

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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HELD AT: 250 Broadway-8th Fl.-Hearing Rm. 2

B E F O R E: Selvena N. Brooks Powers
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Gale A. Brewer
Tiffany L. Cabán
Oswald J. Feliz
Frank Morano
Mercedes Narcisse
Yusef Salaam

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

Deana Logan
Director of Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

Noral Daniel
Chief of Staff at Mayor's Office of Criminal
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Molly Slothower
Executive Director of Research Innovation at
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Sharun Goodwin
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Department of Probation Director

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Nell Colon

Department of Corrections Deputy Commissioner of
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Jeanette Merrill

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Dalvanie Powell

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Zachary Katznelson

Independent Rikers Commission

Michael Klinger

Brooklyn Defender Services

Maria Colosi

New York County Defender Services

Kelsi Burgess

Getting Out and Staying Out

Michael Rock

Bronx Connect

Darren Mack

Freedom Agenda

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

Brian Carmichael
Freedom Agenda

Eduardo Rodriguez
Freedom Agenda

Jennifer Parish
Urban Justice Center

Victor Herrera

Damieone Riviere
Center for Community Alternatives

Uzoma Orchingwa
Emerge Center

Y. Jennings

Glen Bolofsky

Brandon Lloyd
Urban Resource Institute

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, ladies
3 and gentlemen. Welcome to today's New York City
4 Council hearing for the Committee on Criminal
5 Justice. At this time, I'd like to remind everyone
6 to please silence all devices, and at no point may
7 you approach the dais. Chair, we are ready to begin.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: [gavel] Good
9 morning. I am Council Member Selvena Brooks-Powers,
10 Chair of the Committee on Criminal Justice. I want to
11 welcome everyone to today's hearing on programming to
12 prevent recidivism and promote public health and
13 safety and related legislation. I'm joined by
14 Committee Members and Council Members, Council Member
15 Cabán, as well as Nurse, and online we're joined by
16 Council Members Narcisse and Morano. First, please
17 join me in congratulating Department of Correction
18 Commissioner Stanley Richards and Department of
19 Probation Commissioner Sharun Goodwin on their
20 appointments to their posts, and them for being here
21 today. We look forward to working collaboratively
22 with you to improve your critically important
23 Departments and advancing a more just criminal
24 justice system. The justice system includes what
25 happens while individuals are in custody and

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2 preparing them to return to our community better able
3 to thrive and avoid re-entering the system. The
4 programming, services and supports offered in our
5 jails are essential to reducing violence inside
6 facilities, promoting health and safety, and lowering
7 the likelihood that someone will return after
8 release. New York City has legal and moral
9 obligations to provide meaningful programming to
10 people in custody, including educational, vocational
11 training, therapeutic services, and re-entry
12 planning, including a clear requirement to offer five
13 hours of daily out-of-cell programming.

14 Unfortunately, in the recent past budget cuts and
15 staffing shortages negatively impacted the delivery
16 of programming of the highest quality. We want to
17 hear from the Department of Corrections, Department
18 of Probation, and the Mayor's Office of Criminal
19 Justice and representatives of the Correctional
20 Health Services what shortcomings they have
21 identified in the delivery of these services and how
22 they will enhance and improve them under the new
23 administration. We will explore how programming
24 connects to public health outcomes, including mental
25 health support, substance use treatment, and

1 continuity of care upon release. We will also look
2 at the role of community-based partners and re-entry
3 networks in helping individuals secure housing,
4 identification, employment, and other stabilizing
5 resources that reduce the risk of recidivism and what
6 will be done to ensure they are able to continue
7 delivering such critical assistance. We are also
8 considering a bill to enhance re-entry. Introduction
9 246, sponsored by Council Member Hudson, would
10 require the Department of Correction to return all
11 unused commissary funds to incarcerated individuals
12 in cash prior to their release, and to clearly inform
13 them orally and in writing and in a language they
14 understand of the remaining balance in their
15 accounts. The bill would also prohibit the charging
16 of any fee for the return of such funds and require
17 annual public reporting on unclaimed commissary
18 balances in the Department's efforts to return those
19 funds. This bill aims to ensure those who have unused
20 funds receive them at a time they can be of most use
21 when they have limited financial resources as they
22 look to get on their feet and successfully re-
23 integrate into their communities. When we invest in
24 meaningful programming, we are investing in safer
25

2 facilities, safer neighborhoods, and safer-- excuse
3 me-- stronger families. We must do all we can to end
4 the cycle of recidivism and appropriate and reliable
5 programming can clearly help in this regard. I thank
6 everyone here today for participating in this
7 hearing. I look forward to a thoughtful discussion
8 about how we can strengthen jail programming to
9 promote public health, improve re-entry outcomes and
10 enhance public safety for all New Yorkers. Also, I
11 want to acknowledge that we've been joined by Council
12 Member Brewer. I'll now pass it to the Committee
13 Counsel to be able to swear in the agencies. Thank
14 you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair. We
16 have along list of people testifying today. So, I'll
17 read off names. From the Department of Correction we
18 have Commissioner Stanley Richards, Nell Colon,
19 Chelsea Chard, James Conroy, and James Boyd. From
20 the Department of Probation we have Commissioner
21 Goodwin, Wayne McKenzie, Deandra-- Deldreana-- I
22 apologize, Peterkin, Paul Richards, Tiffany Bell,
23 Joshua Young, Antonio Pullano, and Patricia Williams.
24 From the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice we have
25 Nora Daniel, Deanna Logan, and Molly Slothower. And

2 from Correctional Health Services, we have Jeanette
3 Merrill. If you could all please raise your right
4 hands. If you could-- do you affirm to tell the
5 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth
6 before this committee and respond honestly to Council
7 Member questions?

8 UNIDENTIFIED: I do.

9 UNIDENTIFIED: Yep.

10 UNIDENTIFIED: I do.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Noting for the
12 record, that all the witnesses answered
13 affirmatively. You may begin your testimony.

14 DIRECTOR LOGAN: Good morning. Thank you
15 for having us here, Chair Brooks-Powers, members of
16 council. It's my pleasure to be here today. I'm
17 Deanna Logan, Director of the Mayor's Office of
18 Criminal Justice, affectionately known as MOCJ. I'm
19 joined here by Chief of Staff, Nora Daniel, Executive
20 Director of Research Innovation, Molly Slothower. We
21 are exceptionally pleased to be with our colleagues
22 from the Department of Probation, Commissioners
23 Sharun Goodwin and her team, and the Commissioner of
24 the Department of Correction, Stanley Richards. We
25 are excited to welcome them and look forward to

1 working together as we bring new perspectives and
2 they bring new perspectives to addressing the system
3 challenges that we all know we have. Thank you for
4 the opportunity to discuss our collective and
5 interconnected work to address recidivism. Let me
6 begin with just the simple truth. Public health is
7 public safety. Long-term sustainable public safety
8 requires investing in people by providing them with
9 individualized treatments and supports that they need
10 to thrive. MOCJ's mission is clear: ensure fairness
11 in the criminal legal system and shrink its
12 footprint. And how do we do that? By shifting to a
13 restorative approach for justice-involved
14 individuals. Reducing incarceration and recidivism,
15 and coordinating swift and fair processes for the
16 entire justice-involved population. Our research
17 helps to direct criminal legal system programming by
18 providing accurate picture of the overall system.
19 It's important for in this morning to just orient us
20 with some of the data concerning our current
21 legal system and recidivism rates. Since 2022,
22 the jail population rose 24 percent to a whopping
23 6,836 people in custody. And we have to be honest
24 that this census is a concern and we will need to be
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1 mindful and carefully monitor with the seasonality of
2 spring and summer warming months coming of how we
3 address that population increase. Also, given that
4 we know that our Borough Based Jails capacity
5 accommodates only approximately 4,000-- just a little
6 bit above that-- there is considerable work ahead.
7 These sobering numbers are important to note given
8 that jail population is interlinked with issues of
9 recidivism. Since 2022, the one-year felony
10 recidivism rate of all people in New York City court
11 systems remains at about 13 percent citywide. The
12 one-year felony recidivism rate of people who
13 completed their time in Rikers and returned to the
14 community each year outpaced that general court-
15 involved population going from 30 percent to 32
16 percent during this time, the same time. The length
17 of stay for complex cases as well as case processing
18 delays have also contributed to an overall increase
19 in the jail population. Addressing recidivism is
20 beyond the ability for any one single agency. We all
21 in this room have a role to play, and MOCJ currently
22 supports a provider ecosystem of programming that
23 does include supervised release, alternatives to
24 incarceration, re-entry services, and transitional
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1 housing. We invest in alternatives to jail, which
2 thanks to our amazing nonprofit partners, offers
3 pathways towards stabilization. The data is clear,
4 most participants do well in existing programs, but
5 significant gaps still remain in the system. While
6 programs and services exist, the current demand for
7 those resources is higher than the program can serve.
8 For instance, while we have approximately 800 beds,
9 available for our transitional housing, we know that
10 the need of people leaving Rikers is far greater.
11 Continued system improvements require stronger
12 support for the program staff's wellbeing, better
13 access to appropriately match services, and
14 environments that foster human connection and
15 clinical excellence. A deeper recognition overall in
16 the criminal legal system of the barriers that people
17 are facing, and also acknowledgement of the strength
18 that all of the people that we serve have and
19 possess. So, what are we talking about? We are
20 looking at and making sure that we know and note that
21 while capacity is an issue, there is also a need for
22 programming and housing that serve complex needs of
23 justice-involved populations. Given that it really
24 is a small number of people with the highest needs
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1 that represent a disproportionate number of cases in
2 the criminal legal system, we want to ensure that
3 there are robust services and supports specifically
4 for this high needs population. These are the people
5 that are at greatest likelihood of falling through
6 the cracks time and time again. And this group
7 currently makes up approximately 40 percent of the
8 jail's population. We're able to see in the data
9 that people who need the most help are cycling
10 through a very strange system. It's important that
11 we focus on programs and models that prioritize care
12 and support for complex needs. Employing this lens,
13 we have piloted some unique models and programs that
14 show promise, prioritizing the care and promoting
15 stability for individuals. Together with our
16 contracted partner CJA and CASES and the support of
17 this body, we introduced interventions such as the
18 Intensive Case Management known as ICM, and this
19 program focuses on intense engagement. Case managers
20 do more than make referrals. They actually walk with
21 the participants. They help them with the services,
22 going to treatment, getting their housing, and making
23 sure that they comply with the court orders. They
24 stay engaged even when participant's progress is
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1
2 uneven, and that is essential. This program has
3 successfully produced reductions in violent felony
4 recidivism among participants. It's a continuous
5 work-in-progress. Our researchers are studying
6 what's working and what isn't. So, ICM can continue
7 to evolve into one that's even stronger solution that
8 can be for the entire city. We are also-- we also
9 developed ATLAS which now sits under the Department
10 of Youth and Community Development, and ATLAS uses
11 data to connect high-risk individuals with tailored
12 services and ongoing support. MOCJ continues to
13 provide quality assurance and technical support to
14 the program. What's really key to focus on is ATLAS
15 is voluntary and the results so far are promising.
16 Even without a court mandate, a majority of
17 participants complete therapeutic services. This
18 tells us that when people have a safe place to live,
19 access to treatment without barriers and a path to
20 work, we see that they are far less likely to return
21 to the system. We are committed to making this
22 reality for more and more New Yorkers by embedding
23 public health across the criminal legal system. At
24 MOCJ, we are coordinating across agencies to invest
25 in people with the highest needs so everyone in New

1
2 York benefits. I'm not going to be untruthful. This
3 process is going to take time, but we here are all
4 aligned on these objectives and are absolutely
5 committed to accomplishing them together. Addressing
6 recidivism will require sustained and focused
7 coordination and care across agencies. And for that,
8 I will now hand off to my colleague at the Department
9 of Probation and Correction and Correctional Health
10 to provide more detail.

11 COMMISSIONER GOODWIN: Good morning,
12 Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee. I
13 am Sharun Goodwin, Commissioner of New York City
14 Department of Probation. We are pleased to be with
15 our colleagues Deanna Logan, Director of the Mayor's
16 Office of Criminal Justice, and Commissioner Stanley
17 Richards of the Department of Correction. I'm joined
18 today by General Counsel Wayne McKenzie, Deputy
19 Commissioner Joshua Young, Deputy Commissioner
20 Patricia Williams, Associate Commissioner Antonio
21 Pullano, Senior Director Deldreana Peterkin, Director
22 Tiffany Bell, and Director Paul Richards. Thank you
23 for the opportunity to discuss our programming and
24 the direction we are taking under this
25 administration. The Department of Probation fulfills

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2 a dual role, operating at the intersection of law
3 enforcement and social services, ensuring
4 accountability while providing meaningful
5 interventions and support. At its core, Probation is
6 built on a clear belief, people can change. We
7 believe in community safety and that accountability
8 matters. We also believe that when individuals are
9 given structure, supervision, and the right
10 interventions at the right time, they can stabilize
11 their lives and avoid deeper system involvement. Our
12 responsibility is not limited to monitoring
13 compliance. It is to reduce recidivism by changing
14 behavior while establishing stakeholder engagement
15 and strengthening our programming. Most people
16 placed on probation place significant barriers which
17 can include unemployment, housing instability,
18 behavioral health needs, substance use, and trauma.
19 We are currently assessing how we can collaborate
20 further with our sister agencies, our partners and
21 the unions. Supervision alone does not resolve those
22 challenges. If we want safer communities, we must
23 address the underlying risk factors that drive repeat
24 involvement in the justice system. That is why
25 programming is not an add-on. It is central to our

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2 organizational strategy. While I am new to the
3 Commissioner's role, I am not new to Probation. For
4 over 38 years I have dedicated my career to this
5 field. I understand both the operational challenges
6 and the extraordinary potential of this agency. Since
7 my return, I have focused on listening and assessing.
8 We are conducting a comprehensive analysis of our
9 programming, staffing and operation to determine
10 where we are aligned with evidence-based practices,
11 where there are programming gaps, where creative
12 solutions and collaborations are needed, and whether
13 our programs are improving measurable outcomes. I am
14 committed to grounding our organizational decisions
15 and data and research. That means strengthening our
16 use of cognitive behavior interventions, structure
17 skill building and targeted workforce development
18 programming. We are currently delivering programming
19 through a combination of in-house initiatives and
20 contacted community-based providers across the five
21 boroughs. These include educational programs,
22 vocational and workforce development opportunities,
23 mentoring through a Credible Messenger, and referrals
24 to behavioral health services. We are expanding our
25 existing programs. For example, we are evaluating

1 the development of a NeON Academy model within our
2 existing NeON sites to expand access to skilled
3 trades, certification and structured workforce
4 pathways tied to real skills and real jobs. In
5 addition, we are working to re-establish NeON
6 stakeholder groups to ensure community members and
7 local partners have a voice and a seat at the table
8 to inform programming priorities. Public safety
9 outcomes improve when the communities are engaged
10 partners. Our community stakeholder groups fill
11 connections and most importantly trust. Furthermore,
12 we are evaluating ways to expand our behavioral
13 health programming to ensure that our clients and
14 their families receive the supportive services they
15 need to achieve sustainable outcomes. These are just
16 a few of the many ideas we will be working on to
17 bring to our city. And client's time with probation
18 is a critical opportunity for redirection through
19 balancing accountability with access to services that
20 support positive change. Through continued
21 assessment, collaboration and investment in evidence-
22 based programming, the Department of Probation is
23 working to ensure that individuals under supervision
24 are provided with meaningful opportunities to
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2 succeed, and that the communities we serve are safer
3 and stronger. Thank you again for the opportunity to
4 testify today. I welcome your questions, your
5 insight, and your continued partnership.

6 COMMISSIONER STANLEY: Thank you,
7 Commissioner Goodwin. Good morning, Chair Brooks-
8 Powers and members of the Committee on Criminal
9 Justice. I'm Stanley Richards, Commissioner of the
10 New York City Department of Correction, and I am
11 joined here today by Nell Colon, our Deputy
12 Commissioner for the Division of Programs and
13 Community Partnerships. I am deeply honored to be
14 here today and grateful to Mayor Mamdani for the
15 opportunity to serve in this role. My journey,
16 including my own experience of incarceration, has
17 shaped my life's work, and I am here before you
18 committed to ensuring that this department reflects
19 hope, transformation, transparency, and
20 accountability. Let me begin with humility. I have
21 been in this position for just a few days, and I am
22 listening. I am learning and I am meeting with staff
23 and those who are in care across all facilities,
24 speaking with partners, reviewing data, and digesting
25 the full scope of the operations and challenges.

1 While I intend to hit the ground running, it would
2 not be prudent of me to offer or commit to detailed
3 operational changes quite yet. But I can be clear
4 about the direction in which we are headed. We are
5 turning the page, and we are doing so with our eyes
6 wide open. The task before us is not a six-month
7 project. It is not even a one-year project.

9 Transforming the jail system with the size and
10 complexity of New York City's is not like steering a
11 speed boat; it's like turning a cruise ship. It
12 requires steady leadership, discipline, coordination,
13 collaboration, and the patience to move deliberately
14 and sustainably. Once we turn, we must continue
15 forward with consistency and purpose. This work will
16 take time, and I am here to see it through. My
17 strategic mission rests on four interconnected
18 pillars. First, safe, humane jails, period. Safety
19 is fundamental. Without safety, nothing else works.
20 Safety must extend to correction officers, non-
21 uniform staff, and the people in our care alike, but
22 safety cannot come at the expense of dignity. I do
23 not believe that a humane environment is intentioned
24 with security. I believe it strengthens it. when we
25 center our work on order, fairness, and

1
2 accountability, and when we refuse to judge people
3 solely by the worst thing that they ever done, we
4 create conditions where transformation becomes
5 possible. Second, I am focused on developing and
6 strengthening partnerships. Although the Department
7 of Correction is situated on the island, it does not
8 operate in isolation. Reducing recidivism and
9 violence requires collaboration across a wide array
10 of stakeholders, including city partners like the
11 Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, the Department of
12 Probation, Health + Hospitals, Correctional Health
13 Services, New York City Public School system,
14 external program providers, faith leaders, community-
15 based organizations and this council. It's important
16 to note that the city does not operate in isolation
17 either. This work relies on strong partnerships with
18 state agencies and organizations that impact who may
19 come into contact with the criminal legal system.
20 Effective reentry planning begins on day one of
21 incarceration, not on the day of discharge. But we
22 know that ultimately the most effective strategy is
23 prevention. We must strengthen the bridges between
24 custody and community so that support begins before
25 incarceration and does not stop at the gate upon

1
2 release. Third, I am intent on supporting
3 responsible population reduction and a true continuum
4 of care by leveraging all of our partners.
5 Population reduction is not simply a numerical goal.
6 It is part of creating conditions where programming,
7 counseling, education, substance use services, and
8 reentry planning can function as intended. A true
9 care-- continuum of care means individuals have
10 access to structured programming while in custody and
11 clear pathways to housing, employment, treatment, and
12 community support upon release. We must measure
13 success not by lives locked up, but by lives
14 transformed. Last, but certainly not least, a
15 critical part of my vision for this agency is to
16 prepare the Department for Borough-based Jails. The
17 transition away from Rikers Island presents a
18 historic shift in this city. Borough-based
19 facilities demand a different model. Closer
20 coordination with communities, enhanced focus on
21 services, and new facilities designed with
22 rehabilitation in mind. We must ensure that our
23 workforce, our partnerships and our infrastructure
24 are in line with that future. We cannot, however,
25 forget that we are still years away from completing

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2 this move, and resources will be needed for those who
3 still are detained and work on Rikers Island. There
4 are many hard-working and dedicated public servants
5 at this agency that are already engaged in this
6 vision, and I am excited to learn more and to lean in
7 and support and strengthen our contributions to this
8 monumental citywide project. Finally, I would like
9 to touch on the topic of this hearing, because it is
10 important and a personal one to me. Programming
11 matters. Evidence-based intervention and counseling,
12 educational services, vocational training, substance
13 use programs, faith-based engagement, structured
14 discharge planning, all play a role in reducing
15 system involvement. Reentry coordination discharge
16 planning in partnerships with community providers are
17 essential components of preparing individuals for a
18 successful return home. At DOC we have team within
19 this agency that is highly-qualified, that is
20 passionate, that is dedicated to this work, the work
21 of transformation, and I am excited to support them.
22 We know that technology can be used to further
23 enhance community connection and I intend to explore
24 how to continue to modernize the Department in orde
25 to expand access to both services and access to loved

1
2 ones. Pathways to Employment, following release must
3 be real. And so we will collaborate closely with our
4 partners to strengthen and support the continuum of
5 care between jail and community. Social services
6 must be accessible and so I want to make sure that
7 the Department's Division of Programs and Community
8 Partnership is robust and equipped to do the
9 challenges and important work to which we have been
10 drawn to this calling. But programs alone do not
11 reduce recidivism. Leadership reduces recidivism.
12 Stability reduces recidivism. Hope reduces
13 recidivism. Over the coming weeks and months, I will
14 be reviewing participation rates, service delivery
15 models, staffing structures, and outcomes data. I
16 will speak with program staff, uniform staff, service
17 providers and people in custody. I will work closely
18 with partner and stakeholders across the criminal
19 justice system, because this work cannot be done
20 alone. The Department of Correction does not
21 determine who comes into custody. Meaningful
22 progress on recidivism requires that all stakeholders
23 come to the table to provide people with the tools
24 for a better future with less adverse contact with
25 the justice system. Reform is not only possible, it

1 is essential, but it must be grounded in facts,
2 transparency, collaboration, and clear-eyed
3 assessment of what works and what needs
4 strengthening. This will not be easy. There will be
5 setbacks. There will be moments when progress feels
6 incremental, but transformation in large systems is
7 built through consistent disciplined effort.
8 Remember, cruise ships, not speed boats. To the
9 uniform and non-uniform staff of this department, I
10 say to you, your safety and professionalism are
11 central to this mission. We cannot build safe jails
12 without you. I know that each of you work long hours
13 to keep our facility safe and investing in staff
14 morale and wellbeing must be pillars of our success.
15 Your dedication has the power to change the
16 trajectory of someone's life. To the individuals in
17 our custody and their families, your story is not
18 over. Our responsibility is to create conditions
19 where redemption and successful re-entry are
20 possible. And to this Council body and the people of
21 New York City, I commit to collaboration,
22 transparency and sustained effort. We will move
23 forward deliberately. We will measure our progress
24 honestly, and we will stay focused on building a
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2 Department that New Yorkers can be proud of, one
3 defined by progress. The road ahead is long, but I
4 am here and I am committed to this mission. Thank
5 you for the opportunity to testify, and I look
6 forward to the partnership with the City Council to
7 build lives. Thank you. I'll turn it over to my
8 colleague.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you all
10 for your testimony today. We'll go right ahead and
11 hop into questions. I'll start with a series of
12 questions, and then at a certain point I'll yield to
13 my colleagues to ask questions, and then we'll do a
14 round two if necessary. So, Commissioner Richards,
15 again, congratulations on your recent appointment.
16 I'd like to start with a couple of broad questions
17 before drilling down with you and your staff on
18 programming for people in custody. You entered this
19 position, obviously with unique backgrounds, the
20 first formerly incarcerated person to serve as
21 Commissioner for the Department of Correction. How do
22 you think your experience informs what your
23 priorities will be in this role, and in what ways do
24 you think your leadership will be different from the
25 commissioners that have served before you?

1
2 COMMISSIONER RICHARDS: Thank you for
3 that question, Councilwoman. I think it's more than
4 my collective experience. It is my 35 years of doing
5 this work, where I've done this work by holding true
6 to a couple of foundational points. One is that
7 people are not the worst thing that they've ever
8 done. And so I walk into this role seeing both
9 uniformed staff, non-uniformed staff, and
10 incarcerated people as people to be valued, people to
11 be lifted up, people to be held accountable, and
12 people to be supported. And so I'm coming into this
13 work with that pillar as what I'm bringing to the
14 Department. The second piece is that I think for
15 decades in big departments through bureaucracies,
16 it's been hard to get to yes. My approach is how do
17 we get to yes, because when we get to yes, we can
18 begin to transform and change the way the department
19 has been operating. We're located on Rikers.
20 Officers feel isolated. Incarcerated people feel
21 isolated. The majority of our department are Black
22 and Brown people. The majority of people
23 incarcerated are Black and Brown people, and so
24 there's a bit of work that we need to do to make sure
25 that we're getting to yes to support the members of

1 service and incarcerated people. And so I'm bringing
2 all of those things to this role, which I think is
3 different than what we've seen in past
4 administrations.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
7 that. We all know that working as a Correction
8 Officer is an extremely difficult and often dangerous
9 job. What are some of your initial ideas for how to
10 improve safety and morale for the Correction
11 workforce?

12 COMMISSIONER RICHARDS: Yeah. I think
13 the-- you look at the population, and my colleague at
14 MOCJ could talk more about the population and so
15 could Correctional Health. What we have are people
16 with mental illness who are detained in jails that
17 was not designed for people with mental illness. And
18 we have Correction Officers who are not clinicians,
19 but are charged with providing services and care to
20 people who have those challenges. So, I think the
21 first thing we want to do is make sure we go back to
22 correctional practices 101, fixing the infrastructure
23 challenges we have with jail doors, making sure
24 officers are trained and equipped to deal with the
25 population we have, and making sure that people who

1
2 don't need to be in our system are safely removed
3 from our system so that we could begin to reduce that
4 footprint. And I think as we do those things and
5 bringing in programs and making sure people are
6 engaged, we can begin to have safe jails, and that
7 will prepare us for the Borough-based Jail System.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
9 that. In a matter of months there will be a
10 remediation manager in place who's been granted the
11 authority to make a wide variety of decisions related
12 to jail management. Since your appointment, I know
13 you have already met with Mr. Deml. How do you view
14 your position in relation to his job as remediation
15 manager?

16 COMMISSIONER RICHARDS: The North Star
17 for me is jail safety. The Nunez Consent Decree is
18 around jail safety and addressing the Consent Decree
19 order. When I met with Nick, him and I talked about
20 our North Star. Our North Star is not different, and
21 we see the work ahead as a partnership. And so,
22 looking forward to working with Nick to address the
23 12 contempt orders to be in compliance on the Nunez
24 decree, so we could finally set that aside and begin
25 the preparation for the Borough-based Jail. I do not

1
2 see his work in opposition to the work that I need to
3 do. I see it in partnership. And the multiple
4 conversations we had, that's exactly how we're going
5 to approach it.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
7 Last session, the Council passed Local Law 140 of
8 2025 which among other things required the Department
9 of Commissioner-- excuse me, Department of
10 Corrections Commissioner to establish a full-time
11 coordinator to manage the transition to borough-based
12 jails. Can you give us an update on hiring for this
13 position?

14 COMMISSIONER RICHARDS: We are in the
15 process. I'm in the process of getting briefed on
16 exactly where we're at with the borough-based jails.
17 It is a priority for me. I was one of the original
18 architects of the design of the jails and advocates
19 for the borough-based jails. So, I have not yet been
20 fully briefed on the scope of the work, the status of
21 the project, and the staffing on it.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Saw movement.
23 Are you adding to it?

24 UNIDENTIFIED: Not yet.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Oh, okay.

3 Commissioner, you've spoken about your intention to
4 better utilize the 6A Early Release Program. Can you
5 explain the way the program operates and how you
6 might expand its use?

7 COMMISSIONER RICHARDS: No, couldn't go
8 into details of how it operates. My goal is to use
9 every tool at my disposal in partnership with MOCJ,
10 Probation, Correctional Health Services to make sure
11 that we're doing everything we can to reduce
12 population. We're going to be working in partnership
13 with Health + Hospitals on the Just Home Project
14 which would allow us to house people, permanently
15 house people with chronic medical conditions who tend
16 to cycle through some of the most-intensive systems
17 we have, hospitals, shelters, and jails. We're going
18 to be working with MOCJ and Probation, our community
19 providers to offer alternatives to incarceration,
20 supervised release and other diversion programs to
21 ensure those who could be safely diverted in
22 partnership with the district attorneys. And 6A is a
23 tool that I have, and Nell can talk specifically
24 about how we're using it. But I plan to use every
25 tool at my disposal to safely reduce population.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Hi, and I'll
3 just add-- so the last time I think I was presenting
4 was around the time of the Executive Budget hearing,
5 and during that time we talked about needing to have
6 a dedicated team to be able to vet and look at who is
7 currently city-sentenced in our custody and how we
8 can better utilize 6A. Since that time, we have
9 opened up two lines. We have on-boarded one of those
10 6A coordinators. The other person is pending. So they
11 are in the pipeline as we often say at DOC, but they
12 currently haven't started yet. We have vetted every
13 city-sentenced person in custody, and I think where
14 the work is now is aligning with Commissioner
15 Richards on the future pathway of how we utilize 6A.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you
17 both for that. The Board of Correction made
18 recommendations in July 2025 to update the
19 eligibility requirements for the 6A program. These
20 relatively minor changes proposed by the Board of--
21 excuse me-- Board of Correction mostly sought to
22 ensure that the Department was not excluding people
23 for 6A consideration for acts that occurred far in
24 the past. Do you agree with those recommendations,
25 and are you planning to implement them?

1
2
3 COMMISSIONER RICHARDS: I need to look at
4 those recommendations, but I can tell you generally
5 as I said earlier, my approach to management is how
6 do we get to yes, and yes is how do we get to a place
7 where we can safely reduce the population using all
8 the tools we have, including 6A. So, if there are
9 barriers to allowing people to safely participate in
10 6A, we want to take a look at that. We are not in
11 opposition of that, but I just haven't been briefed
12 specifically on the Board of Correction's rule.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Understood.
14 Thank you. Turning to programming. Earlier this
15 month you announced that nonprofit-led programming
16 would be returning to Rikers Island after budget cuts
17 led to end sourcing two years ago. In your press
18 release, three groups were identified as having been
19 awarded contracts. Have these program providers
20 begun their work on the island? If not, when will
21 they start?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yes, it's
23 quite exciting. So, these contracts are registered
24 in December. The providers are onboarding staff.
25 They are on Rikers. And in fact, just to give like

1
2 an update as an example, the substance misuse
3 provider is the Fortune Society, and we opened up our
4 first sober living community literally within the
5 last week. So this is something that we've been
6 talking about and hoping for, and it's something
7 that's happening and it's real. And so these
8 providers are here. We are working to get them more
9 robustly here. We anticipate that we're going to see
10 more services happening literally in the coming weeks
11 and months as they on-board. And just to give an
12 overview of who is awarded, we have for the trauma-
13 informed care programming contract, we're working
14 with the Osborne Association. With the
15 transportation and transition planning contract,
16 we're working with both Fed Cap [sic] and the Fortune
17 Society. Fed Cap is going to be the organization
18 working specifically on transportation with us. For
19 substance misuse services we're working with the
20 Fortune Society, and then for supplemental education
21 we're working with PD [sic] Green [sic].

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
23 that. Will the Department consider bringing back the
24 other program providers who had contracts prior to
25 the \$17 million budget cut in Fiscal 24?

1
2 COMMISSIONER RICHARDS: We want to make
3 sure, as all of our testimony, we understand the
4 important role programs play, and not only in helping
5 people rebuild their lives and transition from jail
6 into the community, but programming in jails also
7 provide opportunities for safety. People are
8 engaged. People see-- have hope that their life
9 could be different. It reduces violence in our
10 jails. So, we want to partner. We can't commit to
11 having additional contracts, but what I can tell you,
12 we will absolutely commit to working with any
13 nonprofit who provides services and want to come in
14 and work with the people in our care to help them
15 transition into the community. We are open to have
16 those conversations and we're open for those
17 partnerships.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
19 And even as the program providers begin their work,
20 the ones that are now being on-boarded on Rikers
21 Island, are there still programs that will be run in-
22 house by the staff?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Absolutely.
24 So, the Division of Programs and Community
25 Partnerships really is intended to be both what is in

1
2 that title, which is program staff who are hired and
3 work for the Department, as well as our community
4 partners that are nonprofit organizations contracted
5 with us and including volunteers, and volunteers of
6 variety of types, including faith-based organizations
7 and other nonprofits that might have different
8 expertise that want to come in on a volunteer basis.
9 But we are absolutely committed to continuing the
10 work with both our internal departmental non-uniform
11 staff who are civil servants, as well as working with
12 contracted providers and nonprofit organizations.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
14 that. I'm going to pivot over to the Department of
15 Probation, and then I'll come back to round two. So,
16 I'll give Department of Corrections a little break.
17 Commissioner Goodwin, congratulations on your recent
18 appointment, as well. I want to start with some
19 questions about your vision for leading this
20 Department before turning to specific questions
21 similar to Commissioner Richards. So, during the
22 tenure of the previous commissioner, the Department
23 underwent rapid changes and altered many
24 longstanding policies and priorities. In what ways
25 do you think your leadership of the Department will

1
2 differ from the previous Commissioner, and what will
3 be your main priorities? Are there any reforms
4 instituted under the previous regime that you plan to
5 continue as well?

6 COMMISSIONER GOODWIN: Well, what's
7 different with me, of course, you know, I started at
8 Department of Probation as an intern and went through
9 the ranks. My vision for the agency is yes, to look
10 at the existing polices and look at the way in which
11 we govern ourselves through evidence-based practices.
12 Does it make sense? And am I looking to change some
13 of our polices, yes, that's being in review, and I'm
14 listening to the staff. So right now, I'm on my
15 listening tour. I'm listening to what the staff has
16 to say. I'm listening to the unions. I'm listening to
17 my nonprofit organizations. I'm listening to the
18 Credible Messenger. I'm making sure that I'm on the
19 tour, I'm listening, and I have the ability like Stan
20 said, my colleague, is can we get to yes. And I have
21 the same focus. So, yes, I'm definitely going to do
22 things differently, but I want the evidence to lead
23 our practice. Where does it lead us? What does the
24 data say before we make some policy changes? But
25 like I said, I spoke to you. Thank you, Brooks-

2 Powers, about my view on certain things, and I told
3 you that, yes, I'm looking to change some policies.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,
5 Commissioner. And what is your philosophy when it
6 comes to the issuance of violations for adults and
7 juveniles? How will you instruct staff on when it's
8 appropriate to issue violations, especially technical
9 violations for non-compliance with rules such as
10 curfew, school attendance, and program participation.

11 COMMISSIONER GOODWIN: Violations to
12 probation is only to be filed if the person is a
13 threat to themselves or to the community. We do have
14 a past policy that mostly violations of probation
15 involve violence and arrests in terms of felonies, or
16 misdemeanors where a person is a victim. We do
17 automatic violations on that. Any other violations
18 is at the discrepancy of the officer. And in terms
19 of violations to probation, my view in terms of
20 technical is that we at Probation must do everything
21 we can in our power to help the person and making
22 sure we provided all the best services,
23 opportunities, and care for that person. If we did
24 not do that, we have different levels of how we
25 approve violations of probation. And if we are not

2 doing what we were supposed to do and what we-- what
3 the person needs and we haven't addressed it, then
4 no, we do not do technical violations.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Sorry, try
6 that again. So HRA has reported that in fiscal year
7 25 of the 1,009 people at Rikers approved for
8 supportive housing, at most 14 were actually placed
9 by the end of the fiscal year. Only 266 people were
10 even referred to a housing provider. Why are those
11 numbers so low? What plans are in place to increase
12 referrals and hopefully placements so we do not keep
13 missing the opportunities to connect people with
14 stable housing and services?

15 ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT MERRILL: sorry.
16 So, hi, Jeanette Merrill, External Affairs for
17 Correctional Health Services. So, as mentioned, CHS
18 does submit to HRA 2010E supportive housing
19 applications for everyone in custody who has serious
20 mental illness and self-identifies as experiencing
21 homelessness. So, our applications are almost
22 universally deemed appropriate. The patients, their
23 clinical needs, are deemed as being eligible for this
24 kind of housing. The challenge is actually securing
25 that housing from Rikers directly. So, we at CHS are

1
2 not the only ones who are submitting supportive
3 housing applications to HRA. Applications also come
4 in through Health + Hospitals more broadly, through
5 the shelter system, and so the challenge that our
6 patients face is that they by in large have unknown
7 discharge dates, and so it is very difficult to
8 secure permanent housing when you don't know when
9 you'll be able to move in. And so we do work, you
10 know, to facilitate interviews with providers,
11 teleconferences, or if you want to come in-person,
12 but the challenge really is that the supply is-- does
13 not meet the demand. And I also don't want to ignore
14 stigma potential in our patients being selected for
15 housing.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
17 And I'll come back around too for you as well. I'm
18 going to pivot to MOCJ. Hello.

19 DIRECTOR LOGAN: Hello.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Good to see
21 you.

22 DIRECTOR LOGAN: Good to see you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Two question-
24 - well, two questions. First, can you update us on
25 the status of MOCJ's ability to provide transitional

1
2 housing to people leaving jail? The transitional
3 housing program is currently funded for a thousand
4 beds. So, like, how many beds are online? What's
5 the timeline for the remaining beds?

6 DIRECTOR LOGAN: Right now, we know we
7 have 800 beds that are online, but I'm going to turn
8 it over to our Chief of staff who's overseeing
9 programming to give more specific detail.

10 CHIEF OF STAFF DANIEL: We are funded
11 for 800-- we are funded for 1,000 beds, and we have
12 about 800 online. We are looking to open up new
13 sites currently, and we're working with our providers
14 to open up those sites. And they're currently in the
15 pipeline.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. And
17 what's MOCJ's capacity to provide transportation
18 directly from Rikers Island or other correctional
19 facilities directly to the transitional housing beds?

20 CHIEF OF STAFF DANIEL: So, we--
21 currently our providers do have some funding to-- not
22 directly to transitional housing beds. So that is a
23 gap that we are working-- we should be working to
24 fill. Our providers are usually people-- we have
25 folks who come directly from Rikers sometimes.

2 People are also referred directly from community as
3 well.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And judges,
5 district attorneys, service providers, and defenders
6 all have lauded the transitional housing beds and
7 call for them to be expanded especially for people
8 with serious mental illness, young adults and other
9 specialized populations. Does MOCJ have any plans to
10 increase the number of beds, and if so, what is the
11 time frame for that expansion? If not, why not?

12 CHIEF OF STAFF DANIEL: So, we are
13 currently working with our providers to expand the
14 beds up to the 1,000 beds. We have some beds online
15 in the pipeline. In terms of expanding to-- for
16 people with serious mental illness, that is something
17 we're currently evaluating and working our partners
18 to determine the exact gap there and figure out
19 exactly how many beds we would need, and then we'd
20 have to work, you know, with our other partners to
21 determine exactly how many beds we'd be able to bring
22 online for that.

23 DIRECTOR LOGAN: [inaudible] that we do
24 have challenges with siting. And so we are open to
25 our partners. We've had conversations with different

1
2 members about making sure that we can find locations
3 where our nonprofits are going to be welcomed, where
4 they can be the assets to community that they are.
5 as you know, Fortune is one of our partners. They
6 are an asset to community. All of the neighbors are
7 generally telling us how great they are to have those
8 partners in community, but it is a challenge to just
9 get to that place, to actually be able to complete
10 the fair share, the seeker [sic] process, and then go
11 through the Community Boards to get the location
12 opened. And so that we will be seeking partnership
13 with the Council as well in order to be able to think
14 about how we could expand that.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
16 And Commissioner Goodwin, one question I did want to
17 ask in this round was-- another contract that was put
18 in jeopardy, and we spoke about this offline, but
19 just wanted to be on the record. By the previous
20 administration was the Works+ Plan, an initiative to
21 provide comprehensive services to young people
22 referred from the crisis management system who have
23 been impacted by gun violence. Can you let us know
24 where things currently stand with the Works+

2 contract, and will you consider reinvesting in this
3 program for the upcoming fiscal year?

4 DIRECTOR LOGAN: Thank you for that
5 question. I'll turn it over to Deldreana Peterkin.

6 SENIOR DIRECTOR PETERKIN PETERKIN: Good
7 morning. Thank you for that question. And so the
8 Works+ program contracts ended in 2025, fiscal year
9 25. And so DOP facilitated or is facilitating an
10 orderly and proper close-out for Works+. So, we
11 extended it for one year. So, DOP will continue to
12 work with the providers to ensue that through this
13 extension and through the close-out, and we're also
14 committed to make sure that every client in the
15 program has a transitional plan [inaudible] too, so
16 they can continue with the services, leaving out that
17 Work+ program.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: okay. So,
19 there's no real commitment to continue it at this
20 time?

21 SENIOR DIRECTOR PETERKIN: Not at this
22 time. I'm still assessing and going through what
23 programs we think will work not just for our clients,
24 but for the community.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
3 that. I'm going to pause on my questions, and go to
4 Council Member questions. We'll first hear from
5 Council Member Nurse followed by Council Member
6 Cabán.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you, Chair.
8 Congratulations on your appointment, and
9 congratulations to you and to everybody on all your
10 leadership roles. I just have a few questions. One,
11 I'm not sure if anyone here is able to speak to the
12 law we passed last year which requires the Mayor to
13 set up the very wonky name office for Coordination of
14 Transition to Borough-based Jails. I believe most of
15 the agencies represented here will have a role to
16 play in the interagency working groups. I don't know
17 if anyone's been-- I just don't know the progress on
18 that office being stood up. I know it's not your
19 all's direct work, but curious if you've been engaged
20 on that effort?

21 COMMISSIONER RICHARDS: I haven't been
22 briefed on that particular effort. James?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOYD: Hi, Council
24 Member. This work is under way. I think, you know,
25 we have to coordinate obviously with the incoming or

1
2 the new administration, but the transition planning
3 is underway here at DOC. And that's something we're
4 laser-focused on with Commissioner Richards of not
5 preparation, because the jails-- all the contracts
6 are registered. If anyone looks at Brooklyn, it's
7 seven stories high. It is now time to start thinking
8 about transition planning and what those resources
9 look like. We do have an Executive Director of BBJ
10 in the pipeline that we hope will start soon, because
11 they're going to lead that endeavor, but over the
12 last couple of years, we have built a robust team
13 focused on the construction and timelines of BBJ.
14 But we are now at a significant milestone, what, four
15 years out from BBJ are the first Brooklyn facility
16 being-- construction being completed for us to start
17 planning what transition looks like now.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Okay. And you
19 know, the first report with some recommendations is
20 due in May, so it would be good to communicate early
21 if more time is going to be needed on that. And then
22 for Probation, I just want-- I'm glad to hear your
23 position on technical violations. We talked a lot
24 about that last year. We saw a rise in the use of
25 those through Probation, and when we asked about it,

2 you know, we were told there isn't a written manual,
3 but there's a whole written manual on violations, and
4 most of the members of this committee held the
5 position that we should not be using those as a last
6 resort. So, I'm really glad to hear. That was one
7 of my questions. And would love to stay engaged with
8 you, and I know the Youth Services Chair, Council
9 Member Stevens, is really keen on programming. It's
10 very confusing to understand what's the data and how
11 are we evaluating these programs.

12 COMMISSIONER GOODWIN: So, I would love
13 to say that I'm making sure-- I make my way around to
14 each office, because that's part of my listening
15 tour. So, I can come and speak to y'all about
16 probation and about where we're going, and hopefully
17 keep that partnership going where I'm visiting, you
18 know, at least one a year or twice a year just so we
19 can have an open data. And also, I'll be asking for
20 some help as well, and you know, looking forward to
21 y'all joining or sending a representative to our NeON
22 stakeholder groups. So, you can always have a voice
23 on what's happening at Probation.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Yes. Just a
25 couple more questions, Chair. I'll be brief. I had a

1
2 follow-up, but-- okay, thank you. One of the things
3 that I really wanted to just uplift here under your
4 leadership is that, you know, over the last few years
5 we had so much incoming mail and communication from a
6 lot of Probation Officers conveying so much low
7 morale. And I hope this administration can address
8 low morale, not just through the leadership, but
9 through the paychecks that folks are getting, right?
10 Like, low morale, higher wages. You know, these
11 folks are working really hard. They need stable
12 schedules, and hopefully that is something you could
13 advocate for with the mayor so that these folks have
14 the right contract that they need to show up for work
15 with their whole selves.

16 COMMISSIONER GOODWIN: Yes. And also,
17 I've been working with the union president, and she
18 and I have been talking about a lot of these issues,
19 and I think we're at a good place.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Council
22 Member Cabán followed by Council Member Brewer.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you. I
24 appreciate that y'all rolled deep today. I'm going
25 to-- I'm going to ask please be as succinct as

1 possible, because you know I got a lot of questions.
2 We're going to try to get through a bunch of them.
3 One is just a follow-up on 6A. Just really quickly,
4 excited to hear the plan there, but I want to know
5 specifically does that plan-- part of that plan
6 include that eight-year list being compared with the
7 list of public defense providers, that they compile
8 of people they think are eligible for 6A?
9

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: I mean, to be
11 quite transparent, I don't think we've crossed that
12 bridge of having that list yet.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Okay.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: But I think
15 that would be a wonderful thing to receive and to
16 look at. Absolutely.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Great, thank you.
18 I'm going to shift gears a little bit. Under the
19 Southern District of New York's 2016 order in
20 Hanberry [sp?] versus Thompson, DOC required to
21 ensure that people under 21 without a high school
22 diploma or GED can-- if you want to go to school, can
23 go to school at least three hours a day every day.
24 So, DOC houses most school-eligible people in RNDC,
25 correct?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yes.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Okay. And do all
4 RNDC housing areas that house young adults have
5 access to school?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Okay. And how do
8 officers know who in a housing area is eligible for
9 school? How do they receive the list of people who
10 should be escorted to school, making sure the list is
11 accurate, what-- those kinds of things.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yeah, that's
13 a great question. So, there's a variety of
14 mechanisms. The first and foremost is that every
15 young person who comes into custody gets an
16 evaluation or an assessment on if they are interested
17 in going to school and if they also need to go to
18 school, if they don't have their high school
19 equivalency or their GED, and then from that
20 assessment that prioritizes them to go to school. So
21 that list is then sent over to the Department of
22 Education who then vets and make sure that people do
23 not actually have their high school equivalency or
24 GED. So we get them on that list to be going into
25 school from a housing unit. That list is provided to

2 the Department from the Department of Education or
3 New York City Public Schools, and that list is then
4 given-- we have specific officers who do the
5 escorting for school. So, they go to every housing
6 unit to make sure that people are woken up, that they
7 are alerted, that they aware, and actually something
8 that I think is really important to mention on this--
9 within literally like the last year and a half, our
10 education specialists who are non-uniform staff who
11 work for the Department, have moved into a case
12 management system.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Okay.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: And that is
15 in part to ensure that young people even if they had
16 declared no, I don't want to go to school, but they
17 do need their high school equivalency or GED, that we
18 are following up with them. We are encouraging them,
19 and if there are any barriers-- if someone is singed
20 up for school--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: [interposing] Going
22 to be my follow-up. Yeah.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: and isn't
24 going, that these people on our team, the education
25 specialists, are actually meeting with individuals

1 and saying what's the barrier and how do we help you,
2 and how do we get you to school?

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: So, it sounds like
5 also your guys are encouraging people to go-- what
6 happens if somebody is not on the list and they ask
7 an officer and say I want to go to school? What are
8 the officers told to do policy-wise or procedure-
9 wise?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Like, in the
11 moment, that information is given over to the staff
12 to able to vet and make sure that they can come into
13 school. But since every housing unit which is
14 something -- recently, in recent history we have not
15 had every housing unit at RNDC going to schools,
16 since that is what our practice is today, this school
17 year, every housing unit is going. They have the
18 opportunity to go and then e-vetted to make sure that
19 they need to go to school and what classroom they
20 should be going into.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: And just to close
22 the loop on that question, you know, we've heard
23 reports that several young adults during the current
24 school year weren't escorted to school from the RNDC
25 housing, because of the like not being on the list.

1
2 So, just want to make sure that those obstacles are
3 removed. I know that Legal Aid had emailed counsel
4 about I think a discreet number of people. So, you
5 know, we'd love follow up on whether those folks are
6 getting access. I do want to sign up for a second
7 round. I have more questions, but I just do want to
8 wrap by saying that I appreciate the topic of this
9 and also-- and I think especially Commissioner you
10 know this. Recidivism is a flawed metric, right?
11 It's not a comprehensive measure of success. It
12 doesn't take into account structural conditions, race
13 and class bias. It doesn't take into account NYPD
14 priorities or policing priorities. And so I think
15 there's a tension here, because we're seeing the
16 increased of use of precision policing which has been
17 debunked study after study. We are seeing the
18 increase in Broken Windows policing. We're seeing a
19 continuum of criminalization of cyclists. And so
20 like those things obviously affect recidivism rates.
21 So, you know, I think just making sure that we aren't
22 looking at recidivism through a vacuum of personal
23 responsibility, but also systemic changes. We know
24 that there needs-- and that's where reentry comes in,
25 right? We know it's like employment, financial

1
2 stability, health. So, I'm hoping that we can
3 continue to talk those things. Alright, thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

5 And I have you down for round two. Council Member
6 Brewer, and then I'm going to ask questions on behalf
7 of Council Member Narcisse.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Alright, thank
9 you very much. I like you all, but I really like
10 Stanley Richards. I'm just telling you. You've been
11 my friend for a very long time. Okay. You're all
12 alright. My question is Bellevue. So, we have
13 toured the space there that you and Dr. Katz have set
14 aside, but there's no staff. So, my question is-- my
15 understanding is that would help, you know, taking
16 individuals there with wonderful support, medical and
17 other. So my question is the staffing. So, you
18 don't want to have your best staff perhaps go there.
19 Everybody want's to go to Bellevue, preferable to
20 Rikers. Are you trying to get others to come out of
21 retirement? Are you able to find staff? When we
22 were there, I don't know, three months ago, there was
23 no ability to get the staff. James Boyd knows
24 everything.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOYD: Thank you for
3 keeping us honest, Council Member. Yes.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I always do,
5 James.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOYD: Yes, you do.
7 That is a plan we are working with Commissioner
8 Richards. One of the first items he asked about on
9 day one, and so we are coming up with that timeline
10 of what that plan looks like inclusive of staffing.
11 What we're focused on right now is all of the SCOC
12 punch list items, training, policies, staffing,
13 testing out all of the systems within Bellevue, and
14 you know, what's equally exciting is not just the
15 space, but that we never commissioned a jail in
16 decades. And so this is a significant milestone for
17 us.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No, I understand.
19 What do you think the timing could be, months, years?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOYD: I don't want
21 to commit to a plan without, you know, talking to the
22 Commissioner first, but we can definitely circle back
23 with you sometime next week.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Alright. Number
25 two is just programming. So, when I go-- I've only

1
2 been to Rikers maybe five times recently, but it
3 seems like not enough people are in programming.
4 Now, maybe they will be. But you see people with
5 nothing to do all day long. I do know some people who
6 are there now, and they don't have a lot to do. So
7 my question is-- I understand that you're maybe in
8 the last recent past, getting more people, but how
9 long does it take to get culinary-- that thing where
10 you drive around that the guys like, whatever the
11 hell that room is?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yeah.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All that, how do
14 you do it quickly so that they're not hanging out.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yeah, that's
16 a great question. I mean, I think that part of this
17 answer is that a lot of like what you're describing,
18 the driving simulators, all of our--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]
20 Culinary.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: All of these
22 programs are cohorts and they cycle. And so you're
23 right that some folks may do this cycle and it may
24 only be one to four weeks that they are engaged, and
25 then they get a certificate. They get credentials

1
2 associated with it. So that is something that like
3 on a vocational level that they get to leave with,
4 but it does mean that this is not that they are doing
5 the driving simulator every day, 365 days a weeks.
6 You know? And so for us, and I think under this
7 leadership and this administration, we're really
8 looking at how do we bring more programs into this
9 space? How do we bring more people to congregate
10 locations to do this programming? So, even if it is
11 not, you know, one cycle of culinary, that they have
12 ongoing programming that could be in the field of
13 culinary.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. I mean, I
15 just-- I'll be quick. But even cosmetology, nobody
16 is often there when I'm there. I'm not there at a
17 time when-- it's during the day. They should be at
18 that program. Right, so I do think that that whole
19 program is-- I'll let you go, but GED is not easy. I
20 got two people in my house trying to get through it
21 who happen to be migrants. English is not their
22 first language. So, when you leave after Council
23 Member Cabán asked schooling, how do you hook up with
24 District 79? So, you're at Rikers.

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yep.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Then you go out
3 and you want to continue your GED. Is there a real
4 clear way to hook up with District 79 which handles
5 the GED?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yes. And I
7 think the beauty of having District 79 in our jails--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] I
9 understand.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: is that for
11 people who are enrolled in school, they are in the
12 District 79 system while they are in our--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] But
14 do you-- it's a different program. It could be
15 Renaissance on the outside, Rikers on the inside. So
16 who keeps tabs of who's going where and making sure
17 they follow up?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: District 79
19 would be the, like, agency that would be having the
20 follow-up. They have social workers that work with
21 people while they're in custody.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: So, they
24 would be the ones that would be doing that case
25 management in the community.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I will stop, but
3 I don't think it's a great follow-up, may I add.
4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Want to do a
6 round two? Okay. The next series of questions is
7 from Council Member Narcisse. Commissioner, many of
8 the medical production failures at Rikers pre-date
9 your tenure. As you step into this role, what did
10 you identify as the single biggest operational
11 breakdown preventing people from reaching medical
12 care? And are missed appointments primarily a
13 staffing problem, a scheduling problem, or a clinic
14 capacity problem, and what operational change have
15 you already implemented since taking office? And
16 lastly, what steps are you taking to ensure
17 individuals are not released with untreated medical
18 or psychiatric conditions that could destabilize them
19 and increase the likelihood of reoffending? If I
20 need to repeat anything, let me know.

21 COMMISSIONER RICHARDS: Yeah. Thank you
22 for that question. My priority is safety and health
23 and support so that people don't come back into our
24 system. I have not met with Correctional Health as
25 of yet, but my plan is to meet with them and to

2 figure out how we could work together to make sure
3 that people in our care get access to health care. I
4 think the starting point for all of us is that we
5 need to sort of stop trying to identify the blame and
6 start looking toward how do we make sure that we work
7 in partnership to make sure people are produced, make
8 sure people get the health care that they need, and
9 so I plan on meeting with Correctional Health
10 leadership to identify how we could work together to
11 ensure people get access to health care.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
13 that, Commissioner. During previous Criminal Justice
14 Committee hearings, the Department has acknowledged
15 struggling to meet the legal mandate to provide five
16 hours of daily out-of-cell programming to everyone in
17 custody. Where do things currently stand? I know we
18 spoke privately about it, but just wanted to be on
19 the record. Is the Department able to provide five
20 hours of daily programming? If not, what are the
21 plans for coming into compliance with this legal
22 requirement?

23 COMMISSIONER RICHARDS: DC Nell Colon can
24 talk specifically, but let me just say for me a
25 priority is bringing in programs, making sure people

1
2 are engaged. The five hours are the minimum
3 standard. For me, we ought to be providing services
4 and resources to help people figure out what's their
5 next move when they get released from our system?
6 Whether their case-- when their case gets
7 adjudicated, they get sentenced to state prison or
8 they go home. And so as an agency we're going to
9 set that as a priority. DC Colon could talk
10 specifically about what we've been doing around the
11 five hours. But that's a priority for me.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Would you
13 like me to add? Yeah, so the five hours of
14 programming, I think there's a few like critical
15 things to address about this. One is the definition
16 of how we're getting to the five hours, and this is
17 something that literally like day one with
18 Commissioner Richards is what does that look like and
19 what does it feel like when you're in a jail seeing
20 programming or not seeing programming? And what
21 should the quality of that programming look like? So,
22 right now, we are assessing how we're defining it,
23 because historically and post-COVID the definition
24 has been all-inclusive of all types of programs and
25 services that are afforded to people. But as we

1 know, not everybody might sign up for Law Library as
2 an example, which is two hours a day, five days a
3 week. So, we've been reaching five hours of
4 programming by including metrics like who is
5 attending Law Library, or is that afforded to a
6 housing area, but that another critical component of
7 that is if we have say a staffing where a non-uniform
8 counselor is not able to come into work for a day,
9 now that house is impacted by-- if they're receiving
10 their counseling services whether that's one to three
11 hours in that day on that unit. So, for us, I think
12 right now it's evaluating how are we defining what
13 five hours looks like so that our housing units and
14 our programs in classrooms look differently and feel
15 differently.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Staying in
18 that same vein, it's our understanding that the
19 availability of programming varies amongst the
20 different facilities on the island. What accounts
21 for some facilities having more or less programming
22 options?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: That's a
24 great question. Actually, I'm going to lean in-- in
25 part it's-- for the departmental internal staff, we

1 try to have a pretty consistent flow of programs
2 across all of the sites when it's the internal staff
3 we're reassigning, whether it's an internal counselor
4 or a legal coordinator or access to enhanced
5 recreation or finding performing arts that are from
6 departmental staff. Now, what we find is at times
7 we have community partners and volunteers who
8 specialize in working with specific populations.
9 That might be specializing and working with our
10 emerging adult population who is 18 to 21. That
11 might be specializing in working with women. And so
12 what we find is then resources end up getting
13 targeted towards those specific populations and it
14 starts to look like there is less for everyone else
15 because we have these volunteers or contracted
16 providers who are really-- their specialty is in
17 working with these subsets of populations on Rikers
18 Island, which is a critical mission of ours to say
19 how can we then support these other sites,
20 specifically the adult male population to make sure
21 that they are getting equal access to programs and
22 services.
23

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And so if a
25 person in custody is transferred to a different

2 facility, outside of obviously ones that are in-
3 house, do they then lose the access to that program?
4 Is there a level of continuity when they're moved, or
5 is it just cut off?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: It really
7 depends on the circumstance. I'm going to use an
8 example. When we have people enrolled in post-
9 secondary offerings, so college courses, our intent
10 and goal is that they do not get removed from the
11 location that has that offering for that specific
12 cohort. We want them to complete that class, that
13 cycle. If that is within our control that we can say
14 they are not going to move to a different facility,
15 we will do our best to ensure that they get to
16 complete that program that they are currently
17 enrolled in. But on a day-to-day basis there are
18 movements that do happen with people in custody and
19 that does mean that people will have opportunities at
20 a jail, a specific jail if a cohort, again, is
21 happening at that jail that is not located in another
22 jail, and in some circumstances it is just cut off.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Another legal
24 mandate related to programming comes from Local Law
25 42 of 2024, legislation the Council enacted over a

1
2 mayoral veto to ban solitary confinement in city
3 jails. Implementation of this law has largely been
4 held up in court. However, one unsafe provision
5 requires that all people in custody under the age of
6 22 regardless of security status or location receive
7 access to trauma-informed, age-appropriate
8 programming on services on a consistent and regular
9 basis. Is the Department currently in compliance
10 with this legal requirement? And if not, can you
11 provide a specific timeline for when you expect to be
12 in compliance?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yes. So, the
14 short answer to this is from our perspective yes, we
15 are in compliance. And I want to dive into what that
16 means in a little if I can. So, first and foremost
17 to offer age-responsive programming and also like
18 just competent programming in general for people who
19 are 18 to 21, there's a few different ways we can do
20 that. one of that is what evidence-based curriculum
21 are we actually using for young people, and is it
22 responsive both in reading level and in scenarios,
23 like the driven aspect of what people are actually
24 engaging in-- can they connect and relate to it? And
25 we have done the work to make sure that our

1 curriculum specific to the emerging adult population
2 who's 18 to 21 has that competency behind it, and
3 that all of our tools are evidence-based. When it
4 comes to trauma-informed care, I think there's like
5 an additional layer to that, right? So trauma-
6 informed is the lens that we're applying as we're
7 working with somebody and really seeing them as a
8 whole person with whole experiences, life experiences
9 both inside of our facilities and prior to being in
10 any of our facilities, and with those life
11 experiences may come different reactions or triggers
12 of how they engage with their environment. And so
13 our programs and our services should be extremely
14 mindful of those triggers, those reactions, and then
15 how we work and support that whole person in maybe
16 developing a different reaction or maybe supporting
17 them through how they're engaging with their
18 environment. We do that through training of our
19 staff. So, we have two different training series,
20 one of them is specifically working with emerging
21 adults in correctional custody which does talk about
22 the stages of development, and then the impact on the
23 stages of development when trauma happens, and then
24 also how we respond to that. Another one of our
25

1 training series is on trauma-informed care, and that
2 is a scenario-driven training series that is specific
3 to looking at real incidents that have happened on
4 Rikers Island and how we responded to them, and how
5 have we used the trauma-informed lens, our response
6 might differ. And it's really engaging the members
7 of service, both uniform and non-uniform staff in
8 what that response might look like. We're partnering
9 with the Osborn Association. We'll be bringing
10 expertise and trauma-informed care through their
11 procurement, their challenge [sic] based [sic]
12 procurement. And with their partnership we're also
13 looking at, you know, is there a gap in service, when
14 we talk about trauma-informed care, of literally
15 doing evidence-based curriculum that is specific to
16 themes of trauma such as seeking safety which is a
17 national standard for curriculum on like focusing on
18 themes of trauma. So, the Osborne Association will
19 be bringing in those expertise and those curriculums
20 to be working with people in custody in group format
21 and also individual basis. They will be providing
22 wraparound care. They have a partnership with the NYU
23 Silberman School of Social Work as well as a
24 partnership with the Horticulture Society of New
25

1
2 York. And I would be remiss if I did not mention
3 that, you know, trauma is something that also like
4 deserves real mental health treatment and that is
5 where our partners at CHS come in to provide that
6 mental health treatment, because that is beyond at
7 times, you know, programming or skill building. But
8 that's when they get to sit with their licensed
9 mental health clinician, with their licensed clinical
10 social worker and do that real work which is offered
11 and afforded by Correctional Health Services.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
13 Next, we're going to go into round two with the
14 Council Members. We'll have Council Member Nurse
15 followed by Cabán, followed by Brewer.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you, Chair.
17 My-- I think my question might be for you, actually.
18 I think so. It was great to hear that you've
19 reviewed all the cases, that I think you said you
20 reviewed all the 6A eligible cases. In the past, when
21 we asked about staff capacity, I think there was one
22 person working on not full-time.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Part-time.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: And then at some
25 point later on you brought someone else on--

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: [interposing]

3 Also part-time.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: for part-time.

5 So, moving forward just for ongoing case review,
6 who's-- what is the capacity going to look like?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yeah. I
8 mean, so it is the two dedicated fulltime staff
9 members who will be doing like their entire role and
10 responsibility is 6A. so it is both vetting to make
11 sure every time somebody is city sentenced and comes
12 into our custody on a literal daily basis, we are
13 starting that vetting process. We're reviewing what,
14 you know, what they're length of stay is, what their
15 charges were, all the factors that kind of come into
16 play that need to be presented then to the
17 Commissioner for review. And so that process is
18 happening with those dedicated staff, and we still
19 have-- actually, it's now three part-time staff who
20 have access to all of the same systems and all the
21 same information who could help with vetting. If
22 there came a time that we needed to have more
23 assistance.

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Alright. Those are
3 people who are only working part-time or just part-
4 time on this particular issue?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Part-time on
6 this specific issue. Yeah, they're full-time
7 employees, and they-- so they're supporting the two
8 full-time staff on this, if there comes a time that
9 it's needed.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: What do you
11 anticipate with this increased capacity which is
12 good? What do you anticipate in terms of your annual
13 case review? I mean, we had-- like a couple years
14 ago it was like 32, then it was like 68. Where do we
15 think we'll be now with this added capacity? What's
16 your projected case review?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: I think that
18 it's hard to equate, and I just say this-- it's hard
19 to equate like the number of people if we're saying
20 part of our case review is like 100 percent of people
21 need to be vetted, and that's where we need to sit
22 all the time, right? So, on that case review status,
23 like, that is our goal that 100 percent of people are
24 vetted, and that information is given then to the
25 Commissioner. But for--

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: [interposing] You
3 don't have a--

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: the
5 projection of literal-- like the number of people
6 released, I think that that is going to be a
7 conversation for the Commissioner at a later time,
8 also with all of the stakeholders involved.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: My last-- my last
10 comment is that while I'm really glad that Just Home
11 landed, I know that you had mentioned siting is an
12 issue, and I think that under this administration I
13 think it would be important to kind of be creative
14 about how to prime communities for that. and then
15 when does ongoing sustained engagement look like?
16 You know, the Council Member who's there now,
17 thankfully Council Member Shirley Aldebol is there.
18 We're grateful she's there because she supports this.
19 But you know, we want to make sure that she can stand
20 ten toes down on this project and not have to fend
21 off, you know, ugly things that come up on her own.
22 So, it would be great to think, like, what is the
23 ongoing engagement for those communities that might
24 be oppositional, because those other communities need
25 to do their fair share, right? And we need to push

1
2 them to do it, and there's new tools to do it now,
3 but we need to make sure we're out there and not just
4 with the loudest voices, but where people are at to
5 make sure that when we stand up these operations that
6 those folks are welcomed, because we want them to
7 feel a part of community. So, that's it. Thank you,
8 Chair.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you.
10 Alright. I'm going to just go back to the education
11 piece. I ended on saying that Legal Aid had reached
12 out about a Hanbury [sic] class member's multiple
13 times. So, I want to make sure that that gets
14 addressed. But also, the Hanbury requirements apply
15 no matter where the person is housed, that's correct?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Okay. And so that
18 includes RESH [sic]?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: And that means
21 that they have to also get that three hours, right?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: And is it DOC
24 policy that the student/teacher ratio in RESH be one-
25 to-one?

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: So, I think
3 that-- I'm going to-- it's not a policy. What I'm
4 going to say is that the layout and design of RESH,
5 the room that can be used for the classroom on each
6 housing unit can effectively fit probably two to
7 three people.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Okay.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: And so when
10 you look at what and how we're doing classroom
11 education in RESH, that is where the barrier comes
12 in, because they're not--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: [interposing]
14 Logistically [sic] you need something like a one-to-
15 one or one-to-two ratio.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: One to two
17 ratio.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Okay. And are
19 there-- and there's more than one school-eligible
20 student--

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: [interposing]
22 Absolutely.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: currently housed
24 in RESH.

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Okay. We've heard
3 reports that usually about 20 to 30 school-eligible
4 people are housed in RESH. So, I just want to talk
5 of or ask about how you're ensuring in everyone in
6 RESH is getting the three hours of schools, because
7 you know, we've been told that over for well-- for
8 several years, right? School eligible people in
9 restricted housing haven't received that requirement.
10 So, I want to know, like, you know, looking forward,
11 what efforts are being made to fix that?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yeah, no. I
13 mean, this is a great-- it's a great question, and
14 it's honestly oen of our biggest struggle. It is like
15 truly one of our biggest struggles. We have one
16 teacher who is phenomenal and he is working with--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: [interposing] Need
18 more teachers.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: I know. He's
20 working with people trying to do as much as he
21 feasibly can within a day, but that is not looking
22 like what you're prescribing or describing as like
23 the three hours in a classroom setting, because it is
24 starting to look like one-to-one or one-to-two
25 engagement. Where I think one of our efforts is to

1
2 try to fix this gap in service is with the support of
3 our supplemental education procurement that is coming
4 onboard, because their entire intent and goal, like
5 the literal scope of their work is to help support,
6 get more people access to school, more people access
7 to tutoring, increased GED graduations. So, while
8 they are not a replacement for the three hours of
9 school, and I want to make that very clear, that they
10 are there to provide supplemental support and this is
11 one of areas of saying if we can't have more teachers
12 right this second, which I-- I love that you said
13 that we need them. If we can't have it right this
14 second, then how are we still supporting people with
15 educational access and educational support to make
16 sure that they're still meeting their milestones
17 while they're in RESH.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Yeah, and we want
19 to be partners in making sure that folks have access
20 to the teachers that they need. And then my last
21 question on this is just like does the-- the borough-
22 based jail plan, does it account for or make changes
23 to the existing physical logistic challenges that you
24 just described?

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: I think one
3 of the beauties of the borough-based jail plan is
4 that is like, programs is center and like first and
5 foremost like one of the core aspects of what the
6 design looks like. So in every single housing unit,
7 on every single floor, there is s classroom space.
8 there is opportunities for us to actually bring
9 programming at a larger scale within those designs.
10 So, to the answer, it is yes, the borough-based jail
11 plan has really looked at these, for a lack of better
12 words, design challenges or failures and said let's
13 really think about this differently.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you. Will
15 there be a third round? Okay. Sign me up.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
17 much. I have three quick questions. One on tablets.
18 When I am there, I see people have tablets. So, my
19 question is, does everyone have one and does it-- it
20 sits if at all in what we're talking about today,
21 programming, etcetera. Number two, Oversight and
22 Investigations, when I was Chair last time, did a
23 study of visitors, people coming and their
24 experience. And I do think that helps with-- a good
25 experience, hopefully with your family and your loved

1
2 ones helps you stay out when you get out. So, how
3 does that-- have you read the report and have you
4 read the report, and have you have an ideas about
5 implement? Some of this is just suggestions. And
6 third, on safety, I know a lot of the Correction
7 Officers have told me that some of the cell doors are
8 broken, and how are we going to fix them? Those are
9 my three questions.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Should I
11 start with tablets or-- just to do that one quickly.
12 So, approximately 80-- I think it's 88 percent as of
13 this week have access or have been afforded a tablet.
14 I will use that. They have been afforded tablets.
15 Now, that 88 percent and being afforded a tablet does
16 not account if somebody has like a system malfunction
17 and they had to send the tablet back to Securis [sp?]
18 and temporarily for a month or two months they may be
19 waiting for that tablet to come back. And that's
20 just being transparent, right, about our situation
21 with the tablets. And with that, absolutely the
22 tablets do assist us with programming. We have-- in
23 reviewing the numbers people use their tablet
24 approximately two hours a day on average. With in
25 that, most of their engagement use as we drilled down

1
2 into it is in what we call our Betterment Apps which
3 are applications like Edovo [sp?] which assists with
4 a variety of different educational and workforce-
5 related or infused lesson plans. It also is with some
6 of our religious content. We also have a central Ed
7 that are located on some of the table, or on all of
8 the tablets, rather. And essential ed is actually in
9 direct connection the New York City Public Schools.
10 It is something that we have been talking with them
11 about how we leverage and utilize that to support
12 educational services. So, yes, absolutely the
13 tablets support and technology just broadly supports
14 advancements with programs.

15 COMMISSIONER RICHARDS: And let me speak
16 to the cell and visiting. Cell doors are a priority.
17 That's around safety. We need to figure out how we
18 pull down the resources to get those doors fixed.
19 I'm looking forward to working with the City Council.
20 this administration is setting safety as a priority.
21 I'm working with our facilities management and repair
22 division to identify how many cell doors we need to
23 repair and the cost for those. And we'll be having
24 ongoing conversations about unlocking resources so we
25 can do that. That's safety number one. That's

1
2 corrections 101. As far as visits, visits are a
3 priority for me. When I was at DOC last time, we had
4 a visiting work group that was led by Osborne
5 Association. We are going to bring that group back
6 to really look at how do we enhance the visit
7 experience for families and loved ones of those who
8 are in our care. What can we do to increase the
9 amount of time people are getting visits? So, we're
10 going to be looing at that entire process, because
11 all of that lends to safety in our jails and
12 connections when people come home.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Please read our
14 report, Stan.

15 COMMISSIONER RICHARDS: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
17 Commissioner, I'm a big believer in collecting data
18 and looking at metrics to evaluate performance. When
19 it comes to the programs Department of Correction
20 offers people in custody, what data is collected and
21 how does the Department evaluate whether to continue
22 or change programs.

23 COMMISSIONER RICHARDS: I'll ask Nell to
24 start.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yeah, so we
3 collect a lot of data. I mean, we have significant
4 metrics that are on the actual engagement within the
5 program, and then there's some qualitative metrics as
6 well, but the specific metrics typically are on how
7 many people were offered the program, how many people
8 actually attended? Was there a reason why somebody
9 did not attend? And then we look at holistically
10 what's going on, specifically also we have let's say
11 a program that is occurring even if it's internal
12 where we have a counselor doing a group on a housing
13 unit and we recognize that only 10 percent of the
14 housing unit is engaging in that activity or that
15 program or that curriculum, is that for us to then
16 say maybe this curriculum isn't the right one for us
17 to be implementing. So, we are using data and are
18 equally data-driven to see how we can improve our
19 programs and what our program and participation rate
20 holistically is looking like, because as we
21 mentioned, if our goal is to increase what the
22 quality of those five hours of programs looks like,
23 that means that we need to be using data to see what
24 are people tapping into while they're in our custody.

1
2 But we do have those metrics and we maintain those
3 metrics.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
5 that. It's our understanding that during the last
6 few years the Department conducted an analysis
7 informed by the views of people in custody and staff
8 to identify which program areas were effective and
9 useful. Can you share some details about how many
10 people gave their input to inform this study or the
11 analysis and what some of the big picture takeaways
12 may have been?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COLON: Yes. So,
14 actually almost on an annual basis at this point we
15 end up doing a variety of different surveys with
16 people in custody from within the division programs.
17 So, it's driven by our team to see how are we best
18 supporting people in custody. Most of the time we
19 take a representative sample of people in custody.
20 The last survey, actually, one of the last surveys
21 that happened was with about 10 percent of the
22 population. So that's roughly about between 600 and
23 700 people in custody and us utilizing their
24 feedback, again, representative sample of both age
25 brackets and other identifying factors of like low,

1
2 medium, high classification, what housing units or
3 jails, sites, whatnot so that we're actually
4 factoring in a holistic view, and then those results
5 we end up analyzing. We have submitted internally
6 evaluations of that, and that's actually where we
7 came up with the challenge based procurements of
8 coming to the City of New York and asking for the
9 city to say help us identify what this program can
10 look like, because people in our care have said that
11 they need substance misuse services that are
12 supportive and supplemental to clinical treatment,
13 that they need additional transition planning
14 services, that they need additional trauma-informed
15 care support, and that they need supplemental
16 education. And so that is how we came with that
17 procurement and that's, you know, one example of how
18 we use this data or this information to inform our
19 practices.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you
21 for that. I'm going to pivot to the Department of
22 Probation. Commissioner, do you plan to reinstitute
23 the Court Liaison Officer position?

24 COMMISSIONER GOODWIN: Yes. But it may
25 not look like it did prior, but definitely, yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Do you have a
3 timeline?

4 COMMISSIONER GOODWIN: Our timeline would
5 be-- I would say it won't be long. I could tell you
6 within the next 60 days as we evaluate our staffing.
7 And we're looking at the courts and what courts need
8 help. So, I can talk to about the next 60 days, even
9 though I believe they already probably started doing
10 it, but next 60 days.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm going to
12 ask you a question I asked privately, but just to
13 have it on the record. Do you plan to continue to
14 require that Probation Officers carry guns and wear
15 uniforms?

16 COMMISSIONER GOODWIN: No. I do not. I
17 think that there's-- not everyone needs to carry a
18 weapon. I'm a believer that we don't need too many
19 weapons out in the community, but we need weapons in
20 specific areas of Probation, and so they are going to
21 be required to carry a firearm. But we do have other
22 areas at Probation where I don't think it's
23 necessary, and it could be on a voluntary basis. And
24 in terms of uniform, again, like I said, I'm looking
25 at that policy as well. And you know, at the meeting

2 with the Union President and I, I think we agreed on
3 a happy place, and that we're looking at business
4 attire in regular field work, and then when we have
5 events, uniform.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
7 that. In recent years, there's been a massive exodus
8 of Department of Probation staff. According to an
9 analysis conducted by Council staff during the last
10 administration, the Department of Probation lost over
11 6,000 hours of probation experience. As of last
12 year, the Department has the highest vacancy rate
13 amongst all city agencies. When staff leave the
14 Department it results in higher caseloads for the
15 people that remain. What is your plan to reduce the
16 Department of Probation's vacancy rate and help
17 address the problems of staff burnout?

18 COMMISSIONER GOODWIN: That's-- we're
19 looking at doing that. That was like our priority
20 right away. So, we have implemented where we're
21 bringing back our probation officer trainees. We're
22 working and contacting all the universities about our
23 requirements and our recruitment. We have reached
24 out and worked with DCAS in terms of advertising.
25 105 Power-- we're like really hands-on in terms of

2 getting out there and recruited. We have posted for
3 probation officers as well as probation officer
4 trainee, and right now, we have about 239 applicants
5 that we have to go through. So that's a good thing.
6 We also lowered the amount of time spent at the
7 academy so that we can get more classes in and so we
8 can have more POs and POTs coming through the agency.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
10 that. Turning back to programming. Under the former
11 administration, the Department of Probation regularly
12 changed contract terms and cancelled contracts with
13 minimal notice. Will you commit to working more
14 closely with the community providers including
15 seeking input on contract changes and holding regular
16 meetings with the contracted providers?

17 COMMISSIONER GOODWIN: Yes, I will. And
18 that's why we are-- we established in our NeON which
19 is our Neighborhood Opportunity Network stakeholder
20 groups, a lot of the providers belong to the
21 stakeholder groups, and we have project managers
22 which I plan on expanding so we can get out to the
23 community as well as myself being involved in the
24 community and with all providers.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How can the
3 Department of Probation expand programming, including
4 both intensive community monitoring in contracted
5 alternative to detention programming to reduce the
6 number of young people in detention?

7 COMMISSIONER GOODWIN: Thank you for that
8 question. We will have Deputy Commissioner Williams.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes, thank
10 you for that question. So, we're actively looking at
11 that now as we are doing-- looking into different
12 programs for ICM and other-- all of consumer [sic]
13 services. And so we are planning to expand a lot of
14 programming, because we see the needs in our
15 communities for these programs.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
17 that. And the previous Commissioner ended the
18 contract for Impact, an alternative to detention that
19 was intended to serve 175 young people annually with
20 intensive mentorship and mental health support. Will
21 you explore whether this program should be brought
22 back?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So, we're
24 currently discussing that and other programming to
25 see what best fits our continuum of services at this

2 point. So, we'll be having updates pretty soon about
3 that.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
5 I'm going to pause my questions again and allow
6 Council Member Cabán.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: One moment.
9 I'm sorry. I keep forgetting. I have to acknowledge
10 Council Member Salaam is online virtually.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you. Going
12 to shift gears a little bit. I'm wondering what
13 improvements the city can make on connecting people
14 in custody who qualify for ACT and FACT teams or IMT
15 treatment, for example, with a treatment team before
16 they're released? So, the Assertive Community
17 Treatment teams, the Forensic ACT teams and the
18 Intensive Mobile Treatment teams.

19 ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT MERRILL: Yeah,
20 sure. So, I should mention that, excuse me, the
21 Health Department manages all of those programs, but
22 CHS does submit referral through the SPOA, the single
23 point of access program, and DOHMH determines
24 eligibility, and then assigns people appropriately.

1
2 Those are based purely on clinical needs for
3 individuals with serious mental illness.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: And understood.

5 And I-- what improvements do you think could be made
6 to connect more people? Because we-- I mean, we know
7 the success of people returning home often times
8 hinges on a, you know, a really good long-term stable
9 mental health plan. Rikers continues to be the
10 largest mental health provider, and it shouldn't be.
11 those people should not be incarcerated. But what
12 can we do connect more people? What can we do about
13 the identification process? What can we do and how
14 can we be helpful in making sure that folks can be in
15 contact with and approved for a team before they're
16 released back into community?

17 ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT MERRILL: Yeah,
18 so we do consider everyone with a serious mental
19 illness for eligibility into the programs. I think
20 maybe the Health Department could speak more to, you
21 know, increasing their capacity or whatever
22 challenges they may have. I will say in terms of
23 patients with serious mental illness, they are all
24 eligible for case management services through our
25 CRAN services, which is Community Reentry Assistance

1 Network, and that's available in every borough.
2 There's also core reentry services we provide to
3 everyone, including help reactivating Medicaid,
4 connecting to community-based health services,
5 including Health + Hospitals port practices which are
6 primary care clinics at Bellevue and Kings, and they
7 provide not just primary care but also psychiatric
8 services, as well as some other programs we've stood
9 up.
10

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: But for those
12 facilities that you mentioned that are in every
13 borough requires an individual to go to that
14 facility, or is somebody meeting them?

15 ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT MERRILL: They
16 would need to go to the--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: [interposing] I
18 mean, that's a difference-maker. Some people need
19 the in-home care, and that's like the beauty of the
20 treatment teams that are able to go to the person.
21 My background in public defense, often times one of
22 the biggest barriers, because there are so many
23 needs, and you just named a lot of them, benefits,
24 housing, transportation-- the weight that is listed
25 off, and a provider being able to come to your home

2 can be like the entirety of the difference. So, I
3 just would like encourage, you know, more
4 collaboration on seeing how we can increase the use
5 of that. And then my last question, does
6 Correctional Health Service plan to continue offering
7 cell phones to people with mental health diagnoses
8 and challenges and other health concerns that are
9 released on Rikers, and has-- has that been
10 successful and should it be expanded?

11 ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT MERRILL: Yes,
12 and we actually have expanded the program. So, in
13 the summer of 2023, we established the first-ever re-
14 entry service center on Rikers. That's where
15 everyone released from custody from Rikers can drop
16 in. They can get, you know, hygiene kits. They can
17 get a snack, make a phone call, and then anyone who
18 has serious mental illness is eligible for a free
19 smart phone which is donated by T-Mobile through a
20 partnership we have with that company, and then CHS
21 provides a year-long service plan. And we've
22 expanded to anyone who is enrolled in our KEEP [sic]
23 program. So, that is anyone receiving appropriate
24 treatment program, as well as all women are also

1
2 eligible for phones now, and we've distributed since
3 launch more than 2,000 phones.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Last one. All
5 women, does that include trans women?

6 ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT MERRILL: Yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Great. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

9 I'm going to pivot to CHS. For people in custody in
10 the KEEP program to receive methadone and suboxone to
11 treat opioid use disorder, it's critical that
12 sobriety and stability they work so hard to establish
13 in custody is not lost upon their release. How does
14 CHS ensure there is continuity of care?

15 ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT MERRILL: Yes,
16 thank you. That is a key part of our opioid
17 treatment program. So, it is actually the largest
18 and oldest opioid treatment program in the country.
19 About one in four individuals on Rikers have
20 substance use opioid disorder. Not everyone would
21 choose to enroll in KEEP or be eligible for the
22 program, but it's certainly one of our highest
23 clinical needs, and a core part of that service isn't
24 just providing methadone and buprenorphine to people
25 while they're in custody, but it's also making those

1
2 connections and referrals to community-based
3 services.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
5 We've also been joined by Council Member Feliz
6 online. Another follow-up to that is does anyone
7 follow up to make sure the person actually made it to
8 the provider and entered treatment? If they did not,
9 what happens?

10 ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT MERRILL: So, we
11 always keep an open line of communication with
12 patients should they choose to contact us. We do
13 that in part through our port line which is a reentry
14 hotline that's staffed by peers. Individuals can call
15 it actually while they're in jail or after they're
16 released, but we don't track patients when they
17 leave, understanding that they have agency, and many
18 people when they leave jail they no longer want to be
19 associated or connected with their correctional
20 health provider, but that's in part why we make
21 connections with the broader Health + Hospitals
22 system. So, we certainly make every effort to
23 connect them and they can always go to the CRAN
24 centers which I mentioned earlier, or contact the
25 phone line.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What
3 improvements can be made to better connect people in
4 custody who qualify for Assertive Community
5 Treatment, Forensic ACT, or Intensive Mobile
6 Treatment with a treatment team before they are
7 released from jail.

8 ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT MERRILL: Yeah,
9 so those were the programs that Council Member Cabán
10 was referencing earlier that we do screen everyone
11 who has serious mental illness for their eligibility
12 and appropriateness for the program, and then we
13 refer. It is a DOHMH-run program. So, I think they
14 could speak better to their capacity needs or other
15 proposed changes to the program. And I should note
16 that CHS is not the only agency that makes those
17 referrals. There are many other entities that are
18 referring individuals.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
20 Moving to MOCJ. Many people with serious mental
21 illness leave Rikers while on the waiting list for
22 Intensive Mobile Treatment and/or Forensic Assertive
23 Community Team. Has MOCJ considered developing an
24 Intensive Mobile Mental Health Team specifically to
25 provide immediate services upon release until an

1 individual is able to gain access to [inaudible]
2 community groups?
3

4 DIRECTOR LOGAN: Thank you for the
5 question. Right now, MOCJ has in partnership a
6 mobile care van for the places in community that have
7 challenges with transportation. We have been looking
8 at serious mental illness population in order to
9 figure out how we better serve them. We really focus
10 on making sure we have the actual personnel that can
11 provide the care to that population, but do
12 understand that making sure that those people are
13 actually connected to those personnel is a priority.
14 And we will look into seeing what a model could look
15 like for that level of collaboration and public
16 health and being able to stand something up.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
18 Commissioner, during 2024 Criminal Justice hearing,
19 representatives from DOC testified that most
20 commissary accounts with unclaimed funds have totals
21 far below \$200. Is there a reason that the
22 Department can't be more proactive in ensuring that
23 people with small amounts remaining in their
24 commissary account have those funds provided to them
25

1
2 upon release? And this is reference, for the record,
3 for Intro 206, sponsored by Council Member Hudson.

4 COMMISSIONER RICHARDS: I'll ask our
5 General Counsel to speak to those details, but let me
6 say this, that we want to ensure that those funds are
7 returned to the people who are in our custody. And
8 we want to partner with City Council to make sure
9 that we work in partnership to achieve that. We do
10 not want that money. We shouldn't have that money.
11 It belongs to the people who are in our care. The
12 challenge is figuring out how do we get there. So,
13 we are working and want to partner with the City
14 Council to make that happen, but our General Counsel
15 can speak specifically to the question you posed.
16 Thank you.

17 GENERAL COUNSEL CONROY: Good afternoon,
18 Jim Conroy, General Counsel. You know, just echoing
19 what the Commissioner said. We don't want the money.
20 We have a desire to move this out. We do find that
21 70 percent of the people in custody have an amount
22 that's less than \$100. So, what we would look to do
23 is increase our messaging, the resources to the
24 person's in custody to understand how they could pick
25 up these funds and any other technical--

2 technological advances that we could make to support
3 that, but we do look forward to working with the
4 Council and internally and coming up with solutions.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. I
6 know I spoke about next steps already, but providers
7 have been asked to provide weekly reports on program
8 outcomes into DOP Connect. The previous
9 administration justified this action based on the
10 fact that they were moving to create a new database.
11 What is the status of DOP Connect, and are providers
12 still being asked to report weekly on program
13 outcomes?

14 COMMISSIONER GOODWIN: Thank you for that
15 question. I will hand that over to Senior Director
16 Deldreana Peterkin.

17 SENIOR DIRECTOR PETERKIN: Good
18 afternoon, and thank you for the question. So,
19 because we're still in the bean counting, that-- we
20 don't have the new system up and running that we
21 wanted to have during that administration. So, we
22 need the documents or the information from the
23 providers so we'll know in real time what information
24 that are being put into the system. A lot of them
25 don't use the system. A lot of the different

1 providers, we work-- or they-- we gather information
2 from different sources. So, it can be systems, it
3 can be spreadsheets. So, to have something on a more
4 continued basis or a more streamlined basis, we ask
5 all the providers to submit these outcomes to us on a
6 weekly basis, and it's helped us look at the data in
7 a more holistic way to see what providers are doing,
8 or faring better than others, and to capture the data
9 in real time. So, the data has been helping us and
10 it also helps the providers, because we'll know like
11 how many people are in the program, what's their
12 capacity and what we need to do to refer more clients
13 to the different programs.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
16 And under the previous administration, several
17 programs that were supporting the prevention agenda
18 were cut and others terminated such as Next Steps.
19 What will your approach to rebuild relationships with
20 providers and individuals on probation be? And on
21 Next Steps, have you analyzed determination and
22 reconsidered re-establishing that particular program
23 yet?

24 COMMISSIONER GOODWIN: I can say that
25 building relationships is very important to me and

1
2 especially with the providers. And so that's why I
3 said I will make sure that I get around-- some have
4 already connected with me and continue to connect
5 with me. Before I could reach out, they're reaching
6 out. My door has been open for bringing them in and
7 hearing, but right now I'm still like learning and
8 assessing and finding out what actually happened
9 before I can say or commit to saying I'm bringing
10 this back or this program back.

11 SENIOR DIRECTOR PETERKIN: And to just
12 piggyback off what the Commissioner is saying, in the
13 unit we have a program evaluation unit that meet with
14 the providers on a regular basis. That regular basis
15 can be weekly, biweekly or monthly, but we stay in
16 contact with all the providers regularly. So, we are
17 in constant communication with them so we can support
18 them if they have any challenges or issues with
19 programming or services. So, we're on-hand to assist
20 them with any of their needs going forward.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
22 And I'd just like to thank the panel for your
23 testimony and your endurance today, and I'm looking
24 forward to future hearings with you all. The panel
25 is dismissed. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER GOODWIN: Thank you.

3 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: The committee
5 is going to take a five-minute break, and then we'll
6 start public testimony.

7 [break]

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I now open the
9 hearing for public testimony. I remind members of
10 the public that this is a formal government
11 proceeding and that decorum shall be observed at all
12 times. As such, members of the public shall remain
13 silent at all times. The witness table is reserved
14 for people who wish to testify. No video recording
15 or photography is allowed from the witness table.
16 Further, members of the public may not present audio
17 or video recordings as testimony, but may submit
18 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant at
19 Arms for inclusion in the hearing record. If you wish
20 to speak at today's hearing, please fill out an
21 appearance card with the Sergeant at Arms and wait to
22 be recognized. When recognized, you will have two
23 minutes to speak on today's hearing topic and the
24 legislation being considered. If you have a written
25 statement or additional written testimony you wish to

1 submit for the record, please provide a copy of that
2 testimony to the Sergeant at Arms. You may also
3 email written testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov
4 within 72 hours of this hearing. Audio and video
5 recordings will not be accepted. We will now call
6 the first panel.
7

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'll call Dalvanie
9 Powell, Zachary Katznelson, Patrick Stephens, Michael
10 Klinger, and Maria Colosi.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: You may begin
12 when you're ready.

13 DALVANIE POWELL: My testimony is going
14 to take a little over two minutes, is that okay?

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I just ask
16 that you submit the rest of the testimony in writing,
17 but if you could keep it two minutes, that'll be
18 appreciated.

19 DALVANIE POWELL: I'll try to keep as
20 much as possible.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Two minutes.
22 We want to get through to everyone.

23 DALVANIE POWELL: Okay. My name is
24 Dalvanie K. Powell, and I serve as the President of
25 the United Probation Officer Association. UPOA

1
2 represents approximately 600 supervising probation
3 officers and probation officer supervisor trainee,
4 probational trainees, probation officer assistants
5 who work in the New York City Department of
6 Probation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify
7 today about the vital role probation plays preventing
8 recidivism and promoting public safety and safety in
9 our community. Probation is one of the most important
10 and often least understood components of criminal
11 justice. Every day, probation officers stand at the
12 intersection of accountability and opportunity. We
13 are peace officers trained alongside our colleagues
14 in law enforcement, authorized to make arrests and
15 carry out enforcement duties when necessary, but our
16 roles go far beyond that. We supervise individuals
17 that have been sentenced by the courts to remain in
18 community under strict conditions. We conduct
19 investigations that inform judicial decisions. We
20 monitor compliance, respond to violations, and ensure
21 court mandates are followed. At the same time, we
22 connect people to services, mental health treatment,
23 substances who use counseling, employment programs,
24 education opportunities, housing resources so they
25 can stabilize their lives and avoid further

1 involvement in the criminal justice system. In
2 short, we keep communities safe while balancing--
3 while giving people a second chance at life.
4 Research consistently shows that effective
5 supervision reduces recidivism when caseloads are
6 manageable and officers are supported with proper
7 training and resources. Probation becomes one of the
8 most cost-effective impactful public safety tool
9 available. We reduce jail populations, ease burdens
10 on cost in correctional facilities and help
11 individuals become productive members of their
12 communities. Our members are predominantly women and
13 people of color, many from various communities that
14 we serve. They understand the neighborhoods, the
15 challenges, and the systemic barriers our clients
16 face. They do this work simply-- they do this job.
17 It's not just a job, but a calling rooted in public
18 service. Probation is not soft in crime and small on
19 public safety. Unfortunately, the Department of
20 Probation has faced-- can I just do some bullets
21 [sic] real quick? Okay. Unfortunately, the
22 Department of Probation has faced significant
23 challenges in recent years that have undermined its
24 effectiveness as documented by State Comptroller. We
25

1
2 have the highest rate of attrition and over 200
3 people have left-- officers have left the Department
4 in the past year. In some assignments, officers are
5 managing caseloads that far exceed best practices
6 standards. Family Court officers carry over 40
7 cases, while adult services is carrying over 100
8 cases. When officers are overburdened they have less
9 time to fulfill visits, home checks and employer
10 contact. Individuals case planning-- they have less
11 time to build relationships that are essential to
12 change behavior. They're forced to--

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: [interposing]
14 I'm going to just ask-- sorry-- to wrap up.

15 DALVANIE POWELL: [inaudible] bullets real
16 quick. Alright, we-- so let me just do my bullets,
17 so could--

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: [interposing]
19 If you could just wrap it up. We'll get it in
20 writing.

21 DALVANIE POWELL: Yeah, I want to wrap it
22 out. Right. Let me do it. We now have an
23 opportunity to turn the page. We congratulate
24 Commissioner Sharun Goodwin on her appointment and
25 recognize that she brings decades of experience with

1 the Department. We joined the AC [sic] together in
2 1987. Upon [inaudible] works collaboratively with
3 Commissioner Goodwin, and her leadership, the team to
4 rebuilt and strengthen this department we believe the
5 following is necessary. Then I'll be finished.
6 Aggressive hiring from active service-- active civil
7 service lists and consist in academy classes,
8 meaningful retention strategies to stem attrition,
9 reasonable caseload standards aligned with evidence-
10 based practices, clear career pathway promotional
11 opportunities, investment in training, technology and
12 safe working conditions, a renewed labor of
13 management partnership grounded in mutual respect
14 with Commissioner Goodwin, and a balanced family work
15 life--

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: [interposing]

18 Thank you.

19 DALVANIE POWELL: with our members.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

21 You can submit the rest in writing.

22 DALVANIE POWELL: And the rest is
23 submitted.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Yes. And I
25 just ask that everyone adhere to the two-minute

1
2 limit, and you can submit the rest of your testimony
3 in writing. Thank you.

4 ZACHARY KATZNELSON: Hi. I'm Zachary
5 Katznelson with the Independent Rikers Commission.
6 Thanks for the chance to testify. I think what we
7 heard today was things you alluded to as well, that
8 missed opportunity after missed opportunity.
9 Unfortunately, when it comes to supportive housing or
10 when it comes to people who've hard won stability in
11 the jails in terms of drug treatment. They're not
12 getting placed. They're not getting warm handoffs.
13 And DOC actually has a good model already for reentry
14 which is the 6A program. The 6A program, everybody
15 there gets an individualized release plan to get
16 connected with housing if they need it. They get
17 connected-- everybody's connected with a community-
18 based provider, and they get transportation either to
19 that provider or to the housing. So, we know that
20 people get there. Right now, people don't even--
21 when people are-- when the drug treatment folks are
22 being released, a lot of times the community
23 providers don't even know that person is coming their
24 way, let alone, when they're going to be released.
25 There's a process right now the criminal justice

1
2 agency runs, whenever someone who's being served by
3 one of the MOCJ-funded providers get arrested, the
4 provider gets notified. Why don't we have the
5 reverse? When they're coming out of Rikers, why
6 isn't the provider notified that someone's coming,
7 and they're ready for them, or they find a way to
8 make it happen? We have these models that work. And
9 one thing that stood out was no agency is
10 coordinating any of this. Right? They're all doing
11 their little pieces here and there. Nobody's
12 responsible for actually ensuring that somebody gets
13 the support and care they need. One person that
14 could help do that at least is the Council-mandated
15 Close Rikers Czar position at City Hall. Alright,
16 last year the Council passed legislation that's
17 supposed to be a fulltime person at City Hall
18 dedicated to closing Rikers, transitioning to the
19 borough jails. This is a key piece of it. How do we
20 safely and smartly stop the over-inflation of the
21 jail population, right? We've got to stop this cycle
22 of recidivism that's happening right now, people
23 returning to Rikers over and over again who have
24 needs. That position is unfilled, and it's really
25 incumbent on City Hall to fill it, but the Council

1
2 could please push as well to try and make that
3 happen. And so I think it's a question of we need
4 some more resources like transitional housing, but
5 it's really about how we make sure people get
6 connected to what we already have today. Thank you
7 very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
9 that.

10 MICHAEL KLINGER: Good afternoon. My
11 name is Michael Klinger. I'm a Jail Services
12 Attorney with Brooklyn Defenders. Thank you to
13 committee members and Committee Chair Brooks-Powers
14 and your staff and the committee staff for organizing
15 today's hearing. Thank you also, Chair, for your
16 active engagement with BDS in the recent weeks over
17 the issues around lack of heat and other basic needs
18 on Rikers Island during this particularly cold period
19 of time. We welcome the news of the Department's \$14
20 million in new contracts for externally provided
21 programming being reinstated or re-instantiated
22 somehow to bring robust programming back into the
23 daily lives of the nearly 7,000 people that currently
24 reside on Rikers Island. I want to share just how
25 important some of this programming is or will be.

1
2 Recently, a colleague of mine received a call from a
3 former client she worked with nearly eight years ago.
4 As a teenager detained at RNDC he participated in
5 every program he could. Now in his 20s he's looking
6 for work. He's back in Brooklyn, and called to
7 request copies of the certificates that he earned
8 while he was in custody, a food handler's license,
9 food preparation certifications, automotive and
10 mechanic training, OSHA 30 completion, and
11 interpersonal skills courses. Eight years later,
12 these certificates still matter. In the short term,
13 we know that programs provide relief from the
14 difficult reality of life in custody, but so often we
15 here desire to make plans for the future and to begin
16 building a life back in the community. We hear from
17 people who see critical opportunities to engage in
18 therapeutic groups, skill-building courses, and
19 classes where they can express themselves creatively.
20 Providing excellent programs will support successful
21 reentry and at the same time increase safety and
22 security in the jails. With respect to education, we
23 are concerned about limited access to Adult Ed, GED
24 classes and other services that appear unavailable to
25 many people over 21 who would eagerly participate.

1
2 We urge the Department to expand these offerings
3 across facilities, and we also encourage expanding
4 summer school services beyond students with IEPs or
5 those already prepared to take the GED. With the
6 return of organizations like Fortune and Osborne and
7 others, there's a renewed commitment to making life
8 on Rikers Island more humane and safer for everyone.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

10 MARIA COLOSI: Good afternoon, Chair
11 Brooks-Powers and Committee. My name is Maria Colosi
12 and I'm a re-entry advocate and grant manager at New
13 York County Defender Services. We are a public
14 defender office that has represented over half a
15 million clients over the last three decades.
16 Traditionally, public defense work ends at
17 sentencing, leaving clients to drift once their trial
18 level case is closed. At NYCDS, we believe public
19 defender offices are uniquely positioned to provide
20 not only legal representation, but also consistent
21 advocacy post-conviction. Our office already knows
22 our clients. We know their needs. We know their
23 histories and their families. We know the
24 difficulties they face while incarcerated and post-
25 release after their case ends. In a year when the

1 city will be issuing a new RFP for public defense, we
2 urge the Council and Mayor to go beyond it's
3 traditional funding platform and invest in reentry
4 programs through public defender offices. This
5 funding will not only ensure that current jail
6 population is reduced to meet the city's commitment
7 to close Rikers Island, but also work to make sure
8 that it does not increase in future years.

9
10 Currently, through a three-year federal grant, NYCDS
11 has been able to charter a different approach to
12 representation. Our reentry team picks up where our
13 trial team leaves off and continues to support our
14 clients through their incarceration and in the
15 critical period in which they transition back to
16 their communities. Our team seeks to fill three
17 essential needs to our clients that other agencies
18 are not filling, continuity of care from arrest to
19 reentry, individualized reentry planning built with
20 client input, and peer support managed by persons
21 with lived experience. Our reentry team leverages
22 the knowledge of our social workers and trial
23 attorneys to start building a relationship with the
24 client as early as sentencing. While our clients are
25 incarcerated, the reentry team meets with them

2 regularly. We speak with them about their goals, get
3 to know their loved ones, create a plan with them,
4 and then we help them execute that plan as they come
5 home. We're often putting in program referrals and
6 coordinating with outside providers while our clients
7 are still incarcerated. I'm just-- just about 30 more
8 seconds. When our clients come home, a peer advocate
9 meets with them at the bus stop or in the community
10 ready with a cell phone and transportation. Our team
11 is there physically to walk through the first days
12 post-release with our clients, escort them to parole,
13 take them to programs, and to be a support to them.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Need to wrap
15 up, please.

16 MARIA COLOSI: Yes. The week our clients
17 reenter the community after being in custody is often
18 the most critical and overwhelming. Our clients are
19 relieved to have a friendly face to walk through this
20 time with them, specifically someone's who's been
21 through it themselves. We endeavor to stop the
22 cycles of incarceration, prevent future crimes and
23 parole violations, and strengthen our communities.
24 Our work is funded in no small part through a
25 generous grant from the New York City Council

1
2 Speaker's initiative for discharge planning, but New
3 York City needs to make this funding--

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: [interposing]
5 Thank you.

6 MARIA COLOSI: a fixed portion of the
7 public funds portfolio.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

9 MARIA COLOSI: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Again, I'd
11 like to remind everyone there's a two-minute limit.
12 Please adhere to it. You can submit written
13 testimony for the rest of the remarks.

14 PATRICK STEPHENS: Good morning,
15 distinguished Chair and Committee Members. My name
16 is Patrick Stephens. I'm a leadership fellow at the
17 Center for Community Alternatives, a systems-impacted
18 person who spent more than two decades in state
19 prison. I'm testifying to urge the Council to support
20 programming known to reduce recidivism, to fully
21 implement and strengthen the laws you've already
22 passed on commissary refunds, and IDNYC access for
23 people leaving city jails. With respect to the
24 evidence-based programming, New York State is known
25 to reduce recidivism by specific targeted

1 interventions. Those include employment services,
2 cognitive behavioral therapy programming, mentoring,
3 alternatives to incarceration, and specifically when
4 it comes to anti-violence programming, restorative
5 justice training and programming. Also,
6 incorporating support for formerly incarcerated
7 people who come to do this work as credible
8 messengers and who are dedicated to this work. And
9 as a quick data point-- with respect to employment
10 and cognitive behavioral therapy programming, we know
11 that according to the Pew McArthur [sp?] results that
12 about 12 percent return. Reduce-- we have a
13 reduction of 12 percent recidivism, and a return of
14 four dollars in taxpayer benefits for every dollar
15 invested in this programming. Now, concerning
16 commissary refunds, under the current administrative
17 law, DOC must help people or supposed to help people
18 get their funds that are left over in commissary.
19 That is not happening. We would ask that the Council
20 support stronger interventions to ensure that people
21 get their money on return. We know that the very
22 first couple of months are very critical when it
23 comes to reentry services, and we want to make sure
24 that people have all of their resources. Similarly,
25

2 when it comes to the identification, this is really
3 critically important. People cannot access bank
4 accounts. Other resources get transferred to other
5 resources if they do not have proper identification.
6 There's no reason that our docs cannot ensure that
7 people leave facilities with their money.
8 Connections to programming and the data--
9 identification that they need. Thank you, Chair. I
10 will submit the rest of my testimony in writing.
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you so
13 much. This panel is dismissed.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I'll call the
15 next panel. Megan Marcelin, Michael Rock, Nadia
16 Chait, Roslyn Morrison, and Kelsi Burgess.

17 MEGAN MARCELIN: Good afternoon. My name
18 is Megan French Marcelin. Today, I testify on behalf
19 of the Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry
20 Coalition. We are a network of 12 community-based
21 organizations who collectively serve more than 40,000
22 justice-involved New Yorkers each year. As you have
23 heard today, behavioral health conditions are not
24 peripheral at Rikers. They characterize the majority
25 of the jail population. Jail is not designed to, nor

1 should it be a place to treat any health disorder.
2 It de-stabilizes, decompensates, and adds trauma in
3 the place of care. In that way, reentry services
4 become even more critical. When providers are able
5 to offer reentry services to people leaving
6 incarceration, especially when those providers are
7 doing those connections on Rikers, individuals can
8 access sustained mental health, substance use
9 treatment, medication management, housing placement,
10 and coordinated case management, but this requires
11 providers to be allowed on Rikers in order to ensure
12 a continuum of care and have the flexibility to
13 create discharge planning that includes warm hand-
14 offs. It also requires the city to resource
15 providers to ensure that they can hire and sustain
16 clinical staff. City contracts are significantly
17 depressed salaries for clinical staff, so we simply
18 cannot compete with the private market. We're also
19 facing \$3.3 million in cuts this year. This is true
20 even as evidence demonstrates quite clearly that
21 community health interventions reduce recidivism and
22 improve outcomes. The Council must prioritize
23 sustained funding for service providers, ensure
24 active Medicaid enrollment and care continuity before
25

2 release, and advance cross-agency funding strategies
3 that treat reentry as a long-term investment. Thank
4 you so much.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

6 NADIA CHAIT: Good afternoon. I'm Nadia
7 Chait. I'm the Senior Director of Policy and Advocacy
8 at CASES. CASES serves over 12,000 New Yorkers
9 annually guided by our core belief that public safety
10 comes from investing in people's potential, not their
11 punishment. Mental illness, poverty and homelessness
12 are conditions that must be treated with holistic
13 support, not crimes. When we think about reentry
14 programming, we often think of it as a discrete
15 moment in time, but the reality of our client's lives
16 is much more complex. Our clients often experience
17 reentry at the same time that they are experiencing
18 an alternative to incarceration. They are reentering
19 our community from Rikers while also avoiding a state
20 prison sentence. And when we have flexible funding
21 that allows us to serve people across the continuum
22 of their interactions with the legal service system,
23 our success is immense. Nathaniel Act which is one
24 of our hallmark programs. It's an alternative to
25 incarceration that provides an intensive mental

1 health treatment team that meets with our
2 participants in the community, but also is funded to
3 do court coordination, to work with folks on Rikers,
4 to work with folks who are at state psychiatric
5 facilities receiving competency restoration as their
6 case proceeds. And with the robust support that that
7 program is able to provide, we find that 94 percent
8 of our participants had no new felony convictions in
9 the two years after they completed the program, and
10 we see a 70 percent decrease in homelessness over the
11 course of individuals' time with us, and a 50 percent
12 decrease in psychiatric hospitalization. In addition
13 to those big metrics, we also see the reality of
14 people's lives being transformed as they're able to
15 connect with their family members and with their
16 friends in the community and build the networks of
17 support that come not just from the clinical and peer
18 support that we provide, but that come from truly
19 being supported by their community, and we urge the
20 council to ensure flexible funding so that across all
21 of our programs we're able to meet our clients across
22 their interaction with the legal system.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

2 KELSI BURGESS: Good afternoon. My name
3 is Kelsi Burgess, Development Manager with Getting
4 Out and Staying Out. At Getting Out and Staying Out,
5 we work directly with 16 to 24-year-old young people
6 who are incarcerated in Rikers Island in juvenile
7 facilities, people in the community who have been
8 directly impacted by the criminal justice system, and
9 those who are at risk. We focus on developing
10 strategies that empower them to reintegrate
11 successfully, overcome barriers and ultimately build
12 a future free of incarceration. In 2025, GOSO's Cure
13 Violence program saved 215 violence interruptions,
14 121 mediations, held 36 events, and connected 41
15 participants to go GOSO's supportive services. This
16 work combined with GOSO's community-based education,
17 mental health, job readiness, and paid internship
18 program has reduced violence and led to better
19 outcomes for the young people we serve. Our GOSO's
20 Works program connects participants to city-
21 subsidized internships to employment opportunities
22 with 50 businesses in New York City at no cost to the
23 employer for the first 240 hours of work. Many
24 participants are hired fulltime and after-- fulltime
25 after the internship program. In GOSO's community

2 program, 93 of the young people we support do not
3 return to jail. GOSO responded to increased needs we
4 saw from court-involved youth for treatment of
5 anxiety, depression, and PTSD by opening an in-house
6 mental health clinic and in partnership with the
7 Child Center that provides robust services including
8 psychiatric care which is in high demand. Research
9 has shown that having education, stable employment,
10 mental health services can dramatically increase an
11 individual's likelihood to reoffend. We are very
12 thankful to the City Council, DYCD, and HRA for
13 funding these programs, but mental health care for
14 justice-involved individuals and adult literacy are
15 chronically underfunded. In order to ensure the
16 future and safety of our city, we need to make sure
17 that antiviolence resources, education, employment,
18 and mental health care are available to more of our
19 young people. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

21 MICHAEL ROCK: Good afternoon. My name
22 is Michael Rock. I represent-- we good? Okay. Good
23 afternoon. My name is Michael Rock. I represent
24 workforce and reentry at Bronx Connect which is also
25 Urban Youth Alliance International Incorporated. We

1 service justice-impacted New Yorkers which includes
2 people returning from incarceration, on probation or
3 parole, recently arrested in the last five years. I
4 work begins before release. We build transition
5 plans inside Rikers Island, secure identification,
6 map training pathways, and schedule appointments so
7 individuals come home with structure, not
8 uncertainty. So we also maintain a presence at
9 probation offices to ensure immediate connection
10 during those first critical days. So, over the past
11 three years, you know, we've had 357 individuals
12 complete programming and/or receive sponsorship with
13 134 placed in paid internships, and 137 who've
14 secured fulltime and permanent employment. But we
15 don't just provide like jobs, we stabilize lives.
16 So, we provide cognitive behavioral therapy, career
17 readiness training, financial literacy, sponsor
18 certifications like CDL, OSHA, EMT, and health care
19 pathways, but we focus on removing barriers such as
20 transportation costs, court obligations, and document
21 issues. But because employment without stability is
22 not opportunity, it's risk-- so I also stand before
23 you as someone who served 16 consecutive years in
24 prison. June 4th of 2024 marked the point of my
25

1
2 release. So, I know firsthand that those first 72
3 hours after release can determine someone's
4 trajectory. So, freedom is something that's
5 extremely powerful, but it also fragile. So, today,
6 what we are presenting is, you know, this idea, this
7 need, this urgency that expanded funding for
8 certifications and credentials is extremely
9 important. Flexible emergency funds for
10 stabilization such as ID, transportation, as well as
11 work gear, and incentives-- increased incentives for
12 employers willing to hire justice-impacted New
13 Yorkers. So, these are small investments that
14 prevent far greater cause. Workforce and reentry
15 funding is not like a charity. It's public safety
16 and economic strategy. That's it.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
18 Panel is dismissed. Thank you all for your
19 testimony.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
21 testimony. The next panel, when you hear your name,
22 please step up: Darren Mack, Jennifer Parish,
23 Eduardo Rodriguez, Brian Carmichael, and Victor
24 Herrera. You may begin when you're ready.

DARREN MACK: Good afternoon, Chair

Brooks-Powers and Committee Members. We are grateful to the Council for holding this hearing today. My name is Darren Mack, and I'm the Co-Director of Freedom Agenda. I'm a survivor of Rikers and our members are people who have experienced Rikers, either while detained there or visiting loved ones. We also coordinate the Campaign to Close Rikers, and we are so glad to have a Commissioner who is committed to getting it done. We are relieved to know that outside program providers are finally returning to Rikers Island. We believe that programs should be further expanded in the future. Expanding access to programs is not just about funding them, it's also about removing barriers. People who could benefit the most from programming are sometimes prevented from accessing it either because they are kept in isolation in violation of Local Law 42, or because they are assigned some security status by DOC that excludes them. Those designations are made by DOC with no meaningful way to challenge them. Since DOC staff run the disciplinary hearings at Rikers, and incarcerated people often have no representation. In addition to programs, having proper identification

1 and access to commissary funds will support our
2 neighbors returning home from Rikers. We support
3 T2026-1254 and Intro 246 and thank the Public
4 Advocate Williams and Council Member Hudson for
5 introducing them. We recommend a slight amendment to
6 T2026-1254 to include people facing misdemeanor
7 charges. Due to bail reform rollbacks and aggressive
8 NYPD enforcement tactics, the number of people held
9 at Rikers facing misdemeanor charges has grown.
10 While we hope to see this number reduced soon, we
11 don't believe there's good reason to exclude people
12 who are detained on misdemeanor charges. We also
13 recommend some slight amendments to strengthen Intro
14 246 and further expand accessibility to reclaim
15 commissary funds. In addition to the option to
16 receive a check, people released from DOC custody
17 should have the option to receive their commissary
18 funds on a pre-loaded debit card.

19
20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Your time has expired.

21 DARREN MACK: And I will be submitting my
22 testimony, the full remainder of my testimony
23 electronically.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
25

1
2 BRIAN CARMICHAEL: Good afternoon. My
3 name is Brian Carmichael. I'm a member of Freedom
4 Agenda and a community organizer and health worker.
5 I also have a history-- I spent more than half my
6 life incarcerated, primarily dealing with drug
7 addiction issues and a temper, and nothing worked. I
8 tried every program. Until I found Rikers Debate
9 Project on Rikers Island-- I don't have authority to
10 speak for them, but I'm advocating for the concept of
11 self-help programs. Programs like Alcoholics
12 Anonymous, Crystal Meth Anonymous, NA, on and on,
13 don't cost the state anything. There's, like,
14 endless supply of volunteers ready to go in there and
15 have meetings and provide services. It doesn't cost
16 the state anything. But programs like Rikers Debate
17 and NA and AA are the first ones to get cut when
18 there's any reason, short staffing-- they can come up
19 with any excuse, and those are the ones that get shut
20 down. From Rikers Island, when you go to the yard,
21 you can see New York City, you know? and you can see
22 the airplanes taking off and landing, and it's very
23 clear-- it's a very clear that New York City and the
24 world has moved on without you and nobody cares.
25 That's the feeling it is in there. And there's so

1
2 many things that the City Council can do to make it
3 clear, like, these programs are important to us, and
4 they must be, you know, protected. And again, they
5 don't cost the state anything, but after, you know,
6 60 years of being in trouble, when I've found
7 programs like Rikers Debate and AA and joined Freedom
8 Agenda, I'm happy to say I'm off parole. Now, I
9 train staff in supportive housing on harm reduction
10 techniques, and I don't have a temper. But those
11 first steps are all important, and you guys can do a
12 lot to show that you, you know, demand them. Thanks
13 for letting me testify.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
15 that.

16 EDUARDO RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon,
17 Chair, Committee Members. My name is Eduardo
18 Rodriguez. I'm a member of Freedom Agenda, the
19 Campaign to Close Rikers Island. I'm also here
20 testifying as an acting house manager at Risewell
21 [sic] Community Care, one of our scatter site
22 supportive housing programs located in District 31. I
23 reintegrated from prison last year in March, and the
24 truth about my experience is the observation that the
25 supportive housing programs aren't functioning as

1 they could be. One of the reasons why is because the
2 lack of adherence to the tier system one, two, and
3 three that is usually used to screen individuals as
4 candidates for the supportive housing programs are
5 not being adhered to. This is important to
6 acknowledge because the level of functionality is
7 what qualifies individuals for these type of
8 supportive housing programs, and if you have people
9 who are less functioning than others, then that
10 causes disruption in the treatment that is being
11 provided to individuals at a level in which I am
12 presently being-- I am presently residing at. For
13 example, this is an independent living center where
14 individuals might be college-ready, employment-ready,
15 vocational-ready. They work hard towards learning how
16 to cope with whatever has led up to their
17 incarceration, and then there are people who are at
18 level two or level one low-functioning. They're not
19 able to acknowledge and comprehend the issues that
20 led out to their incarceration. Some people are just
21 not ready to get it together. And that disrupts the
22 process. That interferes. I have a personal
23 testimony where I had to deal with someone who was
24 delusional as a live-in, pull out a knife on me a
25

1 couple of weeks ago. I'll be submitting the rest of
2 my testimony, and you'll certainly be hearing from
3 me. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

5 JENNIFER PARISH: Good afternoon. My
6 name is Jennifer Parish. I work at the Urban Justice
7 Center Mental Health Project and I'm a member of the
8 Jails Action Coalition and the Halt Solitary
9 Campaign. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.
10 There are two issues that I want to highlight and ask
11 for the Council to support. The first relates to
12 ending the torture of solitary confinement at Rikers.
13 Providing alternative therapeutic programming is
14 essential for transforming the culture at Rikers, but
15 it's particularly important for the successful
16 implementation of Local Law 42 which was passed by
17 the Council. It's not yet been implemented, but we
18 hope that this administration is moving forward in
19 doing so. Local Law 42 prohibits the use of solitary
20 confinement, other than de-escalation confinement for
21 a maximum of four hours. And while the harms of
22 solitary and the needs to restrict its use are often
23 the focus of discussion about these reforms, these
24 laws do not simply take away the Department's power
25

1 to inflict harmful, dehumanizing isolation upon
2 people in custody. They also require an alternative
3 response, namely the creation of units in which
4 behavior change is accomplished through meaningful
5 engagement, and the provision of quality programming
6 in these units is essential. We urge the council to
7 support the Department and strengthening programming
8 across the board, in particularly and successfully
9 ending the use of solitary confinements in the jails.
10 We've urged the Department to bring in outside
11 experts with experienced designing and implementing
12 effective programming. This is feasible and it needs
13 to be prioritized. The other issue I want to
14 highlight is related to ensuring that programming,
15 reentry services, ATIs, community services for the
16 jail population meet the needs of that population
17 comprehensively. We know that 60 percent of the jail
18 population requires mental health treatment and
19 greater than 20 percent are diagnosed with serious
20 mental illness. And that means that the funding that
21 MOCJ provides for ATIs, the programming the DOC
22 offers needs to meet the needs of that population
23 comprehensively. And I'll submit our testimony.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

1
2 VICTOR HERRERA: My name is Victor
3 Herrera. Oh, I'm sorry. Hi. Good afternoon. My name
4 is Victor Herrera, a lived-experience expertise
5 community leader member. I wear a wide variety of
6 hats related to the community at risk. Freedom
7 Agenda Treatment [inaudible] to name a few. Namely
8 people experiencing emotional crisis and recidivism
9 resulting from mistaken often criminalization of the
10 behavioral health concerns that is further
11 exacerbated by pretrial detention and incarceration.
12 The resources as it relates requires the community to
13 do more to prevent people with mental health crisis
14 concerns to be treated rather than criminalized,
15 providing more intense mobile treatment outreach and
16 assuring that appropriate lived experience, lived
17 expertise is strongly enumerated in the IMT proposal
18 to this committee. Many of the individuals at risk
19 lack appropriate medication management and assistance
20 and resort to self-medicating behavior leading to
21 further downward spiral to depression and anxiety.
22 The brutality of detention requires more on the
23 appropriate discharge planning which New York City
24 Department of Correction needs to recognize. In
25 terms of pre-trial detention requires more oversight

1
2 to ensuring individuals are provided with reentry
3 services. Reentry services that I suggest would be
4 similar to the planning discharge that New York City
5 Health + Hospitals Corporation incorporates when an
6 individual is discharged from the hospital. I'm just
7 suggesting that DOC should follow and kind of
8 discharging responsibility of DOC in terms of
9 discharge and reentry. Currently, today, I fear for
10 my brother who's held in Rikers Island who
11 experiences intense mental health concerns. Luckily
12 that he was given time served, and he's being
13 discharged. He'll be staying with me. But my
14 brother is prime example of the experiences and the
15 lack of resources that are coming out of Rikers
16 Island, okay? And in terms of the commissary, that
17 was something that disgust me, because I just left
18 money, okay. And I was thinking, well, he only spent
19 a portion of it. How's he going to get that, okay?
20 and the discharge plan should include a debit card to
21 be included in the discharge. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you so
23 much. Thank you all for your testimony, and the
24 panel is dismissed.

25

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
3 testimony. I'll call the next panel. I apologize in
4 advance for the name abbreviations. Don't want to
5 butcher your name. When you hear your name, please
6 step up. Damieone Riviere, Carlos Jones, Uzoma O., Y
7 Jennings, and Harry G. When you're ready, you may
8 begin your testimony.

9 DAMIEONE RIVIERE: Good afternoon. My
10 name is Damieone Riviere. I work at Center for
11 Community Alternatives. I'm currently the Director of
12 Youth Organizing, and I pretty much came here to
13 speak about the issue of recidivism amongst the youth
14 and the area where we support which is Brownsville,
15 Brooklyn and youth throughout New York City in
16 general. So, I feel that one of the main issues with
17 the recidivism is that we need more trauma and mental
18 health awareness for the youth. Currently, I focus
19 on a lot of restorative justice work, and I have seen
20 the change with the youth that I work with in
21 Brownsville. I take my youth and do like community
22 mapping, community benefit projects and so forth, and
23 we noticed that once the youth has an interest in
24 their community and interest in a certain issue, they
25 tend to lean towards more positive change. Also, I

1
2 feel that we need more pro-socials for our youth.
3 Growing up in New York City, it was always boys and
4 girls clubs, PAL, YMCA, so forth, and now the youth
5 have no real outlet for their free time. They tend
6 to engage in more activities that they shouldn't be
7 engaging in. So, I know that to combat the
8 recidivism. If youth have more time to idolize their
9 time in a more constructive way and manner, it has
10 shown that these youth would try to change, would try
11 to do better. I'm not only just speaking on that
12 experience working in Brownsville, but I-- prior to
13 working there, I worked as a aftercare worker with
14 incarcerated youth. So, I know pro-socials and
15 keeping them engaged and being active with them does
16 help with change, does help with their
17 rehabilitation. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

19 UZOMA ORCHINGWA: My name is Zo, and I'm
20 the Cofounder of Emerge Career. Thank you so much
21 for the opportunity to testify today, Chairman. I'm
22 here to talk about something I believe in profoundly,
23 that unemployment-- that employment is the most
24 powerful tool we have to break cycles of
25 incarceration and build safer communities. A wealth

1
2 of research confirms that formerly incarcerated
3 individuals who maintain employment for just one year
4 post-release recidivated only 16 percent compared to
5 52 percent for those who are unemployed. The problem
6 is access. Six of the 10 people who are released
7 from prison are still jobless four years later. When
8 we fail to connect people to work, we fail our
9 communities. That's why our partnership with the
10 Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice through the
11 program Next Mile [sic] NYC has been so
12 transformative. At Emerge we're using technology to
13 solve a critical problem, the fragmentation of the
14 reentry system and the inefficiencies that are
15 setting up people to fail. Our model leverages
16 automation and software to unify what historically
17 has been a broken process, from recruitment to career
18 assessment, hybrid vocational training, job
19 placement, and retention. We meet incarcerated and
20 formerly-incarcerated people where they're at using
21 technology to deliver personalized coaching, track
22 progress in real time and connect participants
23 directly with employers who desperately need them.
24 This program currently provides free CDL training and
25 soon other vocations to justice-involved New Yorkers

1
2 inside and outside of Rikers, connecting them to
3 careers in industries facing over 6,000 driver
4 shortages nationwide. The results speak for
5 themselves. Our graduates are earning an average of
6 \$80,000, with some earning over \$120,000. We've
7 achieved a near perfect credential attainment rate
8 for those who complete training, and 100 percent of
9 our graduates have received job offers within six
10 months. I urge the Council to continue supporting
11 reentry workforce development programs like Next Mile
12 [sic] NYC. Thank you so much.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

14 Y. JENNINGS: Hello. My name is Ms.
15 Jennings. I don't have anything written down, because
16 I'm nauseous, I'm dizzy, and I'm working on my third
17 heart attack, and that's not a game or a joke. I
18 reached out to your honorable [inaudible]-- I reached
19 out to the honorable Ms. Gale when she was the
20 Manhattan Borough President. I saw her at CCRB.
21 They don't handle stalking. And I asked her
22 something she didn't really have an answer because
23 she couldn't answer. She said, you think. I knew it
24 was always a police issue, because it's drug-related.
25 I don't do drugs. Start of this talking is May 11,

1
2 2006. When I asked the police and the FBI in the
3 fall of 2006--

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: [interposing]
5 Sorry, I'm just going to ask that you speak on the
6 legislation heard today or the hearing topic.

7 Y. JENNINGS: No, it's on the stalking
8 issue, and I sat down here, and I just watched and I
9 saw enough of what I need to see. As I said, I could
10 feel something. I turn around and I see the
11 creeping. You have cameras in here.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I ask that
13 you keep your remarks to today's topic or the
14 legislation that we're hearing today, please.

15 Y. JENNINGS: I came to speak on
16 something else. It's a stalking issue. But I--

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: [interposing]
18 So, this is not the proper form for that. you need
19 to keep it on the topic of today's hearing which is
20 focused on programming to prevent recidivism and
21 promote--

22 Y. JENNINGS: [interposing] Well, I'm into
23 that. I mean, who wants recidivism? We don't want any
24 of that. I just wish all of them who were stalking
25 me would stop, and I'm looking at the room, and I

1
2 love the cameras. So, I'm going to end it now, and
3 I'm going to say-- it was Tuesday. A dozen letters
4 were sent to the Whitehouse, 5,000+ have gone in
5 regard to the stalking, and every bus and train
6 cameras seen it. and I did try to reach out to you
7 before about it.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

9 Y. JENNINGS: Thank you. Have a good
10 day.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: You too. The
12 panel is dismissed. For virtual panelists, we will
13 be calling individuals one-by-one to testify. Once
14 your name is called, a member of our staff will
15 unmute you and the Sergeant at Arms will se the timer
16 and give you the go ahead to begin. Please wait for
17 the Sergeant to announce that you may begin before
18 delivering your testimony. Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Recognizing on Zoom
20 Glen Bolofsky. When you're ready, please unmute, and
21 you may begin.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

23 GLEN BOLOFSKY: Thank you. Good
24 afternoon. I was unmuting. Thank you, Madam Chair.
25 Nice to see you here today holding court as we are so

1 well as you have in the past in Transportation and
2 Infrastructure. The resounding theme today is we
3 need money, money for funding for programs, money for
4 simple things like giving individuals who've served
5 their time, the money they have still in the
6 cafeteria, their few pennies that they have. We
7 can't even get it to them. What a messed up system
8 we're living with. So, the core line, the thread is
9 money, money, money, and the Chair and many of the
10 Council Members know there's money we can have, money
11 we're fighting to get, the Chair's fighting to get
12 under a former bill 1141-2018, and we're seeking to
13 renew that. We've passed around material for New
14 York State VTL 1809A. It says \$15 of every parking
15 ticket is supposed to come to the criminal justice
16 funds for local criminal justice programs. There's
17 literally over \$100 million sitting there not
18 collected by the DOF for companies like Amazon, Fed-
19 Ex, UPS, or in their stipulating [inaudible] program.
20 The money is there. Let's get it. Let's help our
21 communities and our people and our prison guards who
22 are trying to stay safe. We want them coming home
23 safe every night and day, too. Thank you so much for
24
25

2 the opportunity to be here with you guys today. I
3 really appreciate it.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thanks, Glen.
5 Great to see you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Recognizing next
7 person on Zoom, Brandon Lloyd. When you're ready to
8 begin, you may unmute.

9 BRANDON LLOYD: Thank you. Good
10 afternoon, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the
11 Committee on Criminal Justice. Thank you for the
12 opportunity to testify today. My name is Brandon
13 Lloyd and I am the Director of Government Affairs for
14 the Urban Resource Institute which is the largest
15 provider of domestic violence shelter services in the
16 nation and a leading provider of transitional housing
17 and community-based services for families across New
18 York City. Every day we create pathways to safety,
19 accountability, stability and healing for survivors
20 of domestic violence and families in crisis. URI
21 operates a nationally-recognized Abusive Partner
22 Intervention Program also known as APIP. That is a
23 trauma-informed accountability driven and focused on
24 long term behavior change. Our unique model
25 addresses the root causes of abusive behavior by

1 combining evidence-based group intervention,
2 individualized case management, mental health
3 support, and connections to housing, employment and
4 other stabilizing services. This comprehensive
5 approach not only promoted individual transformation,
6 but also strengthens public health and safety by
7 reducing the likelihood of future harm. An
8 independent evaluation conducted by the Urban
9 Institute found strong evidence that URI's trauma
10 informed APIP model is effective in reducing
11 recidivism and improving participant outcomes.
12 Participants demonstrated significant reductions in
13 re-arrest rates compared to similar individuals who
14 did not receive these services. While the evaluation
15 also found meaningful improvements in attitude
16 related to accountability, responsibility, and the
17 use of violence in addition to reduction in trauma
18 symptoms and increased engagement with supportive
19 services. These findings underscore that when
20 individuals are provided with structured
21 accountability alongside trauma-informed care and
22 stabilization supports, they are more likely to
23 change behavior and less likely to return to the
24 criminal legal system. Programs like URI's APIP are a
25

2 critical public safety strategy. Domestic violence
3 is a leading driver of justice system involvement--

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Time is
5 expired.

6 BRANDON LLOYD: Thank you. I'll be
7 submitting the rest of my testimony electronically.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
9 your testimony.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
11 testimony. Seeing nobody else on Zoom, that
12 concludes the Zoom portion of the public testimony.
13 If you are here for in-person testimony and have not
14 testified, but wish to testify, please sign up in the
15 back with the Sergeant. Seeing no one, that
16 concludes public testimony.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: With that, we
18 thank everyone who took part in today's hearing and
19 testimony, whether in-person, virtually, or in
20 writing, and with that, this hearing is now
21 concluded.

22 [gavel]

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COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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 March 2, 2026