

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS

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November 18, 2009

Start: 1:31 pm

Recess: 2:30 pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:

JAMES SANDERS, JR.
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Council Member Tony Avella
Council Member Lewis A. Fidler
Council Member Letitia James
Council Member Michael C. Nelson

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

Roger K. Newman
Commissioner
Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs

Philip Jones
Senior Vice President
America Works of New York

Carlyle Otten
Employee/Representative
America Works of New York

Rosa Goldstein
Corporate Representative
America Works

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2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Ladies and
3 gentlemen, if you have cell phones, please make
4 sure they're silenced. Please continue these
5 conversations outside - -

6 [background noise] [gavel]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Good
8 afternoon. I'd like to thank everyone for coming
9 to today's hearing. I am Councilman Lew Fidler, I
10 am convening as Acting Chairman of the Veterans
11 Committee. Council Member Sanders who chairs this
12 Committee is on his way. I want to begin to
13 taking a moment to thank our men and women in
14 uniform for their sacrifice on behalf of our
15 country. Today's hearing will address employment
16 opportunities for returning veterans in New York
17 City. I'll start with a few statistics. The
18 National Unemployment Rate recently reached 10.2
19 percent. It was already 10.2 percent in New York
20 City in September, so it's probably even higher
21 today. The unemployment rate does not take into
22 account people without claims for, without claims
23 for unemployment, who have given up looking for a
24 job. For veterans, the picture is even worse.
25 According to the Federal Bureau of Labor

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2 Statistics, the National Unemployment Rate for
3 Veterans who served in the military since
4 September 2001, jumped to 11.3 percent in August,
5 up from 9.08 percent. Although the current
6 economic crisis has hurt many New Yorkers, our
7 City's veterans have been particularly hit hard by
8 the current climate. According to the Federal
9 Veterans Administrations, there are approximately
10 225,270 veterans in New York City. Although many
11 advocacy groups disagree with the estimate,
12 believing the methodology is flawed, and the
13 numbers are actually much higher. So using just
14 the national unemployment rate, there are over
15 22,500 unemployed veterans in this City. And the
16 number is probably much higher. Today we hope to
17 hear from several witnesses regarding ways we can
18 help veterans find employment. We have been
19 joined by Roger K. Newman, the Administration's
20 Commissioner of Veterans Affairs. We will also
21 hear from advocates and organizations from the
22 private sector, committed to helping veterans find
23 gainful employment. This Committee hopes to
24 explore various ways we can help our returning
25 veterans with this critical part of their

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2 acclimation process from military to civilian
3 life, because we are of the belief that a good job
4 is a necessary part of a successful transition.
5 In addition, we do not want to forget our veterans
6 who came back earlier and are still struggling.
7 They still need and deserve our help. With that,
8 I would ask Commissioner Newman to join us. Good
9 afternoon, Commissioner, I'm sorry we kept you
10 waiting.

11 ROGER NEWMAN: That's okay.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: And
13 obviously, we've been joined by Councilman Mike
14 Nelson, who is a member of this Committee, and a
15 veteran.

16 [pause, background noise]

17 ROGER NEWMAN: Good afternoon,
18 Chair, well Sanders, but he's not here yet. But,
19 and members of the Veterans Committee. My name is
20 Roger Newman, and I am the Commissioner, I'm the
21 Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Veterans
22 Affairs, MOVA. I am here today to testify on the
23 issue of employment opportunities for New York
24 City veterans. I will start by highlighting some
25 of the work our sister agencies, the Department of

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2 Homeless Services and Department of Small Business
3 Services, have been doing. MOVA often operates a
4 conduit and coordinator for veterans in need of
5 the many services provided throughout the City.
6 For instance, MOVA works very closely with the DHS
7 and the, creating short term and permanent housing
8 specifically tailored for the unique needs of
9 veterans and their families. Since 2006, DHS has
10 helped more than 2,300 homeless veterans move into
11 permanent housing, including nearly 600 to date in
12 2009. DHS, in partnership with the Veterans
13 Administration, established a multi-service center
14 at the Project Torch facility in Brooklyn. For
15 the first time, veterans can access their federal
16 benefits, obtain homeless services, and receive an
17 education and employment assessment to ascertain
18 whether adult education is needed, and skill level
19 for job placement. In operation since May 2008,
20 the multi-service center has proudly served more
21 than 4,8401 homeless veterans. More than 400
22 homeless veterans have moved into permanent
23 housing with federal HUD VASH Section VIII
24 vouchers, which pay rental subsidies with VA
25 Services, and an additional 800 voucher

1 applications have been submitted similarly.

2 Development of veterans only short term housing

3 now is complete with the April 2009 opening of a

4 new facility by the Doe Fund Veterans Program.

5 Veterans at this facility spend nine to twelve

6 months in a supervised residential work program,

7 and receive life skills and job preparation

8 classes on site--adult education, GED preparation

9 and computer classes. Many of the veterans in the

10 program also are in the Doe Fund's "Ready, Willing

11 and Able Program" which focuses on job training

12 and placement into permanent housing. The work of

13 DHS in providing housing for veterans via the Doe

14 Fund Veterans Program and the Board and Avenue

15 Veteran's Residence, as well as their work with

16 the federal government, has led to a 60 percent

17 reduction in the number of homeless veterans in

18 the DHS shelter system, from September 2006 to

19 September 2009. These programs are designed to

20 provide housing, but in doing so, veterans are

21 receiving much needed job training and placement,

22 thus ensuring that the cycle of veteran

23 homelessness ends. Last week, Mayor Bloomberg

24 announced that the SBS is offering specialized job

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1 training and placement programs specifically for
2 veterans and their spouse. This program allows
3 for any veteran and their spouse to have priority
4 service at any of the seven Workforce One career
5 centers, and the two senior career centers,
6 healthcare and transportation. This means that
7 they will be first, fast-tracked for appointment
8 and assessment for both training and job
9 placement. These career centers are located
10 throughout the five boroughs and on, and are on
11 pace to make over 20,000 job placements this year.
12 Over \$20 million will be invested in occupational
13 training this year alone for growing and in-demand
14 opportunities. This training and subsequent job
15 placement are available free of charge.
16 Additionally, using federal stimulus dollars, SBS
17 is also focusing on specific healthcare job
18 training services for veterans, in partnership
19 with Goodwill Industries. This December, the
20 Department of Small Business Services will launch
21 a specialized training in the healthcare sector,
22 that aims to place veterans in the healthcare
23 profession as certified nurse's aids, medical
24 assistants, emergency medical technicians,
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2 counselors, and/or social workers. By the end of
3 the year, Workforce One centers around the City
4 will be able to assist veterans interested in
5 applying for the training program. Recruitment
6 for the program will be throughout the five
7 boroughs, and through partners including the VA;
8 Black Veterans for Social Justice; United Spinal,
9 formerly Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association;
10 Heritage of America, hold of the U.S. Department
11 of Veterans Affairs vocational rehabilitation and
12 education grant; Harbor and Bronx VA Medical
13 Centers; Blinded Veterans Association; Coalition
14 for Homeless Veterans; Mayor's Office of Veterans
15 Affairs; New York State Division of Veterans
16 Affairs; U.S. Department of Labor; Veterans
17 Employment and Training Service; Disabled Veterans
18 Outreach Programs; and local veterans employment
19 representatives. This program will serve 200
20 people per year using an investment of nearly
21 \$900,000. We're extremely excited and supportive
22 about the work our sister agencies are doing for
23 veterans, and look forward to working with them on
24 other veteran specific initiatives in the future.
25 In March 2008, MOVA partnered with America Works

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2 to assist with veteran job placement, and through
3 this partnership, 207 veterans are now employed.
4 Given the current state of the economy, MOVA is
5 extremely proud of the successful job placements
6 we have made with America Works. Additionally,
7 MOVA has made employment referrals to other
8 agencies. Reminding them that veterans receive
9 additional points on civil service exams, and
10 sending specific résumés to agencies that have
11 sought MOVA's assistance. Additional referrals
12 have been made to employees, employers, such as
13 One Step Above Security that are looking
14 specifically to hire veterans. Veteran employment
15 is a priority for my office. As a Vietnam
16 veteran, I can identify with some of the
17 difficulties experienced by many returning service
18 members today. And I am confident that the City
19 is committed to facilitating and easier transition
20 back into civilian life for returning veterans and
21 their families. Thank you for this opportunity,
22 and I am happy to take any questions.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: [off mic]

24 Thank you, Commissioner. Want to begin with [on
25 mic] some of this, little bit of cleanup work from

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2 our last hearing, which MOVA was not represented.
3 And that had to do with the backlog in payments
4 under the GI bill to our returning veterans. It's
5 particularly poignant to me, because yesterday a
6 friend of mine who's recently returned from
7 Afghanistan came in to seek my legal advice on how
8 to break his lease. And I said, "Well, why?" And
9 he said, "Because I'm owed over \$25,000 on the GI
10 bill that hasn't been coming, and my Congresswoman
11 contacted the agency, and the best she could say
12 is that there's a backlog and she doesn't know
13 when I'm going to get the money." And obviously,
14 for an unemployed veteran, this backlog has much
15 more severe consequences than it does for my
16 friend, who happens to be employed, and just can't
17 pay his rent without this money that he obviously
18 had budgeted for and was counting on. Can you
19 tell me what efforts if any MOVA is making to try
20 and get the federal government to meet its
21 obligations here? I do think it does impact on
22 this hearing as well.

23 ROGER NEWMAN: Yeah, well we've had
24 conversations with the VA, and it's my
25 understanding that, I mean, there is a tremendous

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2 backlog, they're trying to catch up on that
3 backlog, but I know that in this regional office
4 at 245 Houston Street, they have identified people
5 there who will give money, they will actually give
6 money to people, like the person that you're
7 talking about, out of a fund that they have, which
8 will then be paid back at some later date when
9 that, when the paperwork is caught up. Now, I
10 can, I could--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: With or
12 without interest, I'm just curious.

13 ROGER NEWMAN: Without interest.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: So, they
15 will advance the money, and the money goes
16 directly to - -

17 ROGER NEWMAN: Yeah, yeah. And in
18 fact, as early as last week we had people come to
19 my office and we sent them there. Now, I'm
20 curious, is the person that you're talking about,
21 is he going to a CUNY school or what type, which,
22 which--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I believe
24 he is, I'm not, I'm not sure.

25 ROGER NEWMAN: Yeah. I mean,

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2 that's even better at CUNY school because, you
3 know, CUNY has its own source of money, so
4 although the books and the curriculum is paid for,
5 it's really the money that they need for living
6 expenses paying the rent, and the VA is issuing
7 those checks.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: So, if
9 people like my friend should contact MOVA to find
10 out--

11 ROGER NEWMAN: Yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Alright, I-

13 -

14 ROGER NEWMAN: They can do that.
15 And if they're, and if he's--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: - -
17 Commissioner, I mean, I'll see him tomorrow, so--

18 ROGER NEWMAN: Do that. You might
19 want to give me a heads up and give me his name
20 and stuff so I can do a little research. But--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: [laughs]

22 ROGER NEWMAN: --but, yeah, we'd be
23 willing to do that.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: That would
25 then, that wouldn't be, that wouldn't be fair.

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ROGER NEWMAN: [laughs]

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I assume you would treat anybody who called your office.

ROGER NEWMAN: Yeah. And just as a, just as a--

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Came in the building.

ROGER NEWMAN: And just as a side point, you know that the VA here, the regional office, has been without a director for a--a number of months. And the good news is that they've identified somebody, and that person should start there on January the 4th. So a lot of the issues that we've had with the VA hopefully will no longer be issues once the actual director is working there.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Well, I certainly hope so. I mean, I think it's absolutely shameful and inexcusable that after someone has come back, risking their life in Iraq or Afghanistan, and then we don't meet the obligations that we've promised them.

ROGER NEWMAN: I agree 100 percent.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: That

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2 they're entitled to. And then, on top of that,
3 to, you know, to have 22,500 veterans here in the
4 City of New York looking for a job, just compounds
5 it. I mean, I'm sure that some of them are
6 wondering what the heck they were fighting for,
7 and you know, it's, it's, you know, I know you
8 share my feeling that it is disrespectful to the
9 veteran, that has to look. So let me shift more
10 directly to the topic of employment opportunities.
11 A number of our veterans do come back with a set
12 of very specific skills from their military
13 experience. What particular efforts are being
14 made to match those veterans who have specific
15 skills with job opportunities in those skill
16 areas?

17 ROGER NEWMAN: Well, there are a
18 few, I mean, I know for instance that the Fire
19 Department, they will actually hire a vet on the
20 spot if that vet has the skills necessary to be an
21 EMT operator, because the skill sets are the same.
22 I know that the Police Department is also
23 considering that. I have had conversations with
24 America Works about that, because there are
25 certain skills that are easily transferable over

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2 to the civilian, you know, civilian population.
3 There aren't as many programs as I would like that
4 are actually doing that. But that's something
5 that we're, that we're working towards.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Now, a good
7 deal of your testimony--

8 ROGER NEWMAN: And I'm just, and of
9 course you know, the City, I mean, the City does
10 have, the City has over 9,100 vets that currently
11 are employed by the City. And one of the drawing
12 points there is the fact that they're preference
13 points, offered for civil service exams, either
14 five points, ten points, depending on what your
15 status is.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Well, I
17 mean, that now, so that's a good segue way to this
18 question. I mean, obviously government, as an
19 employer, has a built in incentive to hire a
20 veteran because they're getting extra points.
21 What efforts are being made to actually ask
22 private sector employers to give a preference to
23 veterans? What, you know, I mean, you know, it's
24 not like I see on TV a public service
25 announcement, you know, "Hire the veteran," or

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anything like that. Are any efforts like that going on?

ROGER NEWMAN: Not as vigilantly as I would like. But there are some efforts going on, and you know, the intent is to increase the efforts in that area. What I would like to see, I know when, you know, one of the problems I think that we have today that we didn't have in years past is that you have such a small pop--such a small number of the population it's actually serving. So like one percent of the population that served. And so, unlike in the years past when a person got out of the military, and they went looking for a job, in many cases is was almost like, you know, being a sorority member or something, because you would go to the job and there would be people there, because of the large numbers who had served and understood the circumstances. I think what needs to happen now is that there needs to be, I know that you hear it on the advertisements, but I think that there needs to be more conversations with actual companies who don't necessarily have that built in reception committee of ex-veterans, like we had

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years past, which made it much easier for vets to get jobs.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: You know, that's an interesting point, I mean, on one hand, because there are so many fewer, you don't have that same cache coming, walking in as a veteran. On the other hand, because there's so many fewer, you would hope that the population would - -

ROGER NEWMAN: Could absorb them.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: --
manageable.

ROGER NEWMAN: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: And you know, so how do we get those conversations with employers in the private sector to encourage them to be hiring veterans, to giving preference to hiring veterans.

ROGER NEWMAN: Well, I mean, we've been having conversations with not-for-profit agencies like Veterans Across America, Veterans Advantage. Veterans Across America actually, that's one of the things that is their main focus. Their main focus is to have conversation with companies to identify mentors in companies who's

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job it would be to actually work with vets as they are, as they are employed, to help them through the transition. I think that's a model that could be looked at. And I think it's just a matter of having more--

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Who looks at it? I mean, you know--

ROGER NEWMAN: Well, it's something that my office, it's something--

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: --actually having this conversation, you know, I have absolutely no doubt as to where your sympathies lie. Alright? And now I'm sitting here having a conversation with the Commissioner, and I know we're on the same page, and the question is how do we make it happen so that we don't get up from this table after having had another hearing, pat ourselves on the back, and say, "There are a lot of things that should be done." How do we get them done?

ROGER NEWMAN: Well, I'm taking responsibility for starting that conversation. I think that I've been in this position a little under, a little over, well a little under two

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2 years, and the large part of that two years was
3 just trying to establish protocols within the city
4 agencies. And I feel fairly comfortable now, that
5 we have liaisons in each of the agencies, we have
6 regular meetings, there's a dialogue going on. I
7 have really a very good understanding of what's
8 going on with the people who work at agencies,
9 that are vets, and also what the vets that each
10 agency, that are the constituents of the agencies.
11 So I think we are in fairly good position there.
12 I think the next place is to reach out to non--to
13 other companies, and that's what I intend to do.
14 And we haven't done that yet.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Okay, we're
16 being joined by Council Member Avella, and we'll
17 go to Council Member Nelson for some new
18 questions, and if Council Member Avella wants to
19 jump in.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: Thank you.
21 Did you say there were, how many veterans in the
22 City workforce? About 9,000?

23 ROGER NEWMAN: A little over 9,000,
24 the last count it was about 9,000 maybe 100. That
25 includes veterans, also active service persons,

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it's not just veterans, people that are in the reserves.

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: That would turn out to be what, at the workforce, I guess they would be at 3.5 percent.

ROGER NEWMAN: Something like that.

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: How many veterans are there in the City? 290,000?

ROGER NEWMAN: Well, you hear different numbers. The number that I feel most comfortable with, though, is between 254 and 260. But you know, you realize that the problem with those numbers, that those numbers are based on the 2000 census.

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: Census.

ROGER NEWMAN: Yeah, so you extrapolate from that.

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: A lot more now.

ROGER NEWMAN: So each person that you talk to, they come up with a slightly different number.

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: Sure. Between the recent wars, there'd be a lot more.

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ROGER NEWMAN: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: How many points, five to ten points, additional on civil service exams.

ROGER NEWMAN: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: Hopefully we could work together to get that amount raised somewhat. Be able to get the veterans more in with their, again with their specific skills and so on. I'd certainly like to see a lot of veterans in the Police Department, Fire Department, etc.

ROGER NEWMAN: Well, actually the, the, of course, the uniformed service departments have the largest numbers: the Police Department, the Sanitation, and Fire--

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: That's where the bulk.

ROGER NEWMAN: That's where the bulk of them--

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: The percentage would be, yeah.

ROGER NEWMAN: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: Sanitation,

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whatever.

ROGER NEWMAN: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: Good. Look forward to hearing from, the testimony from veterans organization representatives as well. I guess, do you have any courses in résumé writing?

ROGER NEWMAN: We have a person at, well, America Works does that, but we also have a person in our office that actually does that. She works with individuals, people come in, she will go over the résumé, she'll help them, you know, tighten it up.

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: And you're saying that is to returning veterans, welcoming them back to the City, with this information.

ROGER NEWMAN: Well, it took, it took a long time ,but recently after, after many, many, many months of trying, I was able to get the names from the VA of every veteran that has been discharged from any branch of service to New York City since 9/11. And currently, that number is approaching 25,000. And what my intention is, is to eventually mail out something to each of those vets. The problem that I'm experiencing right now

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is that--

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: But a--

ROGER NEWMAN: --they would only share that information in a hard copy. They would not share that information--

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: In a database?

ROGER NEWMAN: --in a database. Which you can imagine it requires somebody setting down, or somebodys setting down actually translating that information from paper to a database.

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: And this is DOD, or--?

ROGER NEWMAN: This is, this is, no this is the VA.

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: VA itself.

ROGER NEWMAN: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: That's perplexing.

ROGER NEWMAN: It is. And I've been in contact with the state. I mean, he, James McDonald, he's had the same, the same problem, the same concern.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: I wonder if
3 we couldn't get together a letter to the Mayor to
4 try to facilitate this? I think maybe, maybe,
5 they'd respect his office and his power and
6 authority to get this on a database. It certainly
7 would be helping the returning veterans. I'm sure
8 you want it to happen.

9 ROGER NEWMAN: Well, it would
10 speed, it would speed up the process.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: Thank you.
12 Thank you, and the Chair is here.

13 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Just a follow
14 up, sir. I'm wondering, you know, the disorgani--
15 Well, I'll be kind, the VA is not noted for its
16 efficiencies. They perhaps don't have it on a
17 database. It may be interesting for us to try to
18 get many interns or, to make it a project with our
19 local colleges, even, there's nothing wrong with
20 fighting and trying to get the VA to, to do right,
21 but while we have it, while you have it, to use
22 the smartest software that we can, and--I'm
23 blanking on when you put it into a machine and it
24 copies onto your computer, it's called a--Well--

25 ROGER NEWMAN: Oh, you mean, put it

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on a--Well, you know--

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Scanner.

ROGER NEWMAN: Scanner.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: You scan it, yes, absolutely.

ROGER NEWMAN: Well, as you mention that, there is a person that's on my board, Veterans Advisory Board, who had the same suggestion, and I gave him one of the sheets. Now he thinks that he has software that would allow him to do that. To actually scan the sheet, and then move it from whatever that scanned format is to a database. And if it's able to do that, then the, you know, the problem would be solved.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: It's not that hard. Once you scan it, it's not that hard, it's, there's plenty of software out there than can do it. Yes, there's nothing wrong with why the VA, hitting them, and saying, "Come on, now, give us something accessible," but to, while we're waiting for them, the battles that we're doing with them, let's imagine we are successful after a three month battle with the VA--

ROGER NEWMAN: Well, hopefully in

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three months, I mean, I have people working on it now.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Yes, yes.

ROGER NEWMAN: I have interns that are doing it now.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: I see, I see.

ROGER NEWMAN: It's a snail pace, but it's happening. So hopefully, you know, within three months it should be done.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Yeah, certainly.

ROGER NEWMAN: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Consider if you're doing it now, consider scanning, it's a better technology. Are there any more questions for the Commissioner?

COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: No, sir.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Then on this issue, I thank you very much, sir. Thank you very much for your help the other day, it was very interesting to see the SS New York and to be there. I thank you very much for making that available.

ROGER NEWMAN: Yeah, I thought that

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was extremely exciting. I had never been to a commissioner before.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Yes.

ROGER NEWMAN: And it was just so nice to see all those young guys there, young girls. A lot of them had taken pay cuts just so they could serve on that one, so--

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Wow.

ROGER NEWMAN: You know, so, it's not--

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: I mean, it is a historic ship, and I can understand; and years from now people will say that they sailed on it. And yes, I can understand that, a small pay cut, perhaps.

ROGER NEWMAN: [laughs] Yeah, small.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Thank you very much.

ROGER NEWMAN: You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Why don't you call the next one?

MALE VOICE: From America Works we have Philip Jones and Carlisle Otten [phonetic].

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[pause]

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: You may begin when you're situated.

PHILIP JONES: Okay, great, thank you very much. Chairman James Sanders and distinguished members of the New York City Council Committee on Veterans Affairs, good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Good afternoon.

PHILIP JONES: On behalf of America Works of New York, Inc., Chief Executive Officer Dr. Lee Bowes and Founder Peter Cove, I would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity to be here to address the New York City Council Committee on Veterans Affairs about our veterans employment programs. My name is Philip Jones, and I am the Senior Vice President of America Works of New York. I've been with the organization for almost 23 years, and I have played an integral part in helping America Works place over 175,000 individuals in employment. I'm here today with Carlisle Alten, who is the Director of our veterans programs. Mr. Alten's recent programs, including work with veterans on food stamps,

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2 public assistance and homeless, or sheltered in
3 New York City, has helped him place and retain
4 over, the number has changed, to 208 veterans in
5 the past nine months alone. America Works is a
6 private for-profit performance based workforce
7 development firm that specializes in placing what
8 some may call the "hard to serve" populations in
9 employment. We've been doing this since 1984.
10 We've helped low income individuals and public
11 assistance recipients across a broad demographic
12 spectrum, become self-sufficient by obtaining and
13 retaining jobs, or improving their career
14 positions. We also work with individuals who are
15 receiving food stamps, the formerly incarcerated,
16 youths aging out of foster care, the homeless and
17 sheltered, non-custodial parents, people living
18 with HIV/AIDS, and veterans of the United States
19 Armed Forces. America Works was a pioneer company
20 whose work led to the 1996 Personal Responsibility
21 and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, moving
22 national welfare programs to back to work
23 programs. American Works is currently a Human
24 Resources Administration funded back to work
25 program provider, and has consistently rated

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2 number one among all BTW providers for both job
3 placement and job retention services, as well as
4 in the top three providers for lowest recidivism
5 rates. To date, American Works has placed over
6 175,000 hard to serve individuals into jobs in
7 cities across the United States. We currently
8 have three offices in New York City, located in
9 midtown Manhattan, Bay Ridge Brooklyn and Far
10 Rockaway, Queens. At all three locations, America
11 Works currently recruits veterans, including
12 homeless veterans, and places them into direct
13 employment. We work tirelessly with Commissioner
14 Doar and Commissioner Newman to provide these
15 services to impoverished veterans, and we have
16 received funding from the Federal Department of
17 Labor to provide services to homeless vets. Over
18 the last few years, America Works has seen a
19 growing number of veterans coming into our
20 offices, seeking employment. These veterans came
21 to us through our homeless programs, food stamps
22 programs, public assistance programs, and
23 frequently through our ex-offender programs.
24 Concerned about our country's heroes rapidly
25 sinking into the depths of poverty, we began

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2 researching what services were available for
3 veterans. We found that while the Department of
4 Veterans Affairs states that nearly 200,000
5 service members separate from the military each
6 year, and that right now another 200,000 veterans
7 are incarcerated, there are few to no direct
8 employment services provided to veterans by either
9 the Department of Veterans Affairs or by the
10 Department of Defense. In a time when our
11 national unemployment rate tops 10.2 percent, and
12 the national poverty rate grows every day, we need
13 to provide better, enhanced services to the men
14 and women who risk their lives for our country.
15 In order to do this, American Works has begun
16 leveraging funds from our national scale programs
17 to provide services to some of the veterans in
18 most need. But still, significantly, more needs
19 to be done, especially here in New York City. The
20 types of veterans we serve. Currently, we serve
21 veterans through several different programs. We
22 actively serve veterans receiving public
23 assistance, food stamps, veterans who have HIV and
24 AIDS, veterans receiving SSI and SSDI benefits,
25 formerly incarcerated veterans, veterans who are

1 non-custodial parents, homeless and shelter
2 veterans who participate in our Homeless Veterans
3 Reintegration Program. While it seems we are
4 serving many veterans through our numerous
5 programs, we lack the funding to provide
6 preventive measures, direct employment services,
7 so that veterans do not have to become homeless,
8 or receive welfare or steal for the food to be in
9 our programs. It is too much of a tragedy to
10 allow these veterans to languish in poverty after
11 they have been giving everything they could for
12 the country to not provide them better services.
13 Our model. So what is the answer? How do we
14 provide appropriate, effective and timely services
15 for veterans in New York City? The answer is Work
16 First programming, programs that provide direct,
17 rapid attachment to the workforce. These are not
18 programs that provide training for a job that
19 doesn't exist, and these are not programs that
20 refer veterans to a website where they can
21 virtually apply to jobs for which they will not
22 receive a call back. These are programs that
23 directly link the veterans to a real job, that
24 exists in the job market right now. To ensure
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2 performance, the government only pays these
3 programs after the veteran is actively working on
4 the job. There is no room for error in this
5 model, because if you can get people jobs, you
6 simply lose the program. These programs don't
7 make money until the veteran, him/herself, is
8 making money. These concepts have been the
9 bedrock upon which American Works has been built.
10 This - - has led to once again over 175
11 individuals, thousand individuals, obtaining and
12 retaining employment across the United States.
13 What have we learned? Through our work with the
14 amazing servicemen and women, we have learned many
15 lessons that should be taken into heart. First,
16 our nation's veterans want to work, our veterans
17 who have certainly experienced difficulties and
18 hardships, but they want to work and continue to
19 be the breadwinner for themselves and their
20 families. In the first nine months of 2009, we
21 have placed over, once again the number has
22 changed from 180 to 208 veterans, in employment in
23 New York City, with an average hourly salary of
24 approximately \$10 an hour. And we did the
25 majority of this thanks to the hard work and

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2 dedication shown by Commissioner Doar and
3 Commissioner Newman, to help us leverage existing
4 funding. Second, there is a tremendous need for
5 direct employment services for veterans. While
6 veterans are motivated many, cannot find
7 employers, and they will struggle with barriers
8 that will prevent them from successful obtaining
9 and retaining employment on their own.

10 Performance based contracted services are needed
11 to effectively provide job placement service to
12 veterans today. Our veterans are fighting with
13 over \$20 million other unemployed Americans for a
14 limited amount of jobs, and they deserve a leg up
15 in the competition. Third, companies are not only
16 willing to hire veterans, but actively seek out
17 veterans to employ, and especially so in New York
18 City. The problem is one of time and resources.
19 Companies need to fill positions quickly and they
20 don't have the resource to advertise at length for
21 veteran only employment opportunities. Though a
22 service like ours, companies can all us up and ask
23 us to fill jobs with veterans that same day.
24 Finally, the VA alone should not be the only
25 champion in this fight, to implement employment

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2 programs for the breadth and scale necessary for
3 the today's veterans population. We believe that
4 through strategic partnership, the Department of
5 Defense, Department of Veteran Affairs, the City
6 of New York and private contractors can provide
7 performance based employment programs to New York
8 City's 237,000 veterans. Our recommendations. We
9 recommend the following steps to be taken
10 immediately to help our veterans from today
11 onwards. We need to design and provide specific
12 direct employment programs to aid in transitioning
13 today's military into successful employed
14 veterans. This service should be offered from
15 transition onwards, and would work in
16 collaboration with current services, including the
17 Veterans Administration Programs, and New York
18 City TANF homeless services, and Workforce
19 Investment Act funded programs. These programs
20 will be pay-for-performance to ensure that our
21 servicemen and women obtain and retain civilian
22 employment. In light of the number of wounded
23 warriors returning from our 21st Century conflicts,
24 we also need to provide these direct employment
25 services to spouses and dependents of veterans. A

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2 wounded warrior needs to have, needs his family to
3 heal, but he also, he or she also needs income to
4 provide stability. We propose to offer these
5 employment programs for the spouses and dependents
6 of wounded warriors in New York City. This can
7 begin working, begin by working with families who
8 are involved in veterans administration hospital
9 programs and those currently receiving public
10 housing and TANF services in New York City. Jobs
11 would be found to accommodate caring for the
12 wounded warrior, while also providing income
13 stability. The United States Department of Labor
14 has designed specialized employment programs for
15 veterans, and these need to be expanded at the
16 local level. In particular, the Homeless Veterans
17 Reintegration Program has provided much needed
18 help to homeless veterans nationwide. This
19 program should be expanded to help thousands of
20 other homeless veterans in New York City.
21 Programs for incarcerated veterans should be
22 provided in New York City to address the
23 particular needs of incarcerated veterans. These
24 programs can leverage Workforce Investment Act and
25 TANF dollars, to provide much needed specialized

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2 service to these veterans, with additional
3 barriers to employment. Finally, let us provide
4 the services necessary to more of New York City
5 veterans. In New York City today, there are over
6 237,000 veterans, and unemployment rate for Iraq
7 and Afghanistan veterans tops 14.5 percent. Allow
8 America Works to provide direct employment program
9 here in New York City, to more of the unemployed
10 veterans beyond those receiving food stamps,
11 public assistance, and those who have become
12 homeless. With additional funding leveraged
13 through the Workforce Investment Act, we can work
14 together to help veterans homelessness and
15 poverty. As a lifelong employee of America Works
16 and a proud American, I believe we need to come to
17 do more of the servicemen and women who return to
18 New York City. I ask you today to make a real
19 change for veterans and their families, to make
20 New York City a city for veterans. Our servicemen
21 and women have served us. It is now our
22 responsibility to serve them. Chairman James
23 Sanders and distinguished Members of the New York
24 City Council Committee on Veterans Affairs, thank
25 you for your time.

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2 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Thank you,
3 sir. The backdrop of the conversation of course
4 has to be a report that was released by Senator
5 Schumer over the weekend, where he stated that he
6 had a study showing that veterans nationwide make
7 up 25 to 30 percent of the homeless population,
8 which means that a person has more of a chance of
9 being homeless if they go into service. If they
10 join the U.S. Armed Forces, they increase their
11 chance of being homeless. There's something wrong
12 with this concept.

13 PHILIP JONES: Very wrong.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: There's
15 something wrong that we have allowed it. I have a
16 couple of questions for you, and I just want to
17 see if I have an understanding.

18 PHILIP JONES: Mmhm.

19 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: What is the
20 relationship between America Works and the Maximus
21 Corporation?

22 PHILIP JONES: None.

23 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Is--

24 PHILIP JONES: I'm sorry.

25 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Sure.

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2 CARLISLE OTTEN: The Maximus
3 Corporation runs the ticket to work program.

4 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Okay.

5 CARLISLE OTTEN: And we do have
6 several participants in our programs who are on
7 currently social security, SSI, SSDI. So when we
8 fill out our paperwork, we get all the approvals
9 from them, before we can actually work with the
10 participants that are on social security.

11 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: I see, I see,
12 but that's of course--There's nothing wrong with
13 the Maximus Corporation, point of information, I'm
14 just trying to make sure that, that I know who I'm
15 talking to.

16 CARLISLE OTTEN: Understand.

17 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: A couple more
18 questions like that, and then we can go. I just
19 happen to have this one. Especially when it comes
20 to veterans, what do you guys train them in?

21 CARLISLE OTTEN: America--

22 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: What skills?
23 What careers? What courses are you offering them?

24 CARLISLE OTTEN: America Works is
25 rapid attachment to work. We are not, per se, a

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2 training organization. What we do is we get them,
3 we see what it is they did before and during and
4 after the service, and we rapidly attach them to
5 an interview that they currently qualify for.
6 Once they're working, that's when our training
7 begins. And if they want to go for training, we
8 will help them find funded training. But America
9 Works is an employment organization, rapidly
10 attaching them to the workplace.

11 PHILIP JONES: If I must add, if I
12 can add, if you don't mind, what we've found is
13 that with our model at American Works, working
14 with the welfare population, we have had some of
15 the most educated, unemployed people on public
16 assistance. They've had five, six, seven, twelve
17 different type of training programs they've been
18 to, but not a job. What has happened, it has set
19 a standard up for individuals, they'll say, "Mr.
20 Jones, you know, hey, I'm 40 years old, I have
21 three children, and I can type 50 billion words a
22 minute, so I should take your job." And that's
23 great, but the reality is that you have three
24 months working on White Castle and no GED. So
25 let's start here and work our way up to here. So

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2 what we've been doing, we've been capitalizing
3 over all the training and education that other
4 organizations has, and used that to strictly place
5 them in jobs, and use that same model with the
6 veterans, as they're coming through the program.

7 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: In my
8 journey, I have been blessed to do a bunch of
9 different things. And one of the things that I
10 did was Mayor Giuliani actually had a novel and
11 very successful program where he worked with the
12 faith based communities to help get people off of
13 TANF, welfare if you wish, very successful program
14 that needs to be looked at. We work with many
15 groups and knew of Maximus and knew of other
16 organizations. So I'm very familiar with, with
17 many different arguments that can be raised. The,
18 let me use myself as an example, when I was in the
19 Marine Corps, I was an NO3, I was a grunt. My
20 skill, the only people who would hire me would be
21 the mafia or someone of this nature. [laughter]
22 I was very good at what I did, but I, my skills
23 were no really useful on the streets. Thank god.
24 So, there was, if you were to rapidly employ me,
25 there was--there was nothing that I could, I could

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2 use immediately. You would, I would end up in,
3 well, I would end up where my career would not
4 take me. So I'm, I think that rapid employment is
5 great, yes, there are many people who, especially
6 in the veteran population, that if you are not
7 talking about something right now, you're not
8 talking to them. So I can see that there is a
9 real need, but I am very concerned about a career
10 after that. Something to help them get into, away
11 from a survival job, which is good, you have to
12 survive, before you can do anything else, survive.
13 Something to get them away from a survival job and
14 get them into something, because in New York City,
15 sadly, a \$10 an hour job is really going to be in
16 a world of pain here.

17 PHILIP JONES: Of course.

18 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: So, I'm
19 interested hear, to hear more of what are you
20 doing after they have--this is unfair, I withdraw
21 the question because your contract probably states
22 that your mission is to get them into the first
23 employment. I--sure.

24 CARLISLE OTTEN: Let me just say,
25 as a Air Force veteran, who came home as a bomb

1 loader, I had very similar experiences. So, I do
2 understand what you're saying. America Works, and
3 today, let me say, Phil Jones has just recently
4 opened an account, and you should talk, speak to
5 this before I say what I'm going to say, with a
6 major security firm that will hire marines on the
7 spot at a very decent wage. So, that piece of it
8 has changed. Not as much for the bomb loader, but
9 for the Marine veteran. But the training aspect
10 of the rapid attachment to work is a very
11 important component to the model, but it comes
12 after the employment, because you have to
13 stabilize them. And once they are working,
14 training becomes very important. We have what are
15 called corporate reps, and these, they're called
16 case managers in other organizations. Corporate
17 reps work with the veterans after, much more so
18 than before, they get employed. Well, we really
19 figure out what they're dreams are, and we try to
20 put them in position to succeed and to achieve
21 their dreams after they're employed. And we have
22 many ways of doing that. But it doesn't stop.
23 The point I want to make is it does not stop once
24 they get a job. They're with us and we're
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connected to them, and we continue to work with them, after they are employed.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: One of the arguments that people raise with the Maximus Corporation, Maximus and others, were that the amount that was provided to pay for the training, a lesser amount could be done by government, etc., to do the same. At another, I don't want to do this here, at another day, would you be kind enough to submit to office what are your contracts? Who is paying you? And how much are they paying you? I'm very interested in using you guys, you're already in my home town, Far Rockaway.

PHILIP JONES: We're there.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Which is interesting. 26.4 percent of its population of 105,000 people, according to the Department of City Planning, is on income support, basically TANF.

PHILIP JONES: Mmhm.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Which means around 30,000 people are running around without hope.

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PHILIP JONES: That's right.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: So, I'm very interested in what you're doing and how you're doing it. I will visit and--

PHILIP JONES: Give you an open invitation to please come and visit us.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Okay, we, well be careful, we do an inspection. We won't--

PHILIP JONES: Please do.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: --bring the white glove.

PHILIP JONES: I'll look under the seat, it's fine. [laughs]

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: We won't do a Marine Corps inspection, I will do an Air Force inspection, however. [laughter] I will--see in the Marine Corps, you, in these other branches, you know, you have to bounce a quarter and have it bounce off a bed; in the Marine Corps, the quarter better never hit the bed.

PHILIP JONES: Hit the bed at all.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Just stay in the air.

PHILIP JONES: As long as you don't

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do a Mary Jones inspection, that was my mother.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: [laughs]

PHILIP JONES: [laughs]

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Well, I, we couldn't be that rough. No, no, no, no one will ever be that rough. However, saying that, we will visit and see what you're doing.

PHILIP JONES: We'd love that - -

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: If you guys are taking this population and moving them into where they're at least starting the process of moving them into where they need to be, then we absolutely need to work with you, and we need to, the City needs to go full force in doing everything that it can. I'm looking for you to be cost effective.

PHILIP JONES: Mhm.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: I'm looking for you not simply to stop at the survival job.

PHILIP JONES: Mhm.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Not at simply at the survival job, that's the first step. But then we have to start talking and encouraging people to get into career, or and/or education or

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2 something of this nature. Now, I don't have a
3 problem with your saying that there needs to be a
4 contract for it, I recognize that your model is a
5 new, it's from the new era that we're in. This is
6 a new model. And I don't have a problem with
7 that. But if you are successful, then I will be
8 your greatest advocate.

9 PHILIP JONES: Great.

10 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: If you're not
11 successful, I'm going to try to help you become
12 more successful. If you don't want to get to that
13 point, then we'll have some fun.

14 PHILIP JONES: That's actually
15 where, if I can say, now this model has not
16 changed since 1984. And I've been with the
17 company since 1987. And I would not work for a
18 company for so long if I did not enjoy what I do.
19 And know that we impact the bottom line. What
20 makes us unique is that we are for profit. So we
21 like to work smart and not hard. I believe in
22 repeat business, with employers and also with our
23 candidates who come to the door. Mind you, the
24 majority of people, even the ones that don't get a
25 job, because I'm not 100 percent, I'll be a fool

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2 to say, you'd be a fool to believe it, but they
3 will also refer their friends to us, and that's
4 the most important thing. Because when you get
5 referrals from the people that you are servicing,
6 that means I've done my job. And when I'm able to
7 place somebody from this \$10 an hour job to a
8 higher level job a year or two down the line, what
9 happens? That \$10 an hour job is open for me now,
10 where I can place someone else in that job. It's
11 just like dating, it's easy to get a job when you
12 have a job; when you have a girlfriend or
13 boyfriend, that's when everybody come a calling.
14 So the same thing with employers, and we do the
15 same thing, it's always just networking, we
16 network within our own, and just, and the
17 candidates that we are placing are our feelers out
18 there that are telling Carlyle and the rest of our
19 staff, "Hey, so and so is hiring." Or if they
20 know if any other companies that are hiring, let
21 us know, we will market you to them for you. So
22 we try to best to be as creative as possible.

23 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Well, I do
24 want to state for the record, your dating analogy
25 was interesting. For my wife, I know nothing of--

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PHILIP JONES: [laughs]

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: --this state, 'cause I were to disclaim and of all of that, which brings me back to this one. I'm very interested in how the City can be smarter, how we can really work on these things and be smarter. I'm going to look at your recommendations--

PHILIP JONES: Please do.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: --and study them. Where is America Works based out of?

PHILIP JONES: Our headquarters is at 228 East 45th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues, here in the City.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: So it's in the City, oh okay.

PHILIP JONES: Right in the City.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: On another day, I may even go there, I'm interested in really doing my next, now that I've been given four more years, I might as well use them wisely and employment is going to be a main push for me.

PHILIP JONES: Great.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: My Rockaways community again has the highest unemployment in

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2 all of Queens. So, I'm really interested in
3 seeing what--and I don't simply mean the veterans,
4 I mean the community.

5 PHILIP JONES: Mmhm.

6 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: So I'm really
7 interested in seeing what we can do, and if you
8 guys are doing good work, then we need to do
9 something. What is your relationship with the
10 Department of Small Business Services? New York
11 City's Department of Small Business Services.

12 PHILIP JONES: America Works is
13 working very hard to improve our relationship with
14 the [laughs]

15 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: - - Air
16 Force, man, I tell you. You see that's, that's
17 why there's an Air Force. The Marine Corps
18 would've been in such trouble. That's why we'll
19 never get in the sky, except for somebody taking
20 us to throw us out. Which brings me to the point
21 of reminding everyone, and reminding our City,
22 that when the Department of Small Business
23 Services was created, it took over the
24 responsibilities from the Department of
25 Employment, which was blended into SBDS. And one

1 of the missions of that Department is employment.
2 A mission that I'll be glad when it gets to my
3 part of town, I, you know, I'm sure they're doing
4 fantastic stuff. But we just don't feel it in, in
5 my part of town. However, that's not a
6 conversation for here nor there. I would forward
7 your information that you're desiring a greater
8 relationship.
9

10 PHILIP JONES: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Are there any
12 questions from anyone else here?

13 PHILIP JONES: - - go with.

14 [laughter]

15 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: My colleague
16 had the unfortunate distinction of joining the Air
17 Force, also. [laughter] Well, someone had to
18 have some brains. Which brings me back to this
19 point: then gentleman and lady, are you--are you
20 with them also?

21 ROSA GOLDSTEIN: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Alright, I
23 suspected. I--I was wondering if you were one of
24 my watchers. What is your role?

25 ROSA GOLDSTEIN: I'm actually one

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of the corporate representatives that Carlyle was speaking of before.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Ah.

ROSA GOLDSTEIN: And I also am one of the people that does the résumé prep and interview prep as the Commissioner mentioned earlier.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: For the sake of the record, would you mind identifying yourself to the, into the mic.

ROSA GOLDSTEIN: Rosa Goldstein, corporate representative for America Works.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: What's the hardest problem that you find with these veterans?

ROSA GOLDSTEIN: A lot of them have been out of the interview process for quite some time.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: You're being kind.

ROSA GOLDSTEIN: So, sitting down and actually doing some mock interviews with them can be challenging, but definitely one of the most important parts of the process. So that once we do get them out there, and we get them out there

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quick, they're ready and ready to hit the ground running.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: In your guesstimate, what's the average age we're dealing with?

ROSA GOLDSTEIN: Well, the ages range anywhere from I think the youngest we had pretty recently was about 22, up to 60 years old. The average is probably mid-40s.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Okay, so I suspect that we'll start seeing a shifting. You're still dealing with the Vietnam era, and post-Vietnam era, but I suspect when you're starting to talk of the 20s, you're talking Gulf War and things of this, or conflict. Was it a war? Conflict? Who knows? The bullets seem the same.

ROSA GOLDSTEIN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: So, under those conditions, you're going to start seeing a lot. How do we deal with PS--how do we deal with post-traumatic stress disorder?

ROSA GOLDSTEIN: We have relationships with Cornell Weill, where we can

1
2 openly refer people over to see counselors. We
3 have a relationship with the Manhattan VA, where
4 people are being referred to a counselor there
5 who, if through a communication with him they do
6 decide, you know, this person has severe PTSD, he
7 needs to see someone first. Then we take care of
8 that part before we enter into the interviewing
9 process, 'cause that's something very important.

10 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: In your
11 guesstimate, what percentage of the veterans are
12 grappling with some type of mental disorder?

13 ROSA GOLDSTEIN: It's hard to
14 guesstimate. I mean, many of them present
15 themselves in such incredible ways, and so strong.
16 But I would assume that, you know, after combat,
17 any of them would be suffering from any kind of
18 form of PTSD. But probably at least 50 percent.

19 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Mm. Okay.
20 Then you, well, then counseling of course becomes
21 a critical component.

22 ROSA GOLDSTEIN: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: The Veterans
24 Administration can do some, it perhaps might be
25 better to do it out of that shop. But--

1
2 ROSA GOLDSTEIN: No, we wouldn't,
3 we don't take over that aspect of it.

4 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Would y'all
5 ever consider it? Doing some of the mental
6 counseling? Does your--

7 CARLYLE OTTEN: America Works, our
8 core competency is employment.

9 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Yes.

10 CARLYLE OTTEN: We're the best at
11 that, and it's what we do, it's what we want to
12 do. The other components are partners we have in
13 for wraparound services, and we refer out, Cornell
14 Weill being one of our major partners, for these
15 type of services. But--

16 PHILIP JONES: We don't refer just
17 to anybody, we make sure we do our due diligence
18 and our homework on the individuals. What we do
19 best, like we did with getting people placed, is
20 form the relationships with the organizations that
21 concentrate on that. And I know I am, when I
22 multitask, sometimes I lose it, so if I could stay
23 focused on getting someone the job, I'm very, very
24 good at that. And then I'll let other people do
25 those things that they do best with.

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2 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: No, I agree
3 that that is a real area where you really got to
4 know what you're--you've got to specialize in
5 that, you've got to best there is in that area,
6 because that's sometimes long term. So be it.
7 Well, I want to thank you all for coming up here,
8 and we will continue this conversation at another
9 moment. Let's call our first, how's that, now
10 that's timing.

11 MALE VOICE: The only other thing
12 we have is a statement, and I don't really
13 understand what it means, but--

14 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Okay.

15 MALE VOICE: --we got a call this
16 morning, and he said he was going to try to make
17 it, but he's not here. I'm not really sure what
18 the statement means.

19 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Okay. I have
20 a statement from the United War Veterans Councils
21 of New York, from a Vince McGowan. And the
22 statement reads, "New York is protected by its New
23 York State and National Guard units that
24 supplement out traditional uniform services.
25 Because of the schedule requirements and

1 membership in these guard units, meaningful
2 employment is very hard to get. Request that the
3 New York City Council review the circumstances of
4 this situation and formulate some method to
5 resolve the issue. It is true that if one is a
6 member of the National Guard, there are, it puts a
7 strain on employment. It is also true that
8 guardsmen are--and guardswomen for that matter--
9 are protected federally and by the State, their
10 positions. I would refer Mr. McGowan to the
11 appropriate state and federal agencies that
12 protect people in the National Guard. If that
13 fails, then we certainly, in the City Council
14 would look it up. I do want to make a final
15 report back, and that report has to do with the,
16 when last this Committee met, we were speaking
17 about the veteran vendors, veteran vendors. Since
18 that time, we have had a meeting with the Mayor's
19 office on vendors and what other situations where
20 veterans can vend in New York City. We are, we've
21 been made aware and given a process to follow. We
22 are currently trying to see how accurate that
23 process is. We will keep you updated. If there
24 is nothing further, I do want to thank my
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colleague for stepping in in such a magnificent way. I heard that you were doing it so well, people were wondering how many of the branches you had served in, and I assure them that he would be a pro in any of them.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I didn't serve in the Air Force, but I am a Jets fan, so.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: There you go. There you go. And certainly spoken like a true Air Force person. I want to thank my Committee staff, Matthew Carlin, the Counsel; Joan who's name I'm going to ruin something awful, who is my Policy Analyst, she's fantastic; John Russell who does Finance; and of course Angela Patterson from my immediate staff who puts up--

MALE VOICE: And out intern Ashley.

CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Oh, of course, and my, Angela, who seems to be paid just to put up with me, and that should be a full, certainly a full time job, no matter how much she is paid, she's underpaid if she has to put up with me. And Ash when ask--Alright. Our intern [background comment] oh is that right, you're Navy. Not bad, Afghanistan, alright. Why didn't

1
2 you go Marine Corps? Don't answer that [laughter]
3 don't answer that. He needs a good lawyer,
4 Council Member Fidler.

5 MALE VOICE: It'll be on the record,
6 so I don't want to say it.

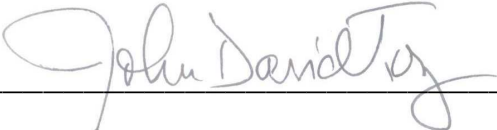
7 CHAIRPERSON SANDERS: Yeah, no, no,
8 no, don't do that, don't do that. [laughter] But
9 certainly I want to thank you also, sir, you're
10 bringing a wealth of experience as you also need
11 to really inform our Committee as to how we can
12 deal with the younger vets, how we can deal with
13 their issues in a slightly different but
14 challenging nonetheless. Having said those
15 things, my friends, I want to thank everyone for
16 coming here. Thank you, sir, you've kept us safe
17 and kept me somewhat rational. So I want to thank
18 you very much. This hearing is now ended.

19 [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature  _____

Date November 30, 2009