

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND LABOR

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March 22, 2022
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HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING - VIRTUAL ROOM 3

B E F O R E: Carmen N. De La Rosa, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Erik D. Bottcher
Tiffany Caban
Oswald Feliz
Kamillah Hanks
Rita C. Joseph
Julie Menin
Francisco P. Moya
Sandy Nurse
Crystal Hudson

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

Iris Smith
Edwin Torres
Bobbie Sackman
Wayne Ho
Tara Klein
LaRay Sullivan
Katelyn Andrews
MJ Okma

2 SERGEANT PEREZ: Good morning, folks. Just
3 give us a second while we confirm the stream.
4 Sergeant Lugo, the stream's been confirmed. You can
5 start your opening.

6 SERGEANT LUGO: Thank you. Good morning,
7 everyone. Welcome to today's remote New York City
8 Council of the Committee on Civil Service and Labor.

9 At this time, would all panelists please
10 turn on your videos. To minimize disruption, please
11 place electronic devices to vibrate or silent.

12 If you wish to submit testimony, you may
13 send it to testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again, that's
14 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you for your
15 cooperation. Chair De La Rosa, we are ready to begin.

16 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Good morning, and
17 I am Council Member Carmen De La Rosa, Chair of the
18 New York City Committee on Civil Service and Labor.
19 First, I'd like to acknowledge that we've been joined
20 by Council Member Crystal Hudson, Chair of the New
21 York City Council Committee on Aging. I would also
22 like to acknowledge my other Colleagues who have
23 joined us so far today, Council Member Caban,
24 welcome, and thank you all for being here.

2 I am Council Member De La Rosa, and I'm
3 proud to chair this Civil Service and Labor
4 Committee. Today, we will be hearing Resolution
5 number 24 of 2022 sponsored by Council Member Crystal
6 Hudson which calls for the New York State legislature
7 to pass and the Governor to sign the Fair Pay for
8 Home Care Act. This legislation would ensure that
9 home care workers are paid uniform and fair wages
10 across the state. In recent years, the aging
11 population and the increasing desire among the
12 elderly and those with disabilities for at-home care
13 have combined to generate an explosive growth in
14 demand for home care workers. In New York state, the
15 number of home health aid and personal care jobs is
16 projected to rise from 440,000 in 2018 to over
17 700,000 by 2028 driven by employment in home care
18 agencies, private households, and public programs
19 like the Medicare Consumer Directed Personal
20 Assistance Program. High turnover adds to the
21 problem. Employers across the state need to recruit
22 an average of 26,510 new aides each year simply to
23 keep up with the growing demand for care as well as
24 an additional 71,680 workers each year to replace the
25 thousands of aides who leave these occupations or

2 exit the labor force entirely. In total, over a 10-
3 year period from 2018 to 2028 nearly 1 million job
4 positions will be filled to meet the demand for home
5 care aides.

6 The demand for home care workers, aides
7 who work in private homes, already exceeds the
8 supply. A 2018-2019 statewide survey of home care
9 agencies found that on average 70 percent of home
10 care positions were left unfilled due to staff
11 shortages. Because home care work is typically poorly
12 paid as well as physically and emotionally stressful,
13 it is difficult to recruit new workers and retain
14 existing ones. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased
15 the demand for home care even more while further
16 depressing the labor supply.

17 Home care allows vulnerable community
18 members to remain living at home with dignity and
19 high-quality individualized care. Many immigrant
20 seniors and families prefer home care because they
21 can receive language accessible and culturally
22 competent care that they would not find in
23 institutionalized settings.

24 While it is crucial to examine the needs
25 of older adults and the programs that allow for them

2 to age in place, we must also ensure that the workers
3 providing these services are supported as well.

4 It is time that we invest in home care
5 workers to ensure that these workers can earn wages
6 that properly compensate them for the skilled and
7 important work that they do.

8 For New York's home care workers, the
9 most pressing issue is inadequate pay and a lack of
10 benefits. A significant number of home care workers
11 rely on public assistance and go without health
12 insurance coverage despite working full-time or
13 multiple jobs. Other concerns commonly cited by home
14 care workers include a stressful, complex, and high-
15 risk work environment, failure to receive full pay
16 for all hours worked, inconsistent work schedules,
17 and fluctuating income, and a lack of opportunities
18 for career advancement, promotions, and raises.

19 Home care is mostly provided by immigrant
20 and women of color. As we examine the challenges
21 facing this industry, I would like to take the
22 opportunity to uplift my own mother's story. She
23 worked as a home health aide for most of her life. I
24 saw firsthand the emotional and physical toll the job
25 took on her while making poverty wages that were

insufficient to put food on the table for our own family. My mother worked as a home health aide for 25 years, only being able to retire once I was elected to office. Despite poor wages and grueling work, I know my mother and the thousands of home care workers in New York state lead with their hearts. Their patients become part of our own families, spending holidays and birthdays with us. After years of backbreaking work, home care workers deserve to be fairly compensated, and this year we can finally achieve this in New York state. Today's my mother's birthday, and I hope we can give her and her colleagues who remain in the field good news this year.

Confronting the challenges affecting the state's home care industry will require transformative solutions including large-scale improvements in home care worker compensation and public funding for wage increases and health coverage. The Committee looks forward to receiving recommendations and feedback on Resolution number 24 of 2022.

The Committee's also interested in learning how the City Council can work with city and

2 state partners to better support home care workers. I
3 would like to take this opportunity to thank the
4 Committee Staff for their hard work in putting
5 today's hearing together, Committee Counsel Bianca
6 Vitale and Policy Analyst Elizabeth Arzt. I would
7 also like to thank my own staff, Chief of Staff James
8 Burke, Legislative Director Kiana Diaz, and
9 Communications Director Amelia Eberline.

10 I would now like to turn it over to
11 Council Member Hudson for her remarks and thank her
12 for her extraordinary leadership. Council Member
13 Hudson.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you so much,
15 Chair De La Rosa, and a very, very happy birthday to
16 your mother, Carmen.

17 Thank you, again, Chair De La Rosa and
18 Members of the Committee on Civil Service and Labor.
19 I'm Crystal Hudson, and today I'm honored that the
20 Committee on Civil Service and Labor will hear my
21 resolution calling on the state legislature to pass
22 and the Governor to sign the Fair Pay for Home Care
23 Act, especially when both houses of the state
24 legislature have included it in their one-house

2 budget bills and advocates are pressing Governor
3 Hochul to include it in her final state budget.

4 This resolution was the first piece of
5 legislation I introduced as a Member of the New York
6 City Council, and that's because it was and is so
7 very personal to me as this is also for Chair De La
8 Rosa. I was raised as the only child of a single
9 mother, Carol Hudson. When she was diagnosed with
10 Alzheimer's disease, I quickly and unexpectedly
11 became her primary caregiver, moving back home and
12 leaving a promising career in sports marketing to
13 care for her. My mother spent more than 40 years
14 working as a nurse in New York City. Yet, when it was
15 time to provide her with care, I realized just how
16 difficult it was to navigate the bureaucratic systems
17 in place that proprot to help folks obtain support,
18 yet in reality further confuse them and leave them
19 feeling defeated. I entered into public service
20 because I was determined to ensure that no one would
21 have to experience the challenges that my family did
22 when my mother got sick.

23 Thankfully, I was fortunate to have the
24 best care of 2 women, Paul and Carol, not dissimilar
25 from Chair De La Rosa's own mother, Carmen. They left

2 their homes everyday to come to ours. They loved my m
3 other as their own, and they provided world-class
4 care under difficult circumstances. Everyone who
5 needs home care deserves their own Paula and Carol
6 and Carmen. Yet, the meager wages, long hours, and
7 unpredictable schedules make it difficult to retain
8 workers, many of whom would rather find another job
9 than deal with the inequities in home care. These
10 wages further entrench the gender pay gap as most
11 home care workers are women, people of color, and
12 immigrants. We must act quickly or New York will
13 continue to have the worse home care shortage in the
14 nation while our state's population of older adults
15 rapidly expands. The Fair Pay for Home Care Act will
16 require home care workers to be paid a minimum of 150
17 percent of the regional minimum wage, which would
18 equate to \$22.50 an hour in New York City, up from
19 \$15.93 per hour. It will help alleviate poverty for
20 home care workers, chip away at the gender wage gap,
21 attract more home care workers, and boost our state's
22 economy with more income tax revenue and reduce
23 public assistance rolls.

24 I urge this Committee to pass this
25 resolution so we can show our state's 400,000 home

2 care workers that we hear them, we respect them, and
3 we know it's time to pay them the wages they deserve.
4 Thank you. I would just like to apologize in advance.
5 I have to run off to another meeting. Normally, I
6 would stay to hear the panels, but I do plan on
7 watching this afterwards and so thank you in advance
8 to everyone who's going to be here testifying. Thank
9 you, again, Chair De La Rosa. Thank you to the
10 Committee Members, and thank you to the staff.

11 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you,
12 Council Member Hudson, for your testimony.

13 I'd also like to acknowledge that we've
14 been joined by Council Member Moya, Bottcher, Nurse,
15 and Joseph. Thank you for joining, Colleagues.

16 I am now going to pass it over to our
17 policy analyst, Elizabeth Arzt, to go over some
18 procedures and some protocols for today.

19 ELIZABETH ARZT: Thank you, Chair. My name
20 is Elizabeth Arzt, and I am the Policy Analyst for
21 the Committee on Civil Service and Labor for the New
22 York City Council.

23 Before we begin, I want to remind
24 everyone that you will be on mute until you are
25

2 called on to testify, when you will be unmuted by the
3 host.

4 At today's hearing, members of the public
5 will give testimony followed by Council Member
6 question. I will be calling on panelists to testify
7 one at a time. Please listen for your name to be
8 called, and I will be periodically announcing who the
9 next panelists will be.

10 For everyone testifying today, please
11 note that there may be a few seconds of delay before
12 you are muted, and we thank you in advance for your
13 patience.

14 All hearing participants should submit
15 written testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

16 Council Members who have questions for a
17 particular panelist should use the raise hand
18 function in Zoom, and I will call on you after the
19 panelist has completed their testimony.

20 I will now call on members of the public
21 to testify. Each panelist will be given 5 minutes to
22 speak. For panelists, please wait a brief moment for
23 the Sergeant-at-Arms to announce that you may begin
24 before starting your testimony.

2 I would like to now welcome to testify
3 Iris Smith, Edwin Torres, and Bobbie Sackman. I will
4 be calling on you in that order. The Sergeant will
5 cue the panelist to speak and start the timer. Iris
6 Smith, you may begin.

7 SERGEANT PEREZ: Time starts

8 IRIS SMITH: Good morning, everyone. My
9 name is Iris Smith. I'm a home care worker, and I'm
10 happy to be here to give my testimony and happy
11 birthday to Miss De La Rosa's mother, Mrs. Carmen.

12 Why should we give home care workers a
13 fair pay wage? Home care workers are frontline
14 essential workers. We provide care that makes it
15 possible for seniors and the disabled to maintain
16 their dignity and respect in their homes in a safe
17 environment where they can thrive. Home care workers
18 prevent their clients from many trips to the
19 emergency room, admission to the hospitals, and long-
20 term care facilities, which can create a financial
21 burden on the health system. Right now, there's a
22 shortage of home care workers. Home care workers are
23 disappearing because they simply cannot afford to do
24 the work. It's a financial challenge for us to pay
25 rent, to buy food for our family, or to pay the

2 multiple train and bus fares just to get to work. We
3 are frontline essential workers. We are out there
4 during inclement weather, rain, sleet, or snow. We're
5 like the post office carrier. They deliver. We
6 deliver services. We provide those services during
7 blackouts, before the pandemic, and we will continue
8 to provide service after the pandemic. It's time for
9 home care workers to be acknowledged, respected, and
10 supported so that's why it's important for us to
11 receive that fair pay wage. It would say that the
12 work that you do is worth it. It would say that they
13 respect us. We're asking Governor Hochul to include
14 us in that budget for this year for that permanent
15 wage because home care workers have to work 130 hours
16 just to keep our health benefits, and it's not fair
17 to us. It's like we're doing more work and we're
18 getting less pay. The work that we do, we love it. We
19 love this work. We love providing care. It's not for
20 everybody, but it's for the people who really care
21 about people and we care. It's only fair that the
22 Governor shows that she cares about the work that we
23 do by providing that permanent raise to us. Thank you
24 for allowing me to share and being here this morning.
25 Thank you so much.

2 ELIZABETH ARZT: I will now turn it over
3 to Edwin Torres for his public testimony. You may
4 begin.

5 SERGEANT PEREZ: Time starts.

6 EDWIN TORRES: Hello. My name is Edwin
7 Torres. I am a home worker. There are very few men
8 that does this kind of job. I've been doing it about
9 6 years already. First of all, I am a husband, I'm a
10 father, and I'm a grandfather.

11 My testimony comes from something
12 personally. In March 2022, I had (INAUDIBLE) to live
13 with us during the pandemic. Two weeks later, I had
14 to take him to the hospital. That same week, I take
15 my wife. I took my father-in-law on a Tuesday. I took
16 my wife on a Thursday. That Saturday, her father
17 passed away. The saddest thing about this was that
18 she was one room next to him and heard his last
19 scream of life, and she couldn't stand up and hold
20 his hand. What I used to at night was pray to God to
21 let her get through this and ask her father not to
22 take her away from me, to keep an eye on her. The
23 thing that this pandemic did, the only thing that
24 kept me really going was that I had to be here for my
25 children, my grandchildren, and for the people that I

2 take care of on a daily basis because I know a lot of
3 them have nobody, and they felt lonely as I felt
4 lonely during that period of time through COVID.
5 Today, my wife still suffers, she's called a long-
6 hauler. She has heart issues, blurry mind. She's also
7 a healthcare worker. She's a certified medical
8 assistant and a pharmacy tech. Life hasn't been easy
9 for us. I'm still struggling with my finances because
10 I really can't make the money that I should be making
11 to pay my bills and feed my family.

12 What I am imploring to Governor Hochul is
13 to pay this Fair Pay bill because it's so important
14 to us because we give those dignity that we take care
15 of, but where is our sense of dignity as home care
16 workers. If we hit one of these pandemics again,
17 there's going to be such a crisis in the home care
18 that it's going to be horrible. There's not going to
19 be any home care workers because from my own, I've
20 heard from other testimonies that if this happens
21 again a lot of people are going to leave their jobs
22 as they're doing right now because I had to pay 25
23 dollars a box for gloves, 3 dollars each for a
24 surgical mask, and I was making nothing. I was barely
25 surviving like I'm still surviving today. On this

2 panel, I know you guys have heard it all, but this is
3 something that I take very personally. My grandmother
4 did this over 30 years. I could be doing anything.
5 I'm a man of many trades, but I do this because I
6 enjoy it, I have a passion for it, so please try to
7 get this through to Governor Hochul to pass this Fair
8 Pay bill. Thank you.

9 ELIZABETH ARZT: Thank you for your
10 testimony. Last witness on this panel, I'd like to
11 turn it over to Bobbie Sackman. You may begin.

12 SERGEANT PEREZ: Miss Sackman, your clock
13 is ready.

14 BOBBIE SACKMAN: Hi. Good morning
15 everybody. Thank you, Assemblywoman De La Rosa, and
16 certainly happy birthday to your mom. You've been a
17 care champion when you were in Albany and now at City
18 Council and thank you to everybody attending. Also,
19 Miss Smith and Mr. Torres, thank you for your
20 testimonies because you're why we're doing this.

21 My name is Bobbie Sackman. Some of you
22 may know that for 28 years I was the Director of
23 Public Policy with LiveOn New York. Katelyn Andrews,
24 who is here, is my wonderful successor. I have been
25 working with the New York Caring Majority for a few

2 years but intensely this past year to get fair pay
3 for home care into the final state budget this year.
4 As you may know, we did successfully get it into the
5 one-house Assembly and Senate bills, which is an
6 enormous accomplishment. Now, we are just waiting for
7 Governor Hochul, who as you've heard before, has
8 suggested a bonus, a bonus that would make no
9 difference in a home care worker's life, and we want
10 it to be sustainable wages. I submitted testimony,
11 but I'm not going to ready. The New York Caring
12 Majority is comprised of older adults, people with
13 disabilities, family caregivers, and home care
14 workers. Even though this is a state-funded issue
15 because it's basically Medicaid, it is so important
16 to the lifeblood of New York City. We need care
17 across the generations, and what doesn't get
18 publicized as much is how many family caregivers,
19 usually the women, they have said that the best long-
20 term care insurance is having a daughter. Many women
21 leave their jobs to care for their parents or other
22 older relatives, and they may have a horrible time
23 trying to get back into the workforce. It's that
24 continuity of feminization of poverty, and this is
25 one of the cycles we're looking to break. We're

2 paying low wages to the women workers. Mr. Torres,
3 you are the rare man. It's mostly women of color and
4 immigrant. Family caregivers, these women can't get
5 ahead in their own careers, and that's why we need
6 this done.

7 What you could help us with is go to your
8 local state representatives from your districts right
9 now, especially in the Bronx, as you know that's
10 where Mr. Heastie is, and just make sure that they
11 support the bill. Many have. We have 96 Assembly
12 members and 43 senators, but they need to speak up.
13 Albany is known for things falling off the table in
14 the midnight hour. You could really help us with
15 that. We have horrible stories of people with
16 disabilities sleeping in wheelchairs because they
17 can't get home care night after night. Somebody that
18 I know (INAUDIBLE) did this for a year. A year
19 sleeping in a wheelchair because they can't get in
20 and out of bed. We have older adults who fall in
21 bathtubs because they don't have help, and if you
22 break your hip 1 out of 4 die within a year. This is
23 very serious. Family caregivers, who I mentioned, are
24 just stretched to the hilt.

2 With an aging society, COVID is bringing
3 more people on with disability, again as Mr. Torres
4 pointed out. I wish your wife the best.

5 What I do want to add, because I'd be
6 remiss, is from the Department of the Aging, because
7 it's so connected to this. The case management
8 waitlist that of course I worked on for many years,
9 but the case management waitlist, this waitlist for
10 home care because it's not an entitlement, but these
11 are seniors that also need this care, and this is
12 where you can play a direct role in the current
13 budget process and look at how the Department for the
14 Aging, as I've heard Councilwomen Hudson say before,
15 gets less than 1/2 of 1 percent of the whole city
16 budget. We have 1.7 million over the age of 60 in the
17 New York City. That's bigger than the whole city of
18 Philadelphia, the whole city, and we are growing so
19 please, you have a very direct role. There's Meals on
20 Wheels, there's the senior centers to keep people
21 independent, and that's where you can really play a
22 role, and I hope of course that you pass this
23 resolution. The clock is ticking. We know that it's
24 close to the end of the Albany budget process and you

2 can get it to your state Colleagues as quickly as
3 possible.

4 Thank you so much everybody for your
5 attention and caring about, we want to make this a
6 caring economy. Thank you so much.

7 ELIZABETH ARZT: Thank you for your
8 testimony. I will now turn it over to Chair De La
9 Rosa for questions.

10 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you so
11 much. I also want to acknowledge we've been joined by
12 Council Member Feliz. I have a first question. First,
13 to Iris and Edwin, thank you for sharing your
14 stories. So many parallels to some of the challenges
15 I saw my mom experience. I wanted to ask you both,
16 whoever wants to answer the question, can you talk
17 specifically about the pandemic and some of the risks
18 that you endured during the pandemic.

19 EDWIN TORRES: Yes, the risks that I
20 suffered was going out everyday to the client's home.
21 Getting PPE was hard. It was horrible. Nobody gave us
22 money for that. That came out of our pockets. Every
23 time I went into a house I had to put my cover shoes,
24 my mask, and worrying that once I got home I had to
25 take everything off and make sure that I didn't bring

2 this virus home because 23 days later after my wife
3 got home I had to disinfect this house completely so
4 my fear was bringing this back and seeing her go
5 through this thing all over again. It was very
6 challenging. It was scary. Today, I'm still scared
7 about going to work and coming home, given that my
8 wife is here now. It is scary. This virus is not over
9 and I pray to God that it doesn't happen again
10 because if this happens again, I would say it's going
11 to be the worse thing to ever happen again to us.

12 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you so much
13 sharing. Iris, go ahead.

14 IRIS SMITH: My situation was similar to
15 Edwin's. I have a son at home who has chronic asthma,
16 and my fear was that going into, contracting the
17 COVID-19 and then coming home, where would I
18 quarantine, because we were not provided that service
19 where you could go stay at a hospital until the COVID
20 passed and so I still went out to work every day
21 because I had to provide food and pay rent during the
22 pandemic so I went out there with fear every day, you
23 know, that I could contract this and bring it home,
24 but I knew that I had a client that depended on me.
25 They didn't have anyone else, and so I had to go. I

2 had to go, but it weighed in my mind will I bring
3 this home to my son, and like Edwin said, the PPE,
4 paying for gloves, you had to pay for your gloves,
5 pay for masks, and they were not cheap, just to
6 protect yourself, your client, and your family so it
7 was really hard. It was challenging, but as home care
8 workers when we step out there, we answer the call.
9 It was challenging, and thank you for allowing me to
10 share.

11 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you, Iris.
12 Bobbie, I have a few questions if you are willing to
13 answer some of them. Can you talk a little bit about
14 the factors that have led to the staffing shortage as
15 well as how many seniors in New York City, for
16 example, do you know how many are on waiting lists
17 for care or have been denied?

18 BOBBIE SACKMAN: The fact is that some of
19 what's been said, and it's poverty level wages.
20 Outside of New York City, north of Westchester, home
21 care workers get \$13.20 an hour. They're not even
22 eligible for the regional minimum wage which is \$15
23 an hour (INAUDIBLE). Here in New York City, it's the
24 \$15 but we know very well how hard it is to even live
25 on \$15 an hour, and there are other opportunities

2 now. Targets may pay more. You can go to McDonald's
3 and earn more. As Mr. Torres pointed out, there's a
4 reason that people do this work, because they really
5 love it. Love is great, but they need money to pay
6 the rent and just live with dignity.

7 I also want to point out one more thing
8 before I get to your other question. In my testimony,
9 there's something at the very end if you want to look
10 at it and it's called the Comprehensive Skills Table.
11 In the Caring Majority Coalition, we have RNs, we
12 have people with disabilities, family caregivers,
13 (INAUDIBLE) Some of those folks, not me, put together
14 this skills table. It just goes on and on. This is
15 not babysitting. This is, of course, getting
16 nutritious food and as we said making sure the
17 personal care, but this could be wound care. Your
18 skin could really deteriorate if you don't get proper
19 wound care. This could be respiratory care. Maybe you
20 need a ventilator of some kind, and we're talking
21 about COVID. This is help getting in and out of a
22 bed, which is very physical labor but also you have
23 to be careful. These are fragile people that you're
24 serving. It just goes on and on. Home care is
25 healthcare, and I think that's what's been

2 recognized, and we know that there are people who
3 can't get out a nursing home, whether they're in a
4 nursing home long-term or a nursing home for rehab or
5 a hospital, they get delayed because there's no home
6 care worker. There's nobody to send them home to, or
7 they get sent home and there's nobody to send them
8 home to. There are 80-year-old women taking care of
9 their 90-year-old husbands with dementia throughout
10 the night who then need their own medical care. This
11 is not a system. This is neglect. This is poverty
12 wages and neglect.

13 In terms of numbers specifically for New
14 York City, I'm sorry that I actually don't have those
15 numbers. I could try to get them. I could ask. I
16 certainly will. In terms of waiting list numbers, I
17 don't know if you're referring, I know I mentioned
18 DFTA to the EISEP program and frankly I think maybe,
19 I don't know, Katelyn, if you have some numbers if
20 you want to share that today. I think she might know.
21 What I can tell you is in my 28 city budgets that I
22 sat through and lobbied through, case management and
23 home care and DFTA-funded programs, but case
24 management and home care in particular, always over
25 28 years have had waiting lists, and we have an ever-

2 growing aging population. You can see I've aged into
3 my own field. I'm glad to be. We have a structural
4 problem. It's a funding problem first, but it's also
5 a structural problem. How does the City structurally
6 fund these services because we know we're not keeping
7 up. I'm sorry. I will go back and see if I can find
8 out any data for you on that question.

9 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Great. My last
10 question for you before I turn it over to the
11 Colleagues here is talk to us about this bonus that
12 the Governor has announced with the goal of
13 alleviating the plight of the home care workers. You
14 said in your testimony that the bonus won't help. Can
15 you explain why?

16 BOBBIE SACKMAN: Sure. There's about 625,
17 630 million dollars of federal money, the American
18 Rescue Act money, and that's the amount of money that
19 is now in the Senate and the Assembly bills. The Fair
20 Pay for Home Care would begin in January 2023 so the
21 last quarter of the State fiscal year. That money
22 covers it. That money launches this program. There's
23 a CUNY study, there's a link in my testimony, you
24 might've heard about it, that has shown if you make
25 these economic investments, the return on investment

2 is literally hundreds of thousands of jobs across the
3 state and certainly in New York City, and these are
4 folks that spend the money locally so it will
5 generate the money. What a bonus does, and the
6 Governor wants to do this with that same money, the
7 max is 3,000. Home care workers will probably get a
8 pittance of that anyway. If you're earning poverty
9 level wages, what's a bonus going to do? In fact,
10 when the bonus disappears, which is quickly, it's
11 like getting a pay cut. This will not recruit or
12 retain the staff. I think Governor Hochul meant it as
13 a thank you, again, for the work during COVID, but
14 the real thank you is a living sustainable wage so
15 the bonus is just not a good use of this funding.
16 It's a lost opportunity.

17 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Great. I could
18 not agree with you more on that. A big thank you is a
19 living wage that is sustainable and lifts our
20 families up.

21 I want to recognize that we've been
22 joined by Council Member Hanks. Thank you for joining
23 us. Then I want to see if any of the Colleagues have
24 questions, please raise your hand so we can call on
25 you for this panel.

2 ELIZABETH ARZT: Thanks, Chair. I will now
3 call on Council Members in the order they have raised
4 the Zoom hand function. If you would like to ask a
5 question and you have not yet used the Zoom raise
6 hand function, please do so now.

7 Council Members, please keep your
8 questions to 5 minutes. The Sergeant-at-Arms will
9 keep a timer and will let you know when your time is
10 up. You should begin once I have called on you and
11 the Sergeant has announced that you may begin.

12 I don't see any Council Member questions
13 so we will move to the next panel. I would like to
14 now welcome Wayne Ho followed by Tara Klein followed
15 by LaRay Sullivan. Wayne Ho, you may begin when the
16 Sergeant cues the timer.

17 SERGEANT PEREZ: Mr. Wayne Ho, your clock
18 is ready.

19 WAYNE HO: Great. Thank you very much. My
20 name is Wayne Ho, and I'm the President and CEO of
21 the Chinese-American Planning Council as well as our
22 subsidiary the Chinese-American Planning Council Home
23 Attendant Program, Inc. I want to thank Chair De La
24 Rosa as well as Council Member Hudson and the other

2 Council Members who are a part of this Committee for
3 joining us today.

4 I am here to speak in support of Reso
5 0024 in support of fair pay for home care. CPCHAP was
6 licensed in 1998 as a licensed home care agency, and
7 we are a 100 percent Medicaid-funded home care
8 agency, non-profit home care agency. Every year, we
9 serve about 3,000 clients with our 4,500 workers who
10 we all see as essential. We are also part of the
11 Community-based Home Care Working Group which
12 consists of 11 non-profit home care agencies that
13 serve about 11,000 New Yorkers and employ about
14 14,000 New Yorkers and just this past Friday, outside
15 the Governor's office, we organized the Providers for
16 Fair Pay Rally where we had about 150 workers,
17 clients, and allies join us.

18 The CPC Home Attendant Program has
19 received a rating of 8 out of 10 in home care worker
20 satisfaction based on our most recent annual
21 anonymous worker survey, and the majority of our home
22 care workers have been with us for between 5 to 10
23 years, which we understand is higher than the average
24 in this industry so we value our essential workers
25 before the pandemic, throughout the pandemic, and now

2 as we recover. Unfortunately, we are a 100 percent
3 Medicaid-funded home care agency which means that we
4 are subject to all Medicaid rules and regulations
5 which limit our ability to compensate our workers
6 well. The fellow panelist, Bobbie Sackman, mentioned
7 that this is a funding issue, and we need to see an
8 investment into this sector to make sure it's a more
9 caring economy and quality jobs not only for our
10 workers but it will lead to stronger services and
11 more consistent services for New Yorkers who receive
12 home care who are mostly seniors or individuals
13 across age groups with disabilities.

14 In the past fiscal year, CPCHAP spent 2.7
15 million dollars in overtime, interruptions during 24
16 hour cases, transportation, PPE, and more for our
17 workers, and this 2.7 million dollars was not
18 reimbursed to the agency. We actually ended the last
19 fiscal year with a deficit. Non-profit home care
20 agencies like CPCHAP, while we are in full compliance
21 with very complicated federal, state, and city
22 regulations, especially Medicaid regulations on
23 compensation as well as labor laws and wage laws, we
24 recognize we're accountable not only to the state but
25 we are also accountable to our workers and to our

2 clients. That's the reason why we are in full support
3 of Fair Pay for Home Care. It will raise our home
4 care worker wages to 150 percent of minimum wage. We
5 encourage the Governor to adopt the Assembly and
6 Senate one-house bills that have put in the funding
7 for Fair Pay for Home Care. We recognize once again
8 that one-time bonuses are not fair and do not address
9 the systemic issue for our workers. We already know
10 that this is not going to help out the workers
11 permanently and it won't address the turnover and the
12 home care shortage. Fair Pay for Home Care makes
13 philosophical sense. We want to pay our workers 50
14 percent more for the jobs that they're doing, which
15 are essential. Programmatically, it will ensure
16 continuous care for our seniors and our disabled.
17 Operationally, it will address the workforce
18 challenge that we're facing in home care. Fiscally,
19 it makes sense because it generates 6 billion dollars
20 in economic activity for the State of New York alone.

21 We recognize the Fair Pay for Home Care
22 is just one step in reforming our home care system.
23 We also need to pass the (INAUDIBLE) Bill to convert
24 24-hour home care cases into two 12-hour split
25 shifts. We need to support the New York Health Act.

2 We also need to end the Medicaid global cap so there
3 is an investment in care for everyone who needs it.
4 At the city level, we'd like to see Human Resources
5 Administration authorize more cases. We'd also like
6 to see more city tax levy dollars to supplement cases
7 and wages, training programs, career ladders for our
8 workers as well as funding innovation.

9 I want to thank this Committee for
10 supporting our workers who are mostly immigrant and
11 women of color. We need a just, dignified economy for
12 our workers. We also need to make sure our patients
13 continue to receive quality care and can age with
14 dignity in their own homes. Thank you.

15 ELIZABETH ARZT: Thank you. I will now
16 turn it over to Tara Klein. You may begin when the
17 Sergeant starts your clock.

18 SERGEANT PEREZ: Miss Klein, your clock is
19 ready.

20 TARA KLEIN: Thank you, Chair De La Rosa,
21 for advancing this resolution today in support of the
22 Fair Pay for Home Care act, to Council Member Hudson
23 for bringing it forward, and all the other Council
24 Members here today. My name is Tara Klein, and I am a
25 Senior Policy Analyst with United Neighborhood

2 Houses. UNH is a policy and social change
3 organization representing 45 (INAUDIBLE) across New
4 York state including 40 here in New York City.
5 (INAUDIBLE) 65,000 New Yorkers from all walks of
6 life. Thirty of our UNH member organizations provide
7 non-profit home care services to their communities
8 (INAUDIBLE) home care service (INAUDIBLE) to
9 thousands of individuals with nearly 7,500 hundreds
10 throughout New York. (INAUDIBLE) industry is
11 (INAUDIBLE) for-profit and non-profit home care
12 agencies. (INAUDIBLE) organizations serve the same
13 goals. They serve their neighborhoods (INAUDIBLE)
14 competent care and to offer many important wraparound
15 services and programs (INAUDIBLE) education, youth
16 development programs, adult literacy classes, senior
17 centers, and more. Recently, as you just heard, our
18 (INAUDIBLE) members joined together as a broader
19 coalition of New York City based non-profit providers
20 forming the Community-based Home Care Working Group
21 to be able to speak with a louder (INAUDIBLE) and
22 develop new partnerships and models of care. For
23 years, these organizations (INAUDIBLE) on behalf of
24 the home care sector trying to reform a system that
25 is in crisis. Home care workers had a median pay of

2 28,750 dollars in 2020 and an estimated 1 in 4
3 workers were living below the federal poverty line,
4 making them some of the most economically
5 disadvantaged employees in the state. With these
6 poverty-level wages and the growing workforce
7 shortage, we need urgent interventions. (INAUDIBLE)
8 state-mandated funding and reimbursement policies
9 through Medicaid have unfairly pit home care workers
10 and employers against one another (INAUDIBLE) trying
11 to operate strong programs that serve older and
12 disabled New Yorkers in need while paying workers
13 fair and sustainable wages. We simply cannot sustain
14 a system that's built on poverty wages and staff
15 burnout. Fair Pay for Home Care is the way out. The
16 bill is sponsored by Senator (INAUDIBLE) and Assembly
17 Member (INAUDIBLE) sets reimburse rates at 150
18 percent of the regional minimum wage, bringing New
19 York City wages up to 22.50 per hour and crucially
20 for the non-profit providers it sets Medicaid rates
21 so providers are paid appropriately for those wages.
22 A recent report from CUNY's (INAUDIBLE) found that
23 this legislation would create 20,000 additional home
24 care jobs per year over the next decade and result in

2 an economic gain of billions of dollars for the
3 state.

4 It really need to happen through the
5 budge process so that it's fully funded. As know
6 Governor Hochul's executive budget did not include
7 the bill but did include the one-time bonus for home
8 care workers, this is not at all sufficient to meet
9 the challenge. We're really glad the Senate and
10 Assembly included it in their one-house budget bills
11 last week and that the state is in a very strong
12 financial position so we (INAUDIBLE) as we move
13 toward the April 1st deadline. This resolution really
14 sends a message that New York City supports. We thank
15 you again, urge the Council to vote in favor of this
16 resolution. I submitted written testimony that has
17 more background on the state of the workforce and the
18 importance of this bill. We also have some additional
19 recommendations on reforming the home care industry
20 including looking at the state Department of Labor's
21 13-hour rule (INAUDIBLE) 13 hours of pay for 24 hours
22 of work. There's a lot that the City could do as
23 Wayne just mentioned to (INAUDIBLE) training,
24 particularly in HRA so we'd be happy to follow up
25 with anyone who (INAUDIBLE) Thank you very much.

2 ELIZABETH ARZT: Thank you for your
3 testimony. Now, I'd like to call on the last witness
4 for this panel, LaRay Sullivan. Your timer starts as
5 soon as the Sergeant cues you.

6 SERGEANT PEREZ: LaRay Sullivan, your
7 clock is ready.

8 LARAY SULLIVAN: Good morning, everyone.
9 Thank you, Chair De La Rosa and all Council Members,
10 for this opportunity to provide our testimony. I'm
11 the Director of Human Resources at Rain Home
12 Attendant Services. Rain Home Attendant Services has
13 been advocating for fair pay for home health aides
14 along with 1199SCIU. We recognize they're
15 compassionate and quality work delivered that is
16 critical to help maintain our valuable members of the
17 community.

18 Home health aides are the backbone of our
19 medically fragile of all ages, and we call upon our
20 elected officials to elevate the conversation and
21 help us affect change in their compensation.

22 Home health aides are truly doing God's
23 work, and they are the angels on the ground. Because
24 of them, many of us can go to work and engage in the
25 routines of our daily lives. We all have a story to

2 share in one way or another regarding a loved one and
3 the risks that they run daily. Having someone
4 providing a professional service should be
5 compensated and supported in their work life.
6 Professional recognition is also much needed in the
7 home health industry. We must not forget that these
8 home health aides represent our community and, as
9 such, run the risk of medical complications as well.

10 Fair pay will enable them to make ends
11 meet, pay for co-pays of medications, and adjust the
12 cost-of-living increases. Thank you. Respectfully
13 submitted, Dr. Anderson Torres, our President and
14 CEO. Thank you.

15 ELIZABETH ARZT: Thank you for your
16 testimony. I will now turn it over to Chair De La
17 Rosa for questions for this panel.

18 CHAIRPERSON DE La ROSA: Thank you so
19 much. I want to recognize that we've been joined by
20 Council Member Menin as well.

21 I do have a question about how this bill
22 in the state legislature would raise the minimum
23 wage. If passed, the Fair Pay for Home Care Act would
24 raise the minimum wage floor to between \$19.80 an
25 hour to 22.50 an hour for home care workers involved

2 in New York. Do you all feel that this fair wage is a
3 fair wage rate for New York?

4 BOBBIE SACKMAN: Can I respond even though
5 it wasn't my panel?

6 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Sure.

7 BOBBIE SACKMAN: Okay. I'm sorry, and if
8 anyone else does want to. Just quickly, 2 things, one
9 is it's a floor. It's not a ceiling so if 1199
10 negotiates a higher hourly wage, there's nothing to
11 stop that.

12 Two, what I think the beauty of this is
13 is that it sets in statute that home care workers
14 will get 150 percent of the regional minimum wage so
15 it remains there. What's happened over the past
16 decade, and many folks who have testified today can
17 attest to, is that because a lack of Medicaid funding
18 and basically really care for this workforce, was
19 neglected for a decade or more, that's why we're in
20 this position. This would set in statute a floor to
21 move up from.

22 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you,
23 Bobbie. My next question is for Wayne. Wayne, thank
24 you for being here and for all of your work. Besides
25 the low wages, what are some other issues you find as

2 a provider that are affecting the New York home care
3 workers?

4 WAYNE HO: Wages are the number one driver
5 of challenges right now. We know that there are home
6 care who are doing hard jobs and they're not getting
7 compensated fairly for how tough the job is, but we
8 also do know, and I do want to acknowledge Edwin for
9 mentioning it, is that during the pandemic it was a
10 very tough time where they were classified as
11 essential workers, but the State of New York, for
12 example, did not prioritize them for PPE, did not
13 prioritize them in vaccinations, did not prioritize
14 them for hazard pay, and that's why many of us as
15 providers and advocates did advocate and try and get
16 those from the state level. We know that many of them
17 risked their health and risked their family's health
18 to go in and work at this time and while we're happy
19 that there's vaccinations, we still get reports from
20 our workers who might have caught a variant or they
21 have family members who caught variants and they
22 can't go into work. We also still have clients who do
23 not want home care workers coming into their homes
24 during this time because of the pandemic. Clients are
25 obviously frail and vulnerable so they're worried

2 about their health so they're moving towards the
3 consumer-directed program for home care where a
4 family member who lives with them can take of them as
5 opposed to a traditional home care worker. I do think
6 that in addition to wages the continued pandemic
7 still is a priority that everyone's trying to
8 address.

9 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you so
10 much. I want to open to see if any of the Colleagues
11 have questions as well.

12 ELIZABETH ARZT: I will now call on
13 Council Members in the order you have raised the Zoom
14 hand function. I see Council Member Nurse has raised
15 her hand. We will send you an unmute request, and you
16 can go ahead when the Sergeant starts your clock.

17 SERGEANT PEREZ: Council Member Nurse,
18 your clock is ready.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you. I don't
20 have anything profound to say. I just want to express
21 my support for the workers here and the healthcare
22 workers who are demanding to be paid better. I just
23 want to express that we're all with you, and I know
24 that many of the Council Members have y'all's back,
25 and I wish we could do more beyond just resolutions

2 and expressions of support but really actually be
3 able to deliver for you all. I appreciate your time
4 here, and I just want to say we're all with you and
5 we stand with you and we're doing what we can so
6 thank you for being here, and thank you, Chair.

7 ELIZABETH ARZT: Thank you, Council
8 Member. I'll give a chance to raise hands if any
9 other Council Members have questions for this panel.

10 Not seeing any hands, we will now turn to
11 the next panel for testimony. I would like to now
12 welcome Katelyn Andrews followed by MJ Okma. Katelyn,
13 you may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock.

14 SERGEANT PEREZ: Katelyn, your clock is
15 ready.

16 KATELYN ANDREWS: Hi, everyone. Thank you
17 for the opportunity to testify today. My name is
18 Katelyn Andrews. I'm the Director of Public Policy at
19 LiveOn New York. LiveOn New York's members include
20 more than 100 community-based non-profits, some of
21 which you've heard here today, CPC and Rain and then
22 MJ who will be testifying for Sage following this.
23 Our members who provide community services for older
24 adults as we age. These include older adult centers,
25 home-delivered meals, and of course home care. LiveOn

2 New York is strongly in support of Resolution 0024
3 and of course we want to thank Council Member Hudson
4 for her introduction of this resolution and
5 leadership in bringing this to the City Council. In
6 addition, we thank Chair De La Rosa for your support
7 and holding this hearing today as well as the more
8 than 20 Council co-sponsors who have already signed
9 on in support of this resolution. Thank you.

10 As has been highlighted today, according
11 to (INAUDIBLE) nearly 90 percent of direct care
12 workers are women, 3 in 5 are people of color, and 1
13 in 4 are immigrants. Unfortunately, 1 in 7 low wage
14 workers in New York City are home care workers,
15 leading to more than 50 percent of this workforce
16 relying on public assistance to make ends meet. This,
17 as a result of government sanctioned wages,
18 demonstrates the fact that the undervaluing of home
19 care workers is one of the more pressing equity
20 issues facing our state. We just had Women's Equal
21 Pay Day symbolizing how far into the year a woman
22 must work to make the same as their male counterparts
23 in the previous year. We can no longer just
24 acknowledge this injustice during one day, but we
25 must dismantle the systemic realities such as the

2 undervaluing of home care workers that create these
3 inequities.

4 As a result of the underfunding, the home
5 care sector is also understaffed and altogether it
6 has been found that New York state now has the worst
7 in the nation home care shortage. Doing Fair Pay for
8 Home Care, New York has the opportunity to go from
9 worst in the nation to leading the nation and
10 creating the caring economy that we all deserve.

11 Now, I will just add that fair pay is
12 just the beginning. We need to begin to value all of
13 our care workers. Here are a just a few ways that the
14 City can directly support our care infrastructure. On
15 a city level, the city also needs to adjust pay our
16 human services workers who are also care workers in
17 their own right. That means a COLA in this year's
18 budget. A minimum of 21 dollars an hour and the
19 creation of a comprehensive wage scale. Just like
20 their home care counterparts, so many of these human
21 services workers are also receiving low wages and are
22 relying on public assistance just to get by.

23 Next, we need to fund the Department for
24 the Aging. In this, we're asking for 5 million
25 dollars to address waiting list for case management

2 which screens individuals for home care, 12.7 million
3 for home-delivered meals which help older adults to
4 remain fed when living in community, and finally 28
5 million for home care on the city level to expand
6 hours and address waiting lists.

7 Finally, back to the topic at hand, pass
8 this resolution. This is a strong show of support
9 from the City Council to your state counterparts that
10 we need fair pay this year in this budget. Thank you.

11 ELIZABETH ARZT: Thank you. I will now
12 turn it over to MJ Okma for your public testimony.
13 You may begin when the Sergeant starts the clock.

14 SERGEANT PEREZ: MJ, your clock is ready.

15 MJ OKMA: Good morning. My name is MJ Okma
16 with Sage, the country's first and largest
17 organization dedicated to improving the lives of
18 LGBTQ+ and HIV-affected older people. We provide
19 social services and community-building programs
20 through a network of 6 older adult centers across the
21 city. Sage is also proud of their role as an on-site
22 service provider at New York City's first LGBTQ+
23 welcoming elder housing development located in
24 Brooklyn and the Bronx.

2 I am here today in strong support of Reso
3 0024 and the Fair Pay for Home Care Act. Nearly 1/3
4 of LGBTQ+ New Yorkers are over the age of 50 and this
5 rapidly growing population experiences greater
6 disparities in both physical and behavioral health
7 outcomes due to the effects of bias and
8 discrimination and the impact of the resulting
9 chronic stress on their health. On top of that,
10 distrust in health and social services due to a fear
11 of continued discrimination can lead LGBTQ+ older
12 people to delay seeking needed care and result in
13 premature institutionalization in nursing homes and
14 long-term care facilities. Many of those fears are
15 exacerbated for trans elders and older New Yorkers
16 living with HIV who face additional fears of stigma
17 and privacy concerns. Home care is vital for LGBTQ+
18 elders to help preserve their independence and access
19 to community and chosen family. However, the high
20 turnover in vacancy rates in the home care field
21 hinders not only access to these services but also
22 the ability to build the trust needed to break down
23 these barriers between LGBTQ+ elders and home care
24 services. New York is currently facing a labor
25 shortfall of home care workers while those in the

field are severely undercompensated and just plain exhausted. Meanwhile, the aging population who is interested in supports to age in place is growing creating an even higher demand for home care. This growth coincides with an increase in LGBTQ+ elders who experience increased rates of disability, poor physical health, and HIV. To quickly go over through the numbers, more than half of people living with HIV in New York state are over the age of 50. LGBTQ+ elders are nearly 20 percent more likely to report high rates of frequent poor physical health.

Transgender New Yorkers of all ages are 50 percent more likely to report being in poor physical health than their cisgender peers. Fair pay for home care is necessary for both the givers and receivers of care. We must end the unacceptable poverty wages for home care workers, an essential workforce which is 90 percent women, 67 percent immigrant, and 75 percent women of color. Investing in this workforce would not only advance racial and gender equity, it would eliminate the home care labor shortage and help increase access to LGBTQ+ competent care and keep LGBTQ+ elders in their communities as they age. Sage stands in strong support of reso 0024 and the Fair

2 Pay for Home Care Act. Thank you so much, Chair De La
3 Rosa, for holding this important hearing, Council
4 Member Hudson for championing this resolution, and
5 for all the co-sponsors of this resolution. Thank you
6 so much for your time and this opportunity.

7 ELIZABETH ARZT: Thank you, MJ. I'm going
8 to turn it over to the Chair for questions for this
9 panel.

10 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: First, I want to
11 thank you both for your powerful testimony. I know
12 that LiveOn New York has been advocating in Albany
13 for what feels like decades for this to be a reality
14 so I want to thank you for your work. Sage, thank you
15 for bringing the plight of LGBTQ+ elders to the
16 forefront, a portion of our community that seems to
17 somehow continues to be left behind, so thank you so
18 much for highlighting that.

19 I do have a question, and it's regarding
20 the investment in home care industry. You mentioned
21 just pay, which is a separate topic but related
22 because it's the same type of workers that are
23 subjected to these poverty wages. Can you both
24 explain from your experiences what a public
25

2 investment in these industries will mean to benefit
3 our City and our State's economy as a whole?

4 KATELYN ANDREWS: Sure, I can start. I
5 think for both home care workers and human services
6 workers, these are individuals that live in our
7 communities, that shop locally, that have strong
8 roots in the neighborhoods that we all know and love
9 and unfortunately there are individuals who are
10 unsure if they can continue to live in a high-cost
11 city like this when they're not receiving the wages
12 that they deserve. We need to be funding all care
13 workers, home care, human services workers, child
14 care in the way it deserves so that they can continue
15 to live in New York City and contribute to our
16 communities and support those who need it.

17 Unfortunately, we don't have a consistent COLA in the
18 budget for human services workers. We don't have a
19 minimum wage floor for human services workers or for
20 home care workers. These are all sort of minimum
21 steps that could be taken to ensure that the floor is
22 solid and, ideally, we go above that and we start to
23 invest in the way that these workers truly deserve,
24 but that floor is so shaky right now that it's
25 leading to people living in homeless shelters or

2 contemplating having to move out of this high-cost
3 city. Certainly on the adverse side, it's leading to
4 older adults and people with disabilities not
5 receiving the care that they need. there was a story
6 recently in testimony of an older adult who was told
7 she only has a few more weeks to live and her biggest
8 fear right now is that she's going to have to spend
9 those in a nursing home because she just can't find
10 the home care attendants that she needs. The impact
11 is on every side of the spectrum, and I think we all
12 know it and see it and you've seen your family
13 members cobble together the support that's needed but
14 that's not sustainable long-term.

15 MJ OKMA: I would kind of add to that.
16 Again, Sage is a strong supporter of the Just Pay
17 Campaign as well in like increasing the wages for all
18 human services workers. A labor issue is a fact of
19 valuing essential workers, valuing the folks who've
20 been on the frontlines for COVID and who've been
21 doing this work and being severely underpaid for it
22 for decades. Really, highlighting again, it's also
23 about the clients, these people who receive care
24 under these services. Specifically, we see with
25 LGBTQ+ populations there is a lot of distrust because

2 of long histories of discrimination in both health
3 care and social services that these elders have faced
4 and if the person you're seeking services from is
5 constantly turning over because of these low-wage
6 workers that's going to stop people who are in most
7 need from trusting and accessing these services and
8 building the supports and trust that they need to
9 make sure that they're connected to everything that
10 they need to age in place. I think that's another
11 side of this. On the economic impact, I do want to
12 highlight that there is a March 2021 report from CUNY
13 that said that the Fair Pay for Home Care Act would
14 net over 3.6 billion for the state, and it kind of
15 outlines where all that money would come from. That's
16 linked to my written testimony as well, but there has
17 been a study that said that this would bring
18 substantial gains to the state budget.

19 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you so
20 much. I also want to recognize that we have been
21 joined by both Council Member Joseph and Council
22 Member Farias. Thank you both for joining. Elizabeth.

23 ELIZABETH ARZT: Thank you, Chair. I will
24 now call on Council Members for questions. I see that
25

2 Council Member Feliz has raised his hand. You may
3 begin when the Sergeant starts the clock.

4 SERGEANT PEREZ: Council Member, your
5 clock is ready.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Thank you so much.
7 Good morning, everyone. Thank you, Chairwoman Carmen
8 De La Rosa, for this hearing. Also, thank you,
9 Council Member Crystal Hudson, for this very
10 important resolution. Also, thank you to all of you,
11 everyone who's participating this morning for making
12 your stories and your voices heard.

13 I grew up in an underprivileged section
14 of the Bronx. My mom was a home attendant. Many
15 family members of mine were home attendants. Many
16 neighbors of mine were also home attendants. I saw
17 what we all know which is that home health aides work
18 very hard. They work hard, sometimes every single
19 day, sometimes 7 days a week, at all hours of the day
20 and all hours of the night, and their work isn't
21 easy. Home care workers have had the backs of our
22 vulnerable populations including our elderly, and I
23 just wanted to briefly say that just like you support
24 our vulnerable populations, I as Council Member will
25 be working with all my Colleagues to support you for

2 fair and just pay. I thank all of you for joining
3 this morning. Thank you so much.

4 ELIZABETH ARZT: Thank you, Council
5 Member. If any other Council Members have questions
6 for this panel, please use the raise hand function in
7 Zoom.

8 Seeing no hands, that was actually our
9 last panel so I would like to do a last call. If
10 we've inadvertently missed anyone that is registered
11 to testify today and has yet to be called on, please
12 use the Zoom raise hand function now, and you will be
13 called on in the order that your hand has been
14 raised.

15 Okay, seeing none, I will turn it over
16 now to Chair De La Rosa for closing remarks. Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: Thank you so
18 much, and thank you all for coming, for sharing your
19 lived experiences, your work experiences, and to my
20 Colleagues for their thoughtful questions and
21 comments.

22 We have an opportunity before us, an
23 opportunity to influence what our Colleagues in the
24 state legislature undertake in the next few weeks. As
25 we all know, budgets are moral documents about what

2 we prioritize as a society, and as the Chair of Civil
3 Service and Labor, I am proud that this is the first
4 piece of legislation that is coming through the
5 Committee. It is a promise and a commitment to the
6 workers of New York to make sure that poverty wages
7 no longer exist in a city that is so divided by the
8 wage gap, by the wealth gap, and so I am honored to
9 work with Council Member Crystal Hudson. I thank her
10 for her leadership, for bringing her pain and
11 experiences to bring this solution before the City
12 Council.

13 Again, thank you all for being here, and
14 we look forward to making sure that this resolution
15 is passed as a symbol of the City Council's
16 commitment to these immigrant, mostly women, workers
17 in our city who have kept our state and city afloat
18 in its darkest hours and now deserve to be
19 compensated fairly to have benefits and to have a
20 caring economy as Bobbie so eloquently always reminds
21 us. Thank you all for being here, and I look forward
22 to seeing this passed. Thank you.

23 ELIZABETH ARZT: Thank you, Chair. If you
24 could just gavel out and then we'll close.

25 CHAIRPERSON DE LA ROSA: [GAVEL]

2 ELIZABETH ARZT: Thank you, everyone.

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1 COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND LABOR

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date April 27, 2022