--could it be also because of a lack of outreach from the VA to explain exactly the services they are providing and also to try to reach out to a young vet and let them know exactly what--

LIONELLE HAMANAKA: [Interposing] I don't know about the VA, because I don't really have much experience with them.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay.

LIONELLE HAMANAKA: But I know that nobody--very few people know about what MOVA does.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay.

LIONELLE HAMANAKA: And I think that, you know, they could profit a great deal from it.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: All right. You said also that the most successful program for PTSD has been Vet to Vet. Can you explain that?

LIONELLE HAMANAKA: These are like--I think they started forming in 2004, and they're just little discussion groups; they're kind of informal, and sometimes they're led by a therapist and sometimes they're not. The second thing, and they've been in lots of documentaries--the main

1  
2 thing is that these people really care about each  
3 other, and if they feel that someone is depressed  
4 or something like that, or needs help, they'll,  
5 like, rush there and help them. And the other  
6 thing was that a friend of mine who is in Chicago,  
7 who has been doing PTSD work since the Vietnam  
8 War, said that he's now working for the Chicago  
9 VA, and that they have a unit manager who is a  
10 battlefront--like, you said, in Israel, who has  
11 war experience, and that because of that they're  
12 very successful.

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: All right.  
14 Thank you very much. Thank you so much. And  
15 again, thank you again for your advocacy for  
16 veterans. Thank you. And Ms. Carr?

17 AUDREY CARR: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you  
19 also. Thank you for your testimony. And I'm  
20 going to ask you probably one or two very quick  
21 questions. Are you--Legal Services New York, is  
22 it affiliated to Legal Aid Society? This is two  
23 different?

24 AUDREY CARR: No. We're completely  
25 two different organizations.

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You are not working together.

AUDREY CARR: We're not.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay, very good. But you mentioned that you provided legal services on location for--you provide services to the veterans, right?

AUDREY CARR: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But do you represent them? Because we at City Council, we provide grants to many legal organizations to serve the people of New York, the New Yorkers, but it seems that they don't represent clients; but do you represent them in court?

AUDREY CARR: We do represent veterans. We have lawyers in all our offices as well as paralegals. Of course we will represent the veteran in areas where we have expertise. So, housing, foreclosure, bankruptcy, family law. But, yes, our lawyers do take on cases and they would represent the individual that comes to us.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So, you don't only provide advice or information or counseling, no? You do represent them also.

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AUDREY CARR: We do representation,  
yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. My last  
question, you know--but before my last question,  
it seemed that somewhere in your testimony you  
mentioned that you provide services in English and  
Spanish.

AUDREY CARR: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But what about  
the other languages? Because we know that New  
York City is home to so many immigrants. I'm not  
talking about Haitian Creole or me, right? I'm  
talking about the Chinese, the Pakistanis, and--  
you name it, you know, the Italian.

AUDREY CARR: We can serve that  
population. We have a language access policy with  
in Legal Services, where we provide interpreters  
and translation services to anyone that comes to  
us, for free. We--our hotline for the Veterans  
Services project is in English and Spanish because  
we found out that the most--it seemed that the  
vast majority of people who would be calling that  
hotline already speak English, because they were  
in the military, they're probably very fluent and

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2 versed in English, and we put in Spanish  
3 specifically for family members who--of Latino  
4 service members or veterans, who may need Spanish-  
5 speaking. We haven't really seen the need for  
6 Chinese yet. It doesn't mean that it's not there,  
7 but it is available.

8 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I thank you.  
9 You know, there is a big issue--I think this is a  
10 very important issue. Especially for United  
11 States, the land of immigrants, the land where we  
12 say that, come here, the land of opportunity. We  
13 all know the history. This country has been built  
14 by immigrants. And, you know, all of us,  
15 regardless of where we came from, we have  
16 ancestors or parents or great-grandfathers and  
17 mothers, they have all contributed enormously to  
18 United States. Anyone can trace his origin or his  
19 origins from one or several countries. So, that  
20 means there are veterans that have served, that  
21 have put their lives in danger for this country,  
22 but for one or either reason, because of  
23 immigration status, they have been deported back  
24 to their country of origin. I believe--they are  
25 good to go to fight for this country, but they are

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2 not good to stay in this country? This is tough.  
3 You know, for somebody who went to fight for this  
4 country, for the opportunity that we have over  
5 here, somebody who went and put his life in danger  
6 for this country, being deported back to his  
7 country of origin, leaving a wife and children and  
8 family behind--this is something I don't think  
9 that should happen in America, regardless of the  
10 origin of the person. But, since Legal Services  
11 New York, do you--are you aware of this situation?  
12 Is there anything that Legal Services of New York  
13 is doing or could do about that?

14 AUDREY CARR: Well, as you can see  
15 from my title, the first part of my title is  
16 Director of Immigration, so it's very close to my  
17 heart.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay.

19 AUDREY CARR: And we are actively  
20 actually looking for anyone that served in the  
21 military who may be facing deportation  
22 proceedings. Recently, towards the end of last  
23 year, the Department of Homeland Security  
24 announced a new policy--well, it really isn't new,  
25 I mean, they've always had this--but where they

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2 would allow their attorneys to have prosecutorial  
3 discretion in order to determine who would be a  
4 priority for deportation. And one of the groups  
5 that they said is not a priority are our military  
6 service members. So the thing is, that's a--you  
7 know, everybody is so afraid of immigration  
8 authorities and coming forward, because they  
9 believe that if they come forward they risk  
10 deportation. And we're actively trying to reach  
11 that population, folks who have served in the  
12 military, who may be lawful permanent residents  
13 who have some criminal background and may be  
14 facing deportation, or even folks who have not  
15 naturalized and really should naturalize, because  
16 there is an expedited process if you've been in  
17 the military, to get US Citizenship. So, that's  
18 also part of our program at Legal Services.

19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yeah, but  
20 honestly, let me tell you honestly, and I'm  
21 willing to work together with you, with your  
22 organization, to champion that, to do everything  
23 that I can do at my level of City Council or just  
24 a citizen, because I don't believe that people who  
25 put their life in danger, who made the utmost

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sacrifice for this country, regardless of their immigration status, they should be granted also the right to stay here.

AUDREY CARR: Yeah, I think--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [Interposing]  
Regardless of what they--

[crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: If they are not good to stay here, they're not good also to go to fight for this country.

AUDREY CARR: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And I think this is not a good message, this is not right. We, our citizens, government, and our leaders and our people, we should do everything we can to ensure that those people who have made the utmost sacrifice receive the authorization to stay here in this country.

AUDREY CARR: Yes. And that policy really separates families, and you know, and it drives people into poverty, because you may have the main breadwinner in the family who has been in the military and now is being forced--is going to be deported--and you have a family left behind in

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2 the United States. So it is a--it's a very huge  
3 problem, and we welcome working with you on this  
4 very issue.

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.

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Please, when you get the opportunity, contact my  
7 office and see how we can follow up.

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AUDREY CARR: Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And again, to

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all of you, thank you very much. Also - - thank

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you so much for your patience. We know that we

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have been punishing you today. You get used to

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that. Barbara, thank you so much. To all of you,

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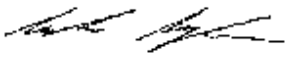
thank you very much. Meeting adjourned. Thank

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you.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Erika Swyler certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature 

Date 3/8/2012