

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEE ON
SMALL BUSINESS

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June 20, 2017
Start: 1:15 p.m.
Recess: 2:43 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway-Committee Rm. 16th Fl.

B E F O R E: ERIC A. ULRICH
Chairperson

ROBERT E. CORNEGY
Co-Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

FERNANDO CABRERA
ALAN N. MAISEL
PAUL A. VALLONE
JOSEPH C. BORELLI
MATHIEU EUGENE
PETER A. KOO
KAREN KOSLOWITZ
RUBEN WILLS
CARLOS MENCHACA
BILL PERKINS

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

Rachel Van Tosh
Deputy Commissioner of Business Services at the
New York City Department of Small Business
Services or SBS

Jamal Othman
Assistant Commissioner for Education, Employment,
Entrepreneurship at the Department of Veterans'
Services

Avi Leshes
Director of Government Affairs and Deputy
Director of the Business Solution Center for the
Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

Komatsu
US Navy Veteran, was assigned to the Yokosuka
Naval Base in Japan

Kristen Rouse
President and Director of the New York City
Veterans Alliance

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[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: We have a, a Reso to vote on in the Veterans Committee. Is it here, this is my opening. The Reso is mentioned in here? Okay, but is it in my opening statement, do you know? Okay, alright, that's fine. Okay, good afternoon. I am Council Member Eric Ulrich and I am the Chair of the Veterans Committee, New York City Council Veterans Committee. I would like to thank my Co-Chair today Robert Cornegy for Co-Chairing this important hearing, he is the Chair of the Committee on Small Business and for holding this hearing with us today and thank those who are in attendance at today's hearing. Before I begin with the... my opening statement or proceed with my opening statement I'd like to ask for a moment of silence to remember the seven American Sailors who were recently killed in that crash aboard a Navy ship who lost their lives and asked for just few moments if we can remember them. Thank you. This afternoon's hearing will focus on veteran entrepreneurship and veteran employment in New York City and the ways in which we as a city can promote and support veteran owned businesses and help veterans secure employment and jobs in our city. We

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2 will also be voting on a Resolution that establishes
3 June 22nd as Veterans Tribute and Advocacy Day in New
4 York City, which was sponsored by Council Member
5 Eugene, the former Chair of this committee and
6 hearing a package of bills sponsored by the Chair of
7 the Small Business Committee, Robert Cornegy in
8 relation to small businesses. Veterans have a long
9 history of returning home from their service and
10 starting their own business, almost, almost 50
11 percent of World War II veterans owned and operated
12 their own businesses after leaving military service.
13 In recent years however the percentage of veteran
14 owned businesses has declined. As of 2013 only 4.8
15 percent of new entrepreneurs were veterans. The city
16 provides programs and support for veteran owned small
17 businesses but veterans may be unaware of these
18 programs or in some instances there may be other
19 hurdles to veteran entrepreneurship or getting a
20 business up and running. In addition to veteran
21 entrepreneurship today's hearing will also focus on
22 the general theme of veteran employment throughout
23 the five boroughs which continues to be a challenge
24 in the city. Unemployment rates for veterans in
25 Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan are higher than the

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unemployment rate for the overall population or the civilian population in those counties. In fact, many veterans report that finding a job is the greatest challenge in transitioning to civilian life and veterans can often face stigma and discrimination from employers as a result of their military service. To that end I am pleased to report that on Monday, yesterday the Civil Rights Committee passed Intro 1259A sponsored by Council Member Jumaane Williams and the Public Advocate which seeks to amend the New York City Human Rights Law to prohibit discrimination on the basis of uniformed service. Discrimination against veterans occurs most notably in the areas of employment and housing accommodation. This important legislation will provide veterans with legal recourse to challenge discrimination and housing and employment and other local level issues and allow them another avenue to obtain relief when their rights are violated or when they feel that they are being discriminated against. Our hope is that this hearing will help the committees understand the different programs and support available to veterans in the city who are interested in starting their own businesses and understand the barriers that exist to

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2 veteran entrepreneurship and to try to break down
3 those barriers. This hearing will also help us
4 understand the obstacles to veteran employment and
5 how the city can help better support veterans with
6 their employment needs. I would like to thank the
7 committee staff; Committee Council Kaitlin Fahey,
8 Policy Analyst Michael Kurtz, the Financial Analyst
9 Zachary Harrison, my Legislative Director Mary
10 Prentice for their work in making this hearing
11 possible and I'd also like to recognize the members
12 of the committee who joined us and then I'll turn it
13 over to the Chair of the Small Business Committee but
14 the members of the Veterans Committee who are here
15 Joe Borelli from Staten Island, Paul Vallone from
16 Queens, and that's it for now but I'm going to turn
17 it over to the Chair of the Small Business Committee
18 Council Member Cornegy who will recognize the members
19 of that committee who have joined us and also read an
20 opening statement.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you Chair
22 Ulrich. So, good afternoon, I'm Robert Cornegy, I'm
23 the Chair of the Committee on Small Business. I'd
24 like to thank Chair Ulrich of the Veterans Committee
25 for holding this hearing jointly with us and all of

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you for attending our hearing today. We'll be hearing a package of bills that I'm support... I'm sponsoring in order to support small businesses and build the New York City workforce including Intro 1509, a local law that requires the Commission on Small Business Services to post business tools online. Intro 1511, which will require the Commission on Small Business Services to prepare and disseminate a, a state of small business survey and Proposal Intro 1510A which will require the Commissioner of Small Business Services to create a comprehensive workforce development plan based on the results of this state of small business survey. We'll also be holding an oversight hearing on the issue of veteran entrepreneurship which was mentioned by Chair Ulrich with a focus on the ways in which we can promote and renew the proud tradition. Small businesses are the life's blood of the city, not only do we have more small businesses than any other city in the country but nine out of every ten small businesses in New York Metropolitan area has fewer than 20 employees and two out of every three companies in New York City employs less than five individuals. However, as we all know mom and pop businesses in the city must

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2 often navigate complicated city regulations and pour
3 over city websites to find the information they need
4 in order to bring their products and services to
5 market. Today's hearing is another step in our
6 ongoing efforts to improve the climate for local
7 businesses. Each of the bills that we consider today
8 will allow businesses to engage in the capacity
9 building work that allows them to grow. Posting
10 online business tools that they otherwise might not
11 have access to such as accounting, record keeping,
12 and bookkeeping services can make it easier for local
13 businesses to run and grow their businesses more
14 quickly and easily than otherwise... than they
15 otherwise would. Additionally, a well-designed
16 citywide survey of small businesses and a workforce
17 development plan based on the results of that survey
18 would give us both a clear picture of the needs of
19 our small businesses and a roadmap for how the city
20 can, can create a pipeline of highly skilled
21 individuals who can act as force multipliers for
22 tomorrows entrepreneurs. I'm looking forward to
23 hearing testimony about these bills and how they can
24 be developed to assist the small business community
25 in New York City. I also intend to understand how we

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can better assist veterans during the job search while starting a small business or while growing to... while working to grow that business. Finally, I'd like to thank the committee staff; Council Nicole Labean, Policy Analyst Michael Kurtz, Finance Analyst John Russell, my Chief of Staff Stephanie Zimmerman, and my Small Business Liaison Kegan Sheen. Finally, I'd like to thank the Council Members who are from the Committee who are here; Vallone from Queens is here, oh Carlos Menchaca from Brooklyn and I'm sure more will join us... oh I'm sorry, Karen, did you just curse out loud? Karen Koslowitz from Queens, Peter Koo from Queens. Oh, Joe Borelli, he already mentioned Joe Borelli, I didn't mention you but... [off-mic] dialogue] Ruben Wills from the great borough of Queens. [off-mic dialogue] thank you.

COMMITTEE CLERK FAHEY: Please raise your right hand? Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony today and to answer Council Member questions honestly?

JAMAL OTHMAN: Yes.

COMMITTEE CLERK FAHEY: Thank you.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So, you can... you can begin, ladies first of course.

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Oh, thank you. can everyone hear me? Is it on now?

JAMAL OTHMAN: It's on now.

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Alright, there we go.

Good afternoon Chair Cornegy, Chair Ulrich when he gets back and members of the Committees on Small Business and Veterans. My name is Rachel Van Tosh and I am the Deputy Commissioner of Business Services at the New York City Department of Small Business Services or as we'd like to say SBS. At SBS we aim to unlock economic potential and create economic security for all New Yorkers by connecting them to quality jobs, building stronger businesses and fostering vibrant neighborhoods across the five boroughs. Today I'm pleased to testify on Intros 1509, 1510, and 1511 as well as share information about the work we do to support our veterans. On a personal note, our conversation today is especially important to me, both my grandfathers were veterans who lived in New York City and returned here after their service. When they returned home my grandfathers were able to find jobs and start

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2 businesses after serving their country and that's how
3 they supported my family for the rest of their lives.
4 One was fortunate enough to attend a watchmaking
5 school through support from the government allowing
6 him to open a small jewelry shop on Canal Street that
7 he operated for 40 years at the same location. Just
8 as past veterans have returned home with the
9 necessary support to succeed my hope for every
10 veteran who returns home to New York City is that
11 they have every possible opportunity to build a
12 strong foundation for themselves and their families.
13 Veteran success and employment and entrepreneurship
14 is very important to SBS and aligns with our vision
15 of creating equity of access to opportunity in New
16 York City. At the beginning of this administration
17 SBS in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Veteran
18 Services now the Department of Veteran Services
19 released an extensive report on SBS services that
20 support and empower veterans. This includes priority
21 one, a tailored set of services for veterans and
22 their spouses available through our network of 20
23 workforce one career centers where SBS also provides
24 recruitment services, industry knowledge, and skill
25 building workshops to match candidates to jobs. SBS

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has 12 dedicated veteran specialists most of whom are veterans themselves at workforce one centers across the city in every borough. These veteran specialists work as a team to recruit veterans to workforce one, prioritize veterans for staff appointments and all career training and job connection services. Specialists also deliver one on one career development support which includes military to civilian resume translation and interview assistance. We work closely with DVS and even have a DVS outreach coordinator placed at our downtown Brooklyn location. In Fiscal Year '16 Priority One connected more than 1,300 veterans and their spouses to employment and we're on track to serve as many veterans this year and have seen a five percent increase as... in wages compared to last year. Workforce One is committed to serving our veterans and is continually making every effort to ensure our clients have access to good paying jobs in fast growing industries. As I know from my own family history small businesses provide opportunities for veterans to achieve economic security and create jobs. Through seven small business solutions... seven NYC Business Solution Centers across the five boroughs SBS provides free

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2 accessible services to local businesses including how
3 to secure financing and access city benefits.
4 Understanding the unique barriers faced by veteran
5 entrepreneurs SBS offers specialized courses tailored
6 to veterans. For veterans who are looking to start
7 their own business we offer ten steps to starting a
8 business for veterans which builds upon our existing
9 course but also incorporates content for veteran
10 entrepreneurs. For veterans that are ready to follow
11 through with their business plan SBS offers a 40-hour
12 course specifically for them. And the curriculum
13 called fast track is a global entrepreneur education
14 program that equips aspiring and established
15 entrepreneurs with business skills and insights,
16 tools, and peer networks to start and grow successful
17 businesses, to date we've reached over 50 veterans
18 through these classes. As the Department of Veteran
19 Services continues to grow we are eager to
20 collaborate and connect the veteran's community to
21 these programs and our other services. We would also
22 welcome the opportunity to work with council to
23 spread the word about these resources to your
24 constituents. I will now discuss each of the bills on
25 today's agenda beginning with Intro 1511, which would

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2 require SBS to prepare and disseminate a state of
3 small business survey. As the Deputy Commissioner for
4 Business Services I am committed to ensuring we're
5 providing services that directly address the needs of
6 New York City's small business owners. We regularly
7 receive feedback from customers who access service,
8 services through our business solution centers.
9 However, an empirical survey would help identify
10 additional obstacles that slow business growth and
11 creation. We would not only be interested in
12 assessing workforce needs but also other issues
13 related to operations, infrastructure and access to
14 capital. However, while SBS fully supports this
15 legislation we don't have the necessary resources to
16 complete the survey in a way that would produce
17 meaningful results and we would need some time to do
18 the survey. Intro 1510 would require SBS to create a
19 comprehensive workforce development plan based on the
20 survey. Since we do not yet know the results of the
21 survey it would be premature to commit to developing
22 a particular response to such, such as a
23 comprehensive workforce development plan at this
24 time. Instead we would propose engaging with the
25 council to discuss potential deliverables of the

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2 survey based on analysis of the results once the
3 survey was completed. Intro 1509 would require SBS to
4 post business tools online. While we certainly agree
5 with the chair that its critical to make business
6 resources accessible that's why we committed to do so
7 through small business first. Since the release of
8 the Small Business First report, SBS is working
9 diligently with multiple agencies and businesses to
10 launch the NYC Business Portal, a one stop shop for
11 businesses to access all related city resources
12 through one portal. Recently we launched several
13 features on this site including a new landing page as
14 well as the ability to create an account from any
15 device so that users can access information regarding
16 their licenses, permits, and inspections with
17 agencies such as Department of Buildings, Fire, and
18 Health as well as pay for violations through Health.
19 The portal also includes licensing questionnaire, an
20 incentive estimator, which allow businesses to
21 identify the necessary licenses and permits that they
22 need when starting a business and learn about
23 incentive programs that they qualify for. Once the
24 portal is complete businesses will be able to
25 seamlessly conduct online transactions with city

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2 agencies including applying for or renewing licenses
3 and permits, making payments, checking the status of
4 application, etcetera. Moreover, business owners will
5 be able to receive alerts about upcoming renewal
6 deadlines. We are also working with relevant city
7 agencies such as Consumer Affairs, Environmental
8 Protection, Department of Finance, etcetera to ensure
9 that information on this site is current and
10 accurate. Additionally, we recently created plain
11 language start up guides for 16 industries such as
12 retail construction and manufacturing. While we
13 support this legislation's goal of making business
14 information accessible and have been trying to do so
15 through our portal we must note that it poses
16 significant legal issues to connect commercial goods
17 or services or to promote or endorse particular
18 applications on city websites as required by this
19 bill. As you can see we do a lot for the job seekers
20 and small businesses of New York City but there's
21 always more to be done. We appreciate the council's
22 advocacy and attention to veteran employment and
23 entrepreneurship and look forward to continuing this
24 conversation with you. Jamal Othman will now provide
25 a brief testimony on the work of the Department of

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2 Veteran Services after which I'm happy to answer any
3 questions. Thank you.

4 JAMAL OTHMAN: Thank you Chair. Good
5 afternoon Chair Cornegy, Chair Ulrich in spirit and
6 members of the Committee on Veterans and Committee on
7 Small Business. My name is Jamal Othman and I have
8 the privilege of serving as the Assistant
9 Commissioner for City Employment, Education,
10 Entrepreneurship Events and Engagement, it's a
11 mouthful, of the New York City Department of Veteran
12 Services. Thank you for the opportunity to meet and
13 hear our testimony on Introduction 1509, 1510, 1511,
14 and Resolution 1412 alongside my colleague Rachel Van
15 Tosh, Deputy Commissioner of the New York City
16 Department of Small Business Services. In my current
17 role, I have the responsibility of leading the
18 department citywide campaign to connect veterans and
19 their families with employment opportunities,
20 educational resources, financial services, and
21 business opportunities. In fact, any resource they
22 may be eligible as a result of their military service
23 regardless of their discharge status. As a veteran of
24 the Marine Corp myself I have a personal connection
25 and vested interest in the economic prosperity of the

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2 veteran's reserve because I am one of them. the
3 challenges of reintegrating into our communities
4 after military service is not a onetime life event,
5 it's a lifelong journey and at DVS we want to be part
6 of that veteran's journey all along the way including
7 increasing access to resources to our veteran
8 business community. DVS has always had a close
9 working relationship with our colleagues at SBS. DVS
10 regularly identifies veteran friendly businesses
11 committed to hiring veterans and ensure they're
12 connected to SBS for consideration as a supplier of
13 jobs to the Workforce One Career Centers. Our
14 community outreach coordinators regularly refer and
15 make warm handoffs to Workforce One Career Center
16 veteran specialists. And as Rachel mentioned DVS and
17 SBS recently launched a collaboration where one of
18 our outreach coordinators is hosted at a local
19 Workforce One Center working alongside a veteran
20 employment specialist. Currently we have an outreach
21 coordinator holding office hours at the downtown
22 Brooklyn Workforce One site where we have been
23 performing warm handoffs of veterans seeking
24 employment and workforce development opportunities.
25 The intention is creating a concerted holistic

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2 approach to addressing the needs of New York City
3 veterans by both DVS and SBS. With regard to the
4 legislation being considered today DVS supports Intro
5 1511, which proposes to require small business
6 services to prepare and disseminate a state of small
7 business services. We believe one of the biggest
8 challenges we face as veteran service providers is
9 not knowing what we don't know. The results of such a
10 survey can help inform SBS and DVS to better provide
11 tailored programs and targeted part... particular unmet
12 needs in a data driven approach and DVS stands ready
13 to assist SBS in that endeavor. In relation to Intro
14 1510, which proposes to require small business
15 services to formulate a comprehensive workforce
16 development plan based on the results of the state of
17 small business survey we concur with SBS. We believe
18 it would be premature to identify programmatic
19 approaches until the results of such a survey
20 identifies gaps in services and community needs.
21 Intro 1509 proposes to require the Commissioner of
22 Small Business Services to post online business tools
23 on their website, we also concur with SBS. In fact,
24 DVS is currently revamping its website and planning
25 to roll out a dedicated landing page listing tools

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2 and resources not only from SBS but also from other
3 federal, state, and city sources. The design and
4 content though will be consistent with advice
5 received on acceptable linking from NYC dot gov and
6 restrictions on endorsement of particular commercial
7 goods and services. Additionally, as we previously
8 testified [clears throat] excuse me... DVS will be
9 launching VetConnect NYC, it's an online portal for
10 veterans and their families that provides a single
11 point of access no wrong door approach for veterans
12 to be connected to best in class vetted public and
13 private resources. VetConnect is in the procurement
14 phase and we expect to launch this fall. Finally,
15 Resolution 1412 would formally declare the date of
16 June 22nd Veterans Tribute and Advocacy Day in New
17 York City. Nearing the culmination of the second
18 World War on June 22nd, 1944 President Franklin
19 Delano Roosevelt signed the Serviceman's Readjustment
20 Act of 1944 more commonly known as the GI Bill into
21 law and I just may add that I am a product of the GI
22 Bill, I went to college and Graduate school on GI
23 Bill after separating from service and I wouldn't be
24 here today if it wasn't for the GI Bill but this
25 landmark piece of legislation guaranteed service

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2 member benefits to pursue education, home ownership,
3 and vocational training to name a few. DVS supports
4 Resolution 1412 as this date represents a critical
5 milestone in our nation's history in acknowledging
6 the service and sacrifices of our veterans as well as
7 the stall work efforts of our veteran advocate
8 community which heavily influenced the passage of the
9 GI Bill. I want to thank you, the members of the
10 council and in particular the community whose
11 feedback we value. This concludes my testimony, I'd
12 be delighted to take questions at this point.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Before we move
14 forward I just want to say on behalf of myself, my
15 family, the Committee on Small Business Mr. Othman I
16 thank you for your service... [cross-talk]

17 JAMAL OTHMAN: Thank you sir... [cross-
18 talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: ...and I'd like
20 for you to tell your grandfathers to both of them if
21 they're still alive and still... and still around that
22 we appreciate their service in all military
23 endeavors.

24 RACHEL VAN TOSH: He was very excited to
25 hear us testifying today.

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CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Thank you Co-Chair

and I want to mention that we've been joined by

Council Member Maisel and also Cabrera, members of

the Veterans Committee, they are waiting for a vote

on the Resolution which we will take the roll in just

a minute but first we're going to hear from the

sponsor of the Resolution, Council Member Eugene who

also happens to be the former Chair of this

committee.

COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you, good

morning Mr. Chair, thank you... good afternoon

everyone. As you know my name is Mathieu Eugene and

I'm the Council Member representing District 40 in

Brooklyn. First, I would like to thank my colleagues

on the Veterans Committee and the Small Business

Committee and especially the two Chairs, Council

Member Eric Ulrich of the Veterans Committee and also

Council Member Robert Cornegy of the Committee on

Small Businesses for him and this very important

Resolution to declare June 22nd Veterans Tribute and

Advocacy Day in New York City. Resolution 1412

proposes that that Veteran Tribute and Advocacy Day

to be held on the anniversary of the day that the,

the President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the GI

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2 Bill of Right into law creating a modern system of
3 benefits for veterans. My intention with Veteran
4 Tribute and Advocacy Day is not only to set up with
5 the service and sacrifices of our veterans but to
6 take this day as an opportunity to advocate for
7 better resources for veterans who are returning to
8 civilian life. Veterans of, of all ages face a wide
9 range of challenges, health problems, mental health
10 problems, difficulties adjusting to family and
11 civilian life and more. And I think it is right to
12 take a... the anniversary of the GI Bill to advocate
13 for better services and resources for those who have
14 given so much to serve our country. I would like to
15 thank the Chair, my colleague Eric, Eric Ulrich as
16 well as all the members of the committee, all the
17 staff especially Michael Kurtz and also my own staff
18 and I would like also to take the opportunity to
19 thank all the veterans of all ages for what they,
20 they have done for us, for all of us for this country
21 for putting their life in dangers to defend our
22 democracy and our freedom and you made the utmost
23 sacrifices and I think we owe you a great deal of
24 gratitude on behalf of everybody and on my behalf
25 thank you so very much for what you have done for

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2 this country and for all of us and god bless you and
3 your family and Mr. Chair thank you very much.

4 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Thank you Council
5 Member Eugene. I'll ask the clerk to call the roll if
6 we can on that Reso.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK DISTEFANO: Committee
8 Clerk Matthew Distefano, Committee on Veterans
9 jointly with the Committee on Small Business roll
10 call vote for the Committee on Veterans on Resolution
11 1412, Chair Ulrich?

12 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: I vote aye and
13 recommend the S vote.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK DISTEFANO: Cabrera?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: [off-mic] Aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK DISTEFANO: Maisel?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: [off-mic] Yes.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK DISTEFANO: Vallone?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: [off-mic]

20 Proudly aye.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK DISTEFANO: Borelli?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: [off-mic] Aye.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK DISTEFANO: By a vote of
24 five in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and no
25 abstentions the Resolution is passed.

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CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Thank you. Thank you very much, thank you. I'm going to turn it back over to Chair Cornegy and I want to apologize for having to step out for your testimony, I'm on the Environmental Protection Committee, we're voting on a bill upstairs so I had to... I had to shoot up there and I just came back down but I'm, I'm actively reading your testimony I'll have some very good questions in just a few minutes but I'll let my Co-Chair take it from here.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you Co-Chair Ulrich. So, I'm acutely aware that some of my colleagues have other responsibilities so I am going to do something unprecedented and forego my usual lengthy round of questioning and allow my colleagues who may or may not have any questions to offer those questions now. Council Member Wills, take, take your time.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: I'm excited, this has never happened before that some, some... someone gave up speaking time, its... I was going to tell you a couple other Chairs that should learn from this but we're going to leave that alone. Good afternoon, thank you Chairs for foregoing that minute because

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2 some of us do have to leave, I appreciate it
3 tremendously. I just had a couple of quick questions,
4 I went over it with the staff this morning. In the
5 briefing paper it discussed the drop off of the
6 veterans that were actually becoming entrepreneurs
7 from World War II and Korean vets at 41.1 percent and
8 then in 2003 it dropped to 2.2 percent of new
9 entrepreneurs by veterans and in 2013 it dropped to
10 4.8 percent do we know why there's such a sharp
11 decline in... and I think the, the new... it's new to me
12 the term that was coined as veteran, veteran
13 entrepreneurship?

14 JAMAL OTHMAN: My, my... I don't have any
15 reason why that would... we had the drop-off, I mean it
16 could be multiple speculated reasons... [cross-talk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: Uh-huh... [cross-
18 talk]

19 JAMAL OTHMAN: ...but I, I honestly don't
20 know.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: I mean you can
22 speculate, I mean is it... I mean I, I don't understand
23 it because it seems like with all of the new programs
24 that we have not just in New York City being the
25 leader of it thanks to the leadership of our

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2 committee chairs small business and veterans and some
3 other people, of course the state, I got to give some
4 state folks some credit also but it would seem that
5 we would have more veterans as entrepreneurs, right,
6 so I'm wondering why, I mean we are in a tech.. the
7 technology driven economy and different things like
8 that so do you have any speculation as to why that
9 dropped off to better help us, I know you said you
10 needed more resources to do certain things but we
11 need to find out why the veterans are not becoming
12 the entrepreneurs that we wished them to be?

13 JAMAL OTHMAN: Again I have no data to
14 back this up off the top of my head what I would say
15 is that since World War II you've been seeing a lot
16 more veterans attend college and enter the, the
17 mainstream job market, that could potentially be one
18 of the reasons again I'm speculating.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Okay... [cross-talk]

20 RACHEL VAN TOSH: I also... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Yes... [cross-talk]

22 RACHEL VAN TOSH: ...although I don't have
23 answers off the top of my head but we can certainly
24 look into it and we can look and see how that

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compares to overall rates of entrepreneurship among individuals... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

RACHEL VAN TOSH: ...and see if there's a disparity there and get back to you.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: Have we done any work around the Chambers on the Go, is that... Chair is that what the correct name of it is, the Chamber on the Go... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Yes...

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: Have we done... I'm giving you credit, you've got a great program, I don't know you late today, I don't know what's happening today with you. Have we... have we done anything with that particular program around veterans?

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Yes, through Chamber on the Go, which is a great program, thank you Chair Cornegy...

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: That's what I was trying to do and he didn't give you a smart remark, I don't know what's happening.

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RACHEL VAN TOSH: The chambers are trained in all of the services that we provide which includes our services for veterans and since we have launched that program we have reached more than 5,000 businesses and connected nearly 1,500 of them to our services. So, we think it's been very successful.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: And have we reached any aspirational marks, anything with that with the Chamber on the Go and veteran services, things that we would like to see or pull into the veteran's services citywide?

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Yeah, that's a good question I think that we've now successfully implemented two years of this service so this would be a really good point to work with our colleagues at DVS and see if there are some ways that we can make even stronger connections there.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Okay, thank you. I don't want to take up more time than I should, thank you very much.

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Thank you. That was... that was very short, I'm very appreciative, thank you. Do any other members of the Veterans Committee,

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2 I think Maisel and Vallone had to leave, there are
3 several other committees that are meeting
4 simultaneously so people are really in and out on the
5 16th floor and here on 14. I didn't get a chance to
6 listen to your testimony but I did get a chance to
7 read it and I want to thank you for being here
8 representing Commissioner Sutton and the agency which
9 we fought very hard to create and we know how
10 important the work is that we're doing together to
11 help veterans. I have a question about the Workforce
12 One Centers and this came up at the hearing about two
13 years ago when we had the first hearing on veteran
14 entrepreneurship, we had heard some unfortunate
15 negative feedback from some actual veterans who came
16 that day to testify about some bad experiences that
17 they had at Workforce One Centers and I know that at
18 the time MOVO was looking into improving the customer
19 service and the accessibility of the veterans liaison
20 that is assigned to the Workforce One Center in each
21 borough and I'm just wondering if you have an update
22 on that, is DVS actively involved in training or
23 supervising any of those workers even though they
24 technically work for SBS and... in, in the Workforce
25 One Centers, are they accountable in any way to the

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2 new department or to Commissioner Sutton maybe you
3 can shed some light on that?

4 JAMAL OTHMAN: Thank you for the question
5 Chair Ulrich. So, as you know we, we... one of our
6 committed milestones when the agency was created was
7 to establish citywide precedence and I'm proud to
8 announce that just before Memorial Day we
9 accomplished that and we have satellite sites in all
10 five boroughs and we have outreach coordinators in
11 each borough. Each outreach coordinator in each
12 respective borough works with the veteran specialist
13 in that respective borough with the veteran
14 employment specialist so you, you have... you have a
15 close working relationship with each, each of these
16 individuals. I'm going to use the Brooklyn site as an
17 example where we currently have one of our outreach
18 coordinators imbedded in the Workforce One site and
19 what we're finding is that when you have a veteran
20 employment specialist and, and an outreach
21 coordinator that, you know specializes on assisting
22 veterans with a whole host of resources and there are
23 a couple of cubicles away from each other great
24 things happen and what we're seeing is... you know... you
25 know people like to say warm handoffs, you know this

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2 is... these are... these are... these are hot out of the
3 oven, you know sort of transfers that are happening,
4 veteran's right there, you could get immediate access
5 to, to resources and services. So, what you've seen
6 since the creation of DVS and since the establishment
7 of the borough site is a much closer relationship
8 between the Workforce One sites where there's a
9 veteran employment specialist and our outreach
10 coordinators.

11 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: I think that's very
12 important Chair and you know for veterans who felt
13 that they were getting the run around prior to this
14 marriage if you will between the two agencies I think
15 it's very important that they work closely together
16 to make sure that when referrals are made that they
17 are made in kind and that they are obviously followed
18 through somehow. There's some people that I, I know
19 Workforce One Centers can't help, you know that there
20 are... there are other issues involved and we won't get
21 into those issues today but for the ones that we can
22 I think it's really important especially in light of
23 the fact that the employment rate among veterans in
24 parts of the city like Brooklyn and Queens are higher
25 than the civilian population, that's very disturbing

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2 to me. Are we helping formally homeless veterans, I
3 know we helped them with getting permanent housing
4 and the administration has done a yeoman's job in
5 actually eliminating chronic veteran's homelessness
6 in the city but are we helping them with job
7 training, are we getting them jobs, it's nice that
8 we're getting them into apartments and out of the
9 shelter system but what are we doing for those
10 veterans to get them jobs, do we have an update on
11 that DVS or, or SBS, anybody want to talk on that?

12 JAMAL OTHMAN: I'd be happy to add
13 something to that. So, so, so as you mentioned... you...
14 as you mentioned the city and, and, and DVS has... had
15 made some great strides in reducing veteran among the
16 homeless around veterans we have on staff an act of
17 care coordinator because we recognize that it's just
18 not about making sure that veterans are housed, we
19 want to ensure that we have low recidivism rates so
20 that's number one. I think number two is we're now in
21 a place through our outreach coordinators and through
22 our connection through SBS to again ensure that
23 formally homeless veterans have access and get front
24 of the line services at SBS Workforce One sites.
25 Additionally, you know we explore all employment

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2 avenues for all veterans, in particular for homeless
3 veterans so there may be a service provider that we
4 have partnered with that we... that may, may take on a
5 case with one of our homeless, formally homeless
6 veterans. Additionally, the city... the city of New
7 York is... many people may not know this is actually
8 the largest employer of veterans in New York City, we
9 have about roughly eight to 10,000 veterans and
10 reservists working for the city of New York and
11 public service has historically been an avenue for
12 many separating service members and we want to make
13 sure that New York City continues that tradition so
14 we're also exploring avenues working with DCAS Civil
15 Service to ensure that veterans who get special
16 consideration, you know civil service credit have
17 access to those benefits including homeless veterans.

18 RACHEL VAN TOSH: And I will add that
19 through the Workforce One System we do and priority,
20 we do try to meet veterans where they're at so if
21 they're not ready to be connected to employment we
22 will connect them to wraparound services, we will
23 work with them on building their resume, interview
24 skills, we will work to connect them with appropriate
25 trainings, and they receive first priority, first

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2 place in the line for any of those services. So,
3 there's no, no wrong door you could come in... [cross-
4 talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: That's really great
6 news and I think we've come a long way from that
7 first hearing where we were very concerned about how
8 veterans were being treated in Workforce One Centers.
9 My last question then I'll... I'm going to turn it back
10 over to my Co-Chair is involving the set aside, you
11 know Governor Cuomo announced a couple of years ago,
12 I think it's a six percent set aside for procurement
13 for state contracts for veterans and I believe that
14 the city of New York, the administration was opposed
15 to that idea of doing it on the city level at the
16 time because we weren't actually sure what percentage
17 of procurements was already being done with veterans
18 and so the city said that they were going to add a
19 question I believe to the GSA or something, it was a...
20 [cross-talk]

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RACHEL VAN TOSH: The pay information
22 portal... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Thank you... [cross-
24 talk]

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RACHEL VAN TOSH: Yeah... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS JOINTLY WITH

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

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CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: ...yeah, the, the,
the... yeah...

RACHEL VAN TOSH: ...PIP.

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: PIP, thank you. PIP,
I was way off but anyway... but... [cross-talk]

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Yeah, GSA is close...

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: GSA is close...
[cross-talk]

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Yeah... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: ...it's a federal
thing anyway but... so have we... we've added that now to
the PIP?

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Yeah... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Do we have any data
on that, how many veterans are actually already doing
business with the city, the, the raw number of
percentage, is there a goal, is it above a certain
threshold, can you share some of that information?

RACHEL VAN TOSH: I can share certainly
some of that information. So, as you mentioned about
two years ago we did some work and thinking around
would it make sense to have a goals program for
veterans and you know we've been working closely with
the newly created Mayor's Office of MWBE and DVS on

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2 thinking through whether that makes sense at this
3 point. We did, you know allow for a checkmark sort of
4 in PIP around this and so far only 200... actually a
5 little over 200 businesses have signed up so it's
6 something we will continue to explore and talk
7 through and I think that, you know we're happy to
8 work with DVS and the Mayor's Office of MWBE on any
9 ways of expanding procurement opportunities for
10 veterans and we haven't waited to have a program in
11 order to provide them a whole range of capacity
12 building services in order for them to access city,
13 state, and federal contracts. So, while I think it's
14 important it's certainly not the only way that we can
15 support veteran business owners in contracting with
16 the city.

17 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Thank you again for
18 your testimony and of course for all your good work
19 helping veterans in the city. Thank you Co-Chair...

20 RACHEL VAN TOSH: Thank you.

21 JAMAL OTHMAN: Thank you Chair.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you Co-
23 Chair Ulrich I just wanted to ask, you know there's
24 some anecdotal information that suggests that
25 veterans, the transferable skills of service are more

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2 suited for entrepreneurship than, than actual jobs,
3 what has been your experience with that anecdotal
4 kind of suggestion, do you... do you support that idea,
5 do you think that it... you know I'm just curious as to
6 what your expertise lends to, to that notion?

7 JAMAL OTHMAN: I, I... it... in working with
8 veterans for, for the last 20 years what I've... what
9 I've seen is a mix, right, I've seen the
10 entrepreneurial spirit and that could be demonstrated
11 in a... in a multiple of different ways, it could be by
12 starting a business or it could be by showing a
13 certain type of initiative at, at the... at the work
14 place. I like to think that I'm entrepreneur at work
15 so I've seen sort of a mix there. The, the spirit is
16 there and it's just displayed in different ways.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So, I, I asked
18 that because I kind of got a sense that, that maybe
19 what you're thinking and I wanted to make sure that
20 we're supporting the notion that there may be some
21 nontraditional opportunities for service members
22 transitioning that we should be not only exploring
23 but having resources ready available to assist in
24 that area so its... you know it's kind of to some
25 degree unchartered waters... [cross-talk]

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JAMAL OTHMAN: Yeah... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: ...as, as a mass idea and there are just so many technologically, technology driven industries that support service members and, and their transferable skills that I don't want to not only miss the boat on any opportunity that could be supportive of those service members so I'd like to continue to have that conversation and see how we as a council and how the Small Business Committee in particular can be supportive of a notion of a greater emphasis on entrepreneurship.

RACHEL VAN TOSH: I will say for the programs that we run that are tailored to entrepreneurs what we see is that most veterans come in with, you know a strong commitment to excellence and attention to detail and very high levels of strategic planning skills which are all extremely applicable to entrepreneurship so a lot of the tailoring of the curriculum that we run for businesses talk about how to translate that skill that you get in the military to planning a business. So, I think your words certainly make sense and resonate with our experience as well.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS JOINTLY WITH

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

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COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you, so Senator Perkins... Council Member Perkins do you have any questions? So, I'm going to move to the legislative portion of today at this time and at the risk of blowing an opportunity to be expedient in a hearing I do have some... a few questions so I... [cross-talk]

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Great... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: I know the... so, my first question is on Intro 1509. In, in the small business first report which was released in 2014 your first recommendation was to create a comprehensive online business portal which you... which you had referenced in your testimony, what's the timeline for a fully functional online rollout of Small Business First one, one that includes the comprehensive business portal?

RACHEL VAN TOSH: So, we have continued to make updates to the portal and I'd like to think that our work is never done in fully rolling something like that out. As I mentioned we have a new interface, we have new abilities for individuals to access their unique permit and licensing information, they now have the ability to conduct transactions

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2 online with agencies like the Department of Health
3 and really have one place where they can go to get
4 information from all of the different agencies. So,
5 we will continue to roll out new versions of that as
6 information becomes available but we've certainly
7 made good progress so far.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Secondly, are,
9 are... so I don't know if I heard you say that there's
10 currently online business tools available for small
11 businesses via the portal, the portal right now
12 today?

13 RACHEL VAN TOSH: So, I think for, for
14 that bill we certainly support it in spirit, I think
15 the problem is with how its written there's some
16 issues from our legal counsel around recommending
17 specific commercial tools like QuickBooks and linking
18 them on this site so while we support the idea of
19 information about how to use tools like that,
20 information on city services that direct connection
21 to specific commercial products would be difficult
22 for us.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So, is the
24 difficulty in choosing specific products to highlight
25 or is it in... because if there's an array and

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everybody... you know and you can point... I'm just curious as to where the problem is, is it in, you know saying QuickBooks and saying something else or is it in listing the... you know what's available to a small business in, in its entirety?

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Right, I think its recommending specific products and I'm happy to talk about ways we might be able to tweak the legislation so that it meets shared purposes because we certainly think collecting in one place all the tools and resources available to businesses is a shared goal of ours.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So, ultimately you should know that I'd love to see Chamber on the Go have a, a vast array of services available like... [cross-talk]

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: ...you know a, a small either bookkeeping or something that actually goes out... [cross-talk]

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: ...and is able to support businesses in kind of a pool, a way of doing things so... this is like kind of the first step

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2 towards I think doing.. you know virtually doing it
3 and then literally doing it to, to support small
4 business owners.

5 RACHEL VAN TOSH: Great, we should talk
6 about that more.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: And so the
8 second is on proposed Intro 1510A.. [cross-talk]

9 RACHEL VAN TOSH: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: ...what do you
11 think a reasonable number of businesses to survey
12 would be and how long do you anticipate the
13 administration of the survey would take?

14 RACHEL VAN TOSH: I think that it would
15 really depend on what scope we ended up going with
16 and our desire to get a broad representative range of
17 business owners in the city which I think we would
18 want. I'm not a statistician so I would defer to
19 somebody with expertise on that to the exact number
20 of businesses surveyed given what potential cost
21 might be and timeline, it could take I, I think up to
22 a year maybe to roll something out but I, I wouldn't
23 anticipate much more than that.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Does, does SBS
25 currently have the capacity, I think you asked..

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answered this in almost an ask of resources but I'm going to ask the question anyway, does SBS currently have the capacity to create and disseminate this survey?

RACHEL VAN TOSH: I think if we wanted to do a large scale comprehensive survey again pending the exact scope we would need additional resources.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: I think you should know and you should articulate to Greg that it is never my.. I'm sorry, Commissioner Bishop it is never my intention to emendate this office which is doing tremendous work... [cross-talk]

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: ...and I, I...
[cross-talk]

RACHEL VAN TOSH: ...thank you... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: ...don't want you to think that I'm somewhere just thinking up crazy stuff for SBS to do, most of... most of the things that I've attempted to implement have been informed by a meeting with business owners in groups in... you know so it... it's not... it's not me just trying to come up with things...

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RACHEL VAN TOSH: We support 1509, we think a broad comprehensive survey of business owners could really benefit our work so I thank you for proposing.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: And, and do you have any idea kind of broadly what information would be most helpful to gather from small businesses with, with an intent on helping to build capacity like because that's my intent not just information for the sake of information but to move us in a direction that we can truly be supportive of businesses and I, I believe I heard you say meeting... or that was you who said meeting either veterans or businesses where they are is, is the total intent of this legislation and I think anything that's come out of this committee so...

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Absolutely and the vision sort of mission of SBS is equity of access to opportunity for everybody in the city so I think what we would want to look at are the unique barriers, the unique barriers that businesses face across the city in accessing capital, in building business skills and things like that.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you and then... and then lastly for me on Intro 1511 how do you anticipate that the upcoming jobs plan creating at least 100,000 new middle-class jobs that pay at least 50,000 per year will incorporate workforce development?

RACHEL VAN TOSH: I think there are some specific recommendations in the report around new ways to do work, workforce development like apprentice NYC in the report so hopefully it will move us, you know further along in exploring new ways to support people in accessing employment in the city.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So, I've been struggling because I, I found a statistic and, and, and I keep cited it and not... I got to get this... the source again but it was a reliable... trust me it was a reliable source, that said if we as a city help build capacity in every small business... [cross-talk]

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: ...across the city of New York in an effort that they could hire one more person we would actually decrease unemployment by 50 percent in over... in under five years, to me

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2 that's the answer to everything, right, I'm like you
3 know new workforce development which is a great
4 direction to go, there's this idea that if we
5 supported the small business as they are they could
6 just hire one more employee it would be better than
7 any goals that we're attempting to set in any other
8 area. I'm just wondering what your thoughts are on
9 that and, and it's hard for you to answer having only
10 Rob Cornegy as the cited source, I promise next time
11 I will have the, the, the cited source which is a
12 credible source but it's just something that's kind
13 of stuck in my mind that I don't want to be off base,
14 I don't want to... I don't want to leave the council
15 having understood that that to be a necessity and not
16 acted towards it?

17 RACHEL VAN TOSH: I mean I think that at
18 SBS we of course believe that small businesses are
19 strong job creators in the city and are the backbones
20 of the economy and through Workforce One the majority
21 of businesses that we serve are small and we provide
22 them with free recruitment services from a, a wide
23 range of candidates, there are about 125,000 people
24 every year that come through Workforce One, we also
25 support them in training their TM's and their staff

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2 through programs like customized training and on the
3 job training so we have a robust set of services I
4 think to support small businesses in helping to find
5 talent and build their talent base and through all of
6 the work we do through business solutions and the
7 variety of other programs that we offer we work to
8 grow business owners so I'm completely supportive of
9 the idea that we should add a job to every small
10 business in the city.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So, I want to
12 thank you both for your testimony and again thank you
13 for, for your service... [cross-talk]

14 RACHEL VAN TOSH: Thank you... [cross-talk]

15 JAMAL OTHMAN: Thank you Chair, thank you
16 so much.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Thank you, I
18 want to kind of just follow up a little bit to your
19 question because I, I, I just... I may have
20 misunderstood the question but I thought if we could
21 build the capacity of small businesses to just hire
22 one more person the unemployment challenge would be
23 overcome, is that a realistic vision to implement, is
24 it... what might be the challenges to implementing that
25 in terms of resources, you know training, I don't

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2 know what... how does that... how does that kind of a
3 challenge get met and what would be the obstacles or...

4 RACHEL VAN TOSH: Uh-huh...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Dollars and
6 cents that might be needed to, to fulfill that?

7 RACHEL VAN TOSH: So, through the work
8 that we do at SBS we offer what I... a very
9 comprehensive set of services to small business
10 owners, I'd say probably among one of the most
11 comprehensive and we work with more than 10,000
12 businesses every year but certainly not... [cross-talk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Small
14 businesses?

15 RACHEL VAN TOSH: Uh-huh, certainly not
16 every single one of them in New York City... [cross-
17 talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: That sounds like
19 10,000 potential jobs as per the question that I
20 understood.

21 RACHEL VAN TOSH: Potentially, I think
22 not every business owner wants to have employees,
23 some are very happy to be sole proprietors or
24 otherwise in the city but I certainly think that the
25 issues that we work to address like access to capital

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2 and business skill building and helping small
3 businesses who are qualified access government
4 contracts those are all ways that we help them try to
5 grow employment opportunities.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: So, let's... if I
7 may proceed just a second more here, I apologize if
8 it's... if I'm being over indulgent but if there was a
9 call we want to hire 10,000 individuals, 10,000 small
10 businesses are going to be supported towards that end
11 how much would that cost, the budget, what would be
12 the budget to in course for something like that, how
13 would you determine the budgetary cost for something
14 like that?

15 RACHEL VAN TOSH: I don't know if I'm
16 able to give a budgetary cost for something like that
17 but I will say that the Mayor did just commit to
18 growing 100,000 new jobs over the next ten years in
19 certain growing sectors with investments in real
20 estate, investments in talent those are all ways we
21 could think about achieving a goal like that.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: But in terms of
23 small businesses which I think is what is, is, is... it
24 kind of attractive to me about the question and I
25 just wondered is there a way to focus that question

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2 and, and, and develop something behind it, do you
3 understand what I'm trying to say because we do have
4 a small business agenda in, in, in our portfolio...

5 [cross-talk]

6 RACHEL VAN TOSH: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: ...how many...

8 [cross-talk]

9 RACHEL VAN TOSH: Absolutely... [cross-
10 talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: ...small
12 businesses would you say there are in, in, in the
13 city for instance?

14 RACHEL VAN TOSH: There are nearly
15 200,000.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: So, 10,000 jobs
17 within that 200,000 is that realistic?

18 RACHEL VAN TOSH: I don't know if I'd be
19 able to, to fully answer that question in this
20 hearing, I'd be happy to talk with you more about it
21 offline. I think you know as the Chair said most of
22 the businesses in New York City are small businesses
23 so the Mayor's commitment around the jobs, job
24 creation plan in other ways are ways we're already
25 working to pursue that goal I think.

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COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Alright, alright thank you very much Council Member for the... for the question and, and, and for your response as well and hopefully we can, you know work with you somehow or other at least take a good look at it because that sounds really promising and it sounds very relevant in, in some of our communities and, and throughout the city.

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So, so just to encapsulate I think what the Council Member, myself, and what you're alluding to is that... to me it's, it's, it's a three prong detactus, it's access to capital...

RACHEL VAN TOSH: Uh-huh...

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: ...so businesses can grow, its access to technical assistance which we try to do with the great that SBS is doing and now doing a tremendous amount of outreach with Chamber on the Go and then its, it's the city's procurement and contracting portion of this falling in particular communities where it didn't exist before. So, there is absolutely a formula if we're committed and we have the political will to do it and I believe that...

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2 and I believe that we do, you've, you've shown the
3 commitment by the... you know the Mayor's new jobs
4 plan, SBS has worked diligently to increase MWBE
5 participation in contracting across the city so I
6 think... I asked the question that the ball is already
7 rolling in but we can... we can shape it I think not a
8 little bit better but, but we can quantify what we're
9 doing and, and it doesn't have to be like this thing
10 that happened during a period of time in history, we
11 actually can, can shape it a little more and, and
12 hopefully instead of it just being an organic
13 occurrence we can... you know we can do a little bit of
14 organic occurrence because it is... we have new
15 industry and new technology that's, that's providing
16 more business but we can target a little bit
17 simultaneously so I think that's not a farfetched
18 number, 10,000 is not a... is not a farfetched number
19 if that's what we're saying and it, it can be rolled
20 into the, the Mayor's portfolio of, of 100,000 jobs
21 but we can target it very easily. I'm, I'm, I'm in
22 contact with small businesses every single day and a
23 lot of them would love access to capital but actually
24 the majority would love access to technical
25 assistance whether its... whether it's you know how to

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2 formulate a website or whether it is access to
3 someone who could help them with their bookkeeping or
4 record keeping. So, all of these small things can
5 cumulatively have an effect and impact on increasing
6 jobs in the city but not by accident so I don't... I
7 don't want this to happen by accident I want us to
8 actually be responsible for its formation and it
9 sounds like you're doing a little bit of that already
10 but I'd like to explore how we can quantify what's
11 happening organically.

12 RACHEL VAN TOSH: I think certainly any
13 way that we can improve our services to help
14 businesses start and grow in the city we'd be happy
15 to discuss.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So, so thank
17 you, if there's no more questions we can call the
18 next... [cross-talk]

19 RACHEL VAN TOSH: Thank you... [cross-talk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: ...panel... [cross-
21 talk]

22 JAMAL OTHMAN: Thank you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Karen Rouse, I
24 am going to destroy this name, last name is Komatsu
25 and Avi, Avi Leshes, oh well I'll be... Avi you write

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2 like a doctor by the way... if you can just be prepared
3 to have your testimony affirmed.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK FAHEY: Please raise your
5 right hands? Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
6 whole truth and nothing but the truth in your
7 testimony today and to answer council member
8 questions honestly? Thank you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So, Avi since I
10 butchered your name the worst can you go first.

11 AVI LESHES: Good afternoon Chairs
12 Cornegy, members of the of both the Small Business
13 Committee and Veteran Committee. I'm Avi Leshes, I'm
14 the Director of Government Affairs and Deputy
15 Director of the Business Solution Center for the
16 Chamber... Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. With over
17 2,500... 2,100 active members the Brooklyn Chamber is
18 the largest chamber of New York, we promote economic
19 development across the borough of Brooklyn as well as
20 advocate on behalf of our members who are small
21 businesses. The Brooklyn Alliance which is a not for
22 profit economic development affiliated of the
23 Brooklyn Chamber which works to address the needs of
24 businesses to their like business programs. The
25 Brooklyn Chamber is generally supportive of Intro

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2 1509 which seeks to further enhance the current
3 accessibility and organization of online business
4 tools on New York City's small business services
5 website. We are optimistic that the Committee of New
6 York City's Small Business Services can work together
7 to implement and enhance over time which will create
8 additional benefits to small businesses that utilize
9 such online functions. We are also supportive of
10 Intro 1511 which would initiate data collection of
11 New York City's Small Businesses Services for
12 analysis as it relates to Workforce needs of small
13 businesses and also Intro 1510 which would help this
14 agency to create a comprehensive workforce
15 development plan based on the results of the said
16 survey. In the 2016 state member issue survey 52
17 percent of participants indicated that they plan to
18 hire one to five new employees in 2017 so obviously
19 back to your comment about hiring new employees our
20 small businesses are saying that they want to hire
21 between one and five new employees so that's
22 definitely a, a goal that would could achieve. So,
23 I'm not going to go through the whole thing and
24 basically the, the... Brooklyn is home to New York
25 City's only remaining active duty military base, Fort

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2 Hamilton, the Fort has been in existence for almost
3 200 years and its economic and cultural impact of
4 Southern Brooklyn is still significant today, we
5 highly recommend to focus initiative between Fort
6 Hamilton and the Veteran entrepreneurs such as what's
7 going on in NYU, LIU and other incubators to workers
8 to include but not be limited to training, mentoring,
9 technology, access upon their discharge. Thank you
10 for the opportunity to testify.

11 KOMATSU: Hi, I'm a US Navy veteran, I
12 was assigned to the Yokosuka Naval base in Japan
13 where unfortunately there, there was a recent
14 incident of seven sailors. There's been some
15 discussion today about the issue of homelessness,
16 shelters, and jobs I'm actually in a shelter for
17 veterans in the Bronx and with regards to remarks
18 that the Mayor made on Veterans Day last year in
19 Madison Square Park across the street from Credit
20 Suisse where I used to work. I have a transcript of
21 his remarks and let me just briefly read to you two
22 key remarks he made. Quote, unquote "anyone who has a
23 job that they're looking to fill, fill it with a
24 veteran", next remark, "when you hire a veteran I
25 guarantee you you'll not only be doing the right

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2 thing, you'll be doing yourself a favor because
3 they're that good". The problem with his remarks is
4 these are 12 jobs with New York City Government
5 Agencies I've applied for, I'm fully qualified for
6 them, I haven't been granted a single interview for
7 any of them. So, the question is, how do you rectify
8 his remarks with the actual practices in play. Next
9 question is one of those jobs... well one of those jobs
10 I applied for was actually with the Mayor's Office as
11 a help desk analysis, a job I previously held, I
12 reached out to Harold Miller who's on his staff, I
13 asked him if there's anything he could do to
14 intervene to see if I could be granted an interview
15 and then have a decision made on merits as to whether
16 to grant me that job or to deny it, again I reached
17 out to his own staff, there was no interview. So, I
18 guess the question that I have for your Commission is
19 what will your commission do to have me granted job
20 interviews with New York City Government Agencies I'm
21 fully qualified for and applied for. Let me move on
22 to the next question, with regards to that oath that
23 we all took when we enlisted in the military to
24 protect something called the constitution against all
25 enemies both foreign and domestic without an

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2 expiration date and without any exceptions, if the
3 Mayor's head of security Howard Redman whose
4 currently a defendant in a federal civil rights
5 lawsuit kept me out of a town hall meeting on April
6 27th in Long Island City, if he's still on his
7 security team... security team, team violating a US
8 Supreme Court decision in Wood versus Moss as well as
9 the New York State Open Meetings Law again what will
10 your commission do to allow me to attend a public
11 meeting where I'm essentially trying to ask these
12 commissioners of government agencies why am I not be
13 granted an interview and how can you help the 66 year
14 old lady in Rego Park whose... a slum lord that I
15 previously beat in court is trying to evict, I mean
16 with regards to HHR it has its office of, of Civil
17 Justice that perhaps Mr. Ulrich is familiar with, I
18 asked Steven Banks on March 1st at the Yale Club face
19 to face, gave him about five to six court transcripts
20 if you could get me legal assistance, legal
21 representation, he told me at the time he would, he
22 tried to get me some legal help, the problem is he
23 lied, that never happened. I followed up with him at
24 numerous public events about that very question, that
25 very issue again he lied. His wife is actually the

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2 supervising judge of the Housing Court citywide so
3 the question is if Judge Clifton Nembhard of the
4 Queens Housing Court was in my apartment in Queens in
5 Jackson Heights on July 10th of 2015 while I was
6 recording him on audio to determine whether... if there
7 a fraudulent inspection conducted in my apartment
8 when the judge was present with two court officers, I
9 could then use that information on appeal. If those
10 two court officers told me to shut off that audio
11 recording in violation of a 2014 California federal
12 court decision that basically says if a government
13 officer enters your residence you have the first
14 amendment due process right to record those officers
15 as long as you don't interfere, interfere with the
16 performance of their public duties then where's the
17 legal assistance been to let me overcome that
18 judicial misconduct that caused me to be unlawfully
19 evicted from my residence in Jackson Heights. I
20 should follow up on that point by... it would... it would
21 seem that Mr. Banks has a clear conflict of interest
22 on one hand, the mandate of his agency is to try to
23 stop or otherwise reduce evictions, on the... on the
24 other hand his wife is failing to supervise
25 subordinate judges such that veterans like myself

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2 have to become a homeless only because of the fact
3 that a judge illegally prevented me from presenting
4 audio recordings, video recordings in court after he
5 initially said he would let me present those
6 recordings which then caused me to have absolutely no
7 defense in that litigation. Let me... I don't mean to
8 dominate your time but I'm just going to try to be
9 brief. Okay, that... okay, with regards to the root
10 cause of what caused me to become homeless in the
11 first place is there's a company I used to do
12 business with, worked for five years ago at Credit
13 Suisse, it's an IT outsourcing company it's called
14 Entity Data, the problem is HRA, the New York State
15 Attorney General's Office, the Department of
16 Education they all have contracts with this company
17 so if Credit Suisse illegally coerced me to work 50
18 hours per week, five years ago and I only got paid 40
19 hours in violation of the contract that applied then
20 why in the hell is HRA all these New York City
21 Government Agencies doing business with the same
22 company I'm still waiting to be paid from, I mean if
23 you... if it were you and you weren't getting your
24 compensation for the job that you're doing, week in
25 and week out, day in and day out that would have

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2 severe ramifications upon... with regards to your
3 ability to pay your bills. So, again with regards to...
4 there was a discussion earlier about procurement so
5 if New York City is procuring services from vendors
6 that are violating labor law that are currently a
7 defendant in a separate... what Eastern District Court
8 case where... involving both TD Bank and Entity Data it
9 involves a compliance manager who got into a car
10 accident, she asked for reasonable accommodation
11 because they didn't grant that reasonable
12 accommodation she was retaliated against and
13 terminated. So, if Entity Data is a defendant in that
14 same lawsuit it's not related to me basically if
15 they're discriminating if they're violating labor law
16 and people like myself unfortunately that compliance
17 manager is at a loss because of their unlawful
18 conduct. Again, why is the city of New York doing
19 business with that company.

20 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Okay, Mr. Komatsu,
21 right?

22 KOMATSU: Yeah.

23 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Is that correct?
24 First of all, I want to thank you for your service,
25 my grandfather's a Navy veteran, was, he passed away,

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2 served on the USS America, that ship has been
3 decommissioned but I have profound respect and
4 admiration for our sailors, all the members of our
5 armed services but particularly I have a soft spot in
6 my heart for, for a Navy man and my brother's a
7 Marine which is technically part of the Navy, I like
8 to remind him of that, it drives him nuts sometimes
9 but he's in Camp Pendleton right now but thank you
10 for your service, thank you for coming here to
11 testify. You brought up a lot of.. first of all it
12 takes a lot of courage to come here, it takes a lot
13 out of your day and time to even come here and get up
14 and say the things that you've said so I want to
15 thank you for that and let you know that that is not
16 falling on deaf ears, it sounds to me and I'm not
17 trying to generalize your remarks but it sounds like
18 it to me that you have a number of legal issues that
19 you need legal assistance with and the council you
20 may be aware recently provided a significant grant to
21 NYLAG, the New York Legal Assistance Group and also
22 the, the person there is David Falcon, F a l c o n, I
23 can give you his contact information..

24 KOMATSU: I reached out to them, they
25 refused to provide assistance.

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CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Okay, the other group that we fund is Legal Services NYC...

KOMATSU: I did that too...

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: And did you speak to Peter Kempner?

KOMATSU: ...basically... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: I'd like to put you in touch with him, he's actually a housing specialist.

KOMATSU: I think I reached out to him and again... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Well I... if I can I'd like to reach out to him on your behalf, I'd like to call him in advance to say you're going to hear from Mr. Komatsu and I want you to meet with him or take his call and just sort of try to sort some of these things out for him. So, I personally would be very happy to make that call so that you're not cold calling him and he doesn't say who is this guy calling me about all these issues, I'd like to give him a, a heads up that you're going to call and if I can after the hearing get your contact information. I'm sorry to hear that you've found yourself in the shelter system, I want to let you know that it can

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2 happen to anybody; people fall on hard times, they
3 lose their jobs, things happen in life for whatever
4 reason and you're up in the Bronx in the... are you...
5 are you in the... in the, the... [cross-talk]

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KOMATSU: With Urban Pathways which did a
7 bait and switch that let to me getting assaulted
8 after an attempted assault on May 12th. I brought
9 that to HRA's attention, they failed to act as a
10 result I was diagnosed with a concussion on July 2nd
11 of last year.

12

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Well I mean anyone...
13 do, do you avail yourself of the services at the VA
14 or... [cross-talk]

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KOMATSU: They told me they can't help,
16 they can only help with veteran's issues... [cross-
17 talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Do you have bad... and
19 it's not my business but do you have an honorable
20 discharge, I'm assuming you do... [cross-talk]

21

KOMATSU: Honorable under, under general
22 conditions.

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CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Okay, so... well I
24 mean if you're not comfortable or it's not convenient
25 for you to go to the VA we're also big supporters of

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the NYU Family... the Langone Military Clinic there,
they do phenomenal work, phenomenal work and for
free.

KOMATSU: I already reached out to both
they told me they can't help.

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Why can't they... what
was their reason... [cross-talk]

KOMATSU: I went to the 23rd and 1st the VA
there... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Yeah... no, not the
VA... not... that's the Harbor VA, I want to send you to
NYU... [cross-talk]

KOMATSU: ...but... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: ...and I want... and I'm
going to talk to Dr. Amanda Spray...

KOMATSU: ...but I don't have mental health
issues.

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Well they have
other... they have a range of services there, it's not
only mental health... it's not a mental health clinic
exclusively they have other types of services they
could provide for veterans. I would imagine that you
need to see a neurologist their specialist if you

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have a concussion for instance, you know... [cross-talk]

KOMATSU: I don't have the time I have to deal with this litigation.

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Okay, here's the thing I want to help you get a lawyer and I want to help you get help...

KOMATSU: Yep... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Right, and I don't want you to feel like you're getting the run around because it sounds to me like you're very frustrated that perhaps you're not able to get anywhere...

KOMATSU: But what about this issue of employment, I mean right now... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: The issue of employment I, I'm a little disappointed that the administrations folks left but I think some people have stayed... [cross-talk]

KOMATSU: Because with regards to that particular issue... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Yeah... [cross-talk]

KOMATSU: ...I'm getting... I've been getting public assistance benefits from HRA and although I applied to HRA and other city agencies for jobs that

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2 would provide an annual salary of over 60,000 a year
3 I'm getting this notices in the mail from HRA saying
4 hey do you want to go to this place where you can
5 earn 11 dollars an hour that's nothing close to like...

6 [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Yeah... [cross-talk]

8 KOMATSU: ...60,000 a year.

9 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Well, I mean 60,000
10 dollars a year are... they're certainly bountiful in a
11 big city like New York but there, you know they're
12 very hard to navigate so what I would like you to do
13 is just first of all I want to get your information...

14 [cross-talk]

15 KOMATSU: Sure... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: ...after this test...
17 after your testimony... [cross-talk]

18 KOMATSU: One of the last question that I
19 really had for you guys was is there anything that
20 you guys can do to try to propose legislation that
21 would grant veterans preferential hiring as well as
22 preferential legal representation instead of having
23 to read the news and hear about how immigrants are
24 getting legal representation left, left and right

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while veterans have to basically sit in the back of the line?

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Well we are... we have made considerable progress with helping veterans navigate the, not only the civil court issues that they're having but also the criminal court with the expansion of the veterans treatment courts to all five boroughs and getting some of those providers that we are funding to go to those monthly meetings with the judge, with the DA's office to make sure that those veterans who do find themselves involved in the criminal justice system on that end of the courthouse that they do have proper representation, what I'd like to do is that... which I mentioned to you earlier is I want to call Peter Kempner for you and I... and he's a wonderful guy, he's a very caring, compassionate person who really goes out of his way to, to, to try to do everything he can to help veterans with a range of legal issues and certainly some of the issues that you brought up fall into those categories. I'm confident that he's going to listen to you and he's going to try to help you sort some of these things out. I, I'm not going to guarantee you a certain outcome but I am going to

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2 guarantee you that he's not going to blow you off,
3 you're not going to feel like you're getting the run
4 around. With respect to the employment issues I'm
5 going to... I'm going to punt that to the
6 administration and hope that someone from DVS sort of
7 works with you one on one to look at some of those
8 specific JVN numbers, those job vacancy numbers that
9 you've applied for on NYC dot gov to go through some
10 of them with you and then see if any accommodations
11 can be made. Again, I can't... [cross-talk]

12 KOMATSU: I mean... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: ...promise if they're
14 going to say you're hired on the spot but I do... I, I
15 do believe that they will do whatever they can to
16 help cut through some of the red tape, they receive
17 thousands and thousands of... [cross-talk]

18 KOMATSU: Right... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: ...applications but
20 certainly a person with your experience and having
21 your military service attached to your resume is, is
22 going to be very helpful so I just... what I want to do
23 is let you know that we're going to try to help you.

24 KOMATSU: Sure, but is there anything in,
25 in the interim that you can do to I guess allow... have

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me allowed into this public town hall meeting in Chinatown that's going to be tomorrow night with the Mayor and... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: You know... [cross-talk]

KOMATSU: ...Commissioners?

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: You know what, I mean if, if you want... [cross-talk]

KOMATSU: So, I can actually raise these concerns directly to those commissioners and the Mayor.

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: I believe that the preference in those incidents, I don't know because the Mayor hasn't had a town hall in my district, I've invited him, I don't know why but I'm... it's a... [cross-talk]

KOMATSU: ...but if his security team... if his security team... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Yeah... [cross-talk]

KOMATSU: ...kept me out of the public meeting in the Bronx... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Well I think... [cross-talk]

KOMATSU: ...where I was... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: ...I think that to be...
to be quite honest with you and I'm the last guy
defending the Mayor, you know that, okay but to be
fair the preference goes for the constituents that
live in those districts that's why he's having
different town halls in various council districts
because there are hundreds of people... [cross-talk]

KOMATSU: Sure... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: ...that have concerns
and issues in their own neighborhoods and when the
Mayor comes to their neighborhood they want to be
heard too and... [cross-talk]

KOMATSU: But there's a problem with
that, again there was a public meeting in the Bronx
Supreme Court where his own security team, team kept
me out of Veterans Memorial Hall.

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Okay...

KOMATSU: So, if they're violating my
first amendment rights in the Bronx Supreme Court
where they have absolutely no jurisdiction...

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Right...

KOMATSU: Then they should be able to
make some... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: ...I, I can't... [cross-talk]

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KOMATSU: ...reasonable accommodations...
[cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: ...speak to that but what I would like to do after this hearing if we can please give me your information, work with the folks at DVs and let's see what we can help you with, we might not be able to help you with everything but I really want to see if we can sort some of these issues out for you... [cross-talk]

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KOMATSU: I already set to DVS previously, Nicole Branca specifically, didn't get help.

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CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Alright, well... but they're here today, Jamal the, the Assistant Commissioner is here, he's a, a Marine, he's honorary Navy veteran I guess we could call them because he's department of the Navy and... I'm just teasing him but let's see if we can work through some of these issues... [cross-talk]

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KOMATSU: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: ...but I want to thank you for being here today and any veteran that ever

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2 comes before this committee we don't put a time limit
3 on them, I don't... I mean unless we have hundreds of
4 them, we appreciate your service and we want to help
5 you and for you to come here today I think takes a
6 lot of courage and I want to let you know we're going
7 to do what we can.

8 KOMATSU: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Thank you, thank you
10 Co-Chair, thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you Mr.
12 Komatsu.

13 KRISTEN ROUSE: Good afternoon and I... I'd
14 like to start my testimony by, by seconding the
15 recommendations made by Councilman Ulrich to as my
16 brother veteran that there are free legal services
17 available for low income New Yorkers and we do
18 receive a hiring preference in civil service
19 positions in New York City and New York State and
20 thank you for offering this help to, to a fellow
21 veteran. My name is Kristen Rouse, I served for more
22 than 20 years of combined service in the United
23 States Army, Army Reserve, and the New York National
24 Guard which included three tours of duty in
25 Afghanistan. I'm here today to testify on behalf of

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2 the New York City Veterans Alliance, a member
3 supported grass roots policy advocacy and empowerment
4 organization serving veterans, service members and
5 their families across the New York Metro area. I'm
6 also the President and Director of the New York City
7 Veterans Alliance which is a corporation registered
8 in New York State which technically makes me a
9 business entrepreneur. We applaud this joint hearing
10 for considering the needs of veteran entrepreneurs
11 and business owners in New York City. Veteran
12 business owners have not received significant public
13 attention from the New York City government since
14 2014 when SBS and MOVVO jointly produced a report
15 concluding that there should be no focus program for
16 veteran owned businesses and city contracting. The
17 report surveyed only a small pool of veteran owned
18 businesses and as many of us noted at the time the
19 findings of that report were stunningly low even
20 going so far as to contradict a much higher number of
21 veteran entrepreneurs that had been counted in the
22 2007's United States census figures for New York City
23 but that report is what has stood since then as a bar
24 to making veteran owned businesses competitive for
25 city contracts, forcing veterans who seek lucrative

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2 government contracts to seek eligibility instead for
3 federal and state contracting set asides in the
4 absence of a, a city set aside and with, with
5 reference to the training programs offered by SBS.
6 SBS has offered that... the, the fast track training
7 program for veteran business owners but we've heard
8 from, from veterans that its offered during the day
9 time and... which makes it difficult for employed
10 veterans to attend that, that training and
11 additionally outreach materials which are currently
12 difficult to find by navigating the DVS or SBS
13 websites as they are today simply do not inspire the
14 confidence of veterans that the course is worth there
15 wild. Veterans have instead turned a nonprofit or
16 academic ventures or they've started their own
17 ventures like Bunker Labs or NYU Tandems programs or
18 the, the other programs that Avi mentioned to launch
19 and incubate their business ideas and so we're seeing
20 a lot of... a lot of proliferation and support within
21 the, the nonprofit and private sector and all the
22 while veterans seeking information about the city's
23 oldest entrepreneurial venture for veterans, street
24 vending still have to navigate murky regulatory
25 guidance between different city and state agencies

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2 just to determine how to attain a license let alone
3 operate successfully so that, that information is
4 still very difficult to find and clarify which is all
5 to say that any workforce development plan or online
6 business tools offered by New York City Government
7 must include wording and materials specific to
8 veterans and their needs as we've talked about here
9 today to include eligibility for state and federal
10 contracting set asides that currently exist. Any
11 small business survey must seek to capture data on
12 both disabled and non-disabled veterans which was not
13 adequately surveyed in 2014 in order that the needs
14 of veterans are, are adequately taken into account
15 and addressed. I'd also like to just speak briefly
16 about Workforce One, you know the, the integration
17 between DVS and Workforce One has been encouraging
18 but, but we hear anecdotally from veterans that many
19 of the positions posted are you know earning below 15
20 dollars an hour and, and it's not seen as, as veteran
21 job seekers as providing a lot of quality job
22 opportunities, again that's anecdotal and, and the
23 post that we see coming across our vet jobs lists
24 are, are often of the lower wage, low skills, you
25 know sort and so, so we encourage the city to, to

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2 promote higher skilled, higher paying job
3 opportunities through, through Workforce One and, and
4 those portals. And furthermore, as Chairman Ulrich
5 mentioned at the outside of this hearing I want to
6 take this opportunity to encourage all members of New
7 York City Council to support the passage of Intro
8 1259 which does address, you know prohibiting
9 discrimination against veterans in employment
10 importantly as well as other aspects of... you know
11 there, their life such as housing and, and so on. I
12 urge in particular Council Member's Maisel and
13 Cabrera members of the Veterans Committee to sign on
14 as co-sponsors of 1259 which they have not done yet.
15 I also urge Council Member Eugene who was present
16 earlier who, who sponsored this wonderful Resolution
17 honoring the passage of the GI Bill, we encourage him
18 to also support 1259 which will not only honor
19 veterans and, and their benefits in words but
20 substantively prohibit discrimination against
21 veterans and military members in New York City. This,
22 this is something that will tangibly effect veteran's
23 employment, veteran's lives here in New York City,
24 please support 1259 and take that opportunity to pass
25 that bill this week. On behalf of New York City

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2 Veterans Alliance, I thank you for this opportunity
3 to testify.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you all.

5 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Very briefly allow
6 Council Member Perkins he's having a veteran's
7 resource fair coming up maybe you want to announce
8 that date when that is, I know you, you host a
9 wonderful event every year up in Harlem..

10 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Yes, let me
11 check... we're having a, a, a resource fair... it's a... we
12 have a veteran that works for us, his name is Rafael
13 Escano and he handles this and so it's an annual
14 event and we have a task... a task force... let me just
15 double check this scheduling here... June 21st from
16 nine... it starts at 9:30 and they'll be at the state
17 office building in Harlem on the 8th floor, all
18 veterans here and anywhere that can hear my voice or
19 get any news of it by all means don't hesitate to
20 join us, it's usually a pretty well attended and all
21 appreciated event by the veterans and so we're happy
22 to... Rafael was able to provide the kind of leadership
23 and outreach to make it so successful. If there's any
24 other questions or concerns you can reach me by my
25 cell 646-279-1824.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Did you just give out your personal cell phone?

COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Alright, that concludes today's hearing, I want to thank the members of the Veterans Committee and also the members of the Small Business Committee of which I'm also a member and my Co-Chair Robert Cornegy this is an issue that we care very deeply about and we want to help veterans get jobs, help them keep the jobs that they already have and help them train for the jobs that are going to be available in the future so... and we want to thank the administration for coming and testifying and being a partner in helping veterans with employment issues in New York City. So, with that I will conclude today's hearing, thank you.

[gavel]

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

July 23, 2017