

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

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February 27, 2012
Start: 1:17 p.m.
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HELD AT: 250 Broadway
Committee Room, 14th Floor.

B E F O R E:
JULISSA FERRERAS
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Margaret S. Chin
Annabel Palma
Ruben Wills
Daniel Dromm
Elizabeth S. Crowley

A P P E A R A N C E S

Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.
Staten Island District Attorney

Wanda Lucibello
Brooklyn District Attorney's Office

Silda Palerm
Executive Vice President and Legal Director
Legal Momentum

Lynn Schafran
Senior Vice President
Legal Momentum

Bitta Mostofi
Staff Attorney
Safe Horizon

Emma Hansen
Sanctuary for Families

Anna Ognibene
Committee on Domestic Violence
New York City Bar Association

Nanette Schorr
Family Law Unit Supervisor, Bronx
Legal Services for New York City

Brian Dworkin
Family Law Unit Supervisor, Queens
Legal Services for New York City

Mary Haviland
Executive Director
New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault

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

Sharene Roig
Educator
Connect

Mercedes Matias
Legal Advocate
Connect

Chai Jindasurat
Coordinator, National Coalition of Anti-Violence
Programs
New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project

Marguerite D. Cordice
Holistic Local Advocacy Center of Queens

Reshmi Sengupta
Domestic Violence Program Advocate
Sakhi for South Asian Women

Rosita Romero
Executive Director
Dominican Women's Development Center

Karina Aybar-Jacobs
Director, Anti Domestic Violence Program
Dominican Women's Development Center

Bobbie Sackman
Director of Public Policy
Council of Senior Centers and Services

Jin Kim

Yinghua Yue

Jugba Santi

Attia Nawaz

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Good

afternoon. I'd like to thank you all for being here today. My name is Council Member Julissa Ferreras, and I Chair the Women's Issues Committee here in the Council. I'd like to thank my colleagues and Council Member Dromm, Chair of the Committee on Immigration, for co-sponsoring Resolution 1064-A, calling upon the United States Congress to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, also known as VAWA. In 2010 our two committees held a hearing on VAWA's impact on services for immigrant women in New York City. At that time we heard from many groups and providers about how critical VAWA legislation and funding is to their ability to provide services to immigrant women who have often had unique needs. We also heard from victims about the obstacles and violence they bravely confronted and the life changing services they received. VAWA, first signed into law in 1994, was a groundbreaking legislative package that for the first time focused on many aspects of violence against women. VAWA sought to address and remedy the unique and complex issues of and associated with domestic

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2 violence and sexual assault. VAWA required a
3 coordinated community response and that approach
4 yields positive results. In other words, VAWA
5 changed everything. As time went on and as we
6 learned more, changes have been made to broaden
7 and improve its scope. VAWA has been reauthorized
8 twice since its creation. VAWA 2000 and VAWA 2005
9 both reauthorized grant programs created by the
10 original VAWA, and also expanded the initial
11 mandate and broadened the communities it served.
12 Currently it is again under consideration for
13 reauthorization. It actually expired already in
14 2011. Resolution number 1064-A, which will be
15 heard at today's hearing, was introduced--not an A
16 version yet. Resolution number 1064, which will
17 be heard at today's hearing, was introduced in the
18 City Council on October 5th, 2011. Since that
19 time, Senate Bill 1925, the Violence Against Women
20 Reauthorization Act of 2011 was introduced and
21 then passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee
22 on February 2nd, of 2012. It says 20102.
23 However, the full Senate has yet to approve the
24 legislation and action has been taken in the House
25 of Representative. VAWA needs to be once again

1 reauthorized. It needs to expand upon its
2 accomplishments and we need to move forward. As a
3 woman, an elected official, and Chair of the
4 Women's Issues Committee, I feel it is my
5 responsibility to say that I am appalled at the
6 political tone taken in addressing such an
7 important piece of legislation. We cannot allow
8 politics to turn back the clock on the advances
9 made through years of hard work and education.
10 Women's lives are at stake, children's safety at
11 risk. Entire communities are in need. This is
12 not a game and it is not something to use for
13 political gain. VAWA must be reauthorized to
14 continue saving lives, assisting victims in need,
15 and aiding law enforcement towards eradicating
16 acts of violence against women. Today we're
17 hearing testimony about VAWA's history along with
18 an update on what the current reauthorization
19 contains. We will hear from victims service
20 providers and law enforcement about how this
21 important legislation impacts us here in New York
22 City. I'd like to thank you all again for your
23 attendance as well as attention to this issue, and
24 thank you to the Committee Staff for their hard
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2 work on this Committee. We are joined today by
3 Council Member Annabel Palma, and Council Member
4 Dromm, who will also share some opening
5 statements. Thank you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you,
7 Madam Chair. The reauthorization of the Violence
8 Against Women Act should not be controversial.
9 Addressing the endemic crisis of gender-based
10 violence seems like a no-brainer. After all, the
11 initial passage of VAWA in 1994, and
12 reauthorization in 2000 and 2005 were bipartisan
13 efforts. But that was during the gloriously non-
14 partisan and cooperative Clinton and Bush years.
15 In all seriousness, the number of lives impacted
16 by gender-based violence is staggering. If
17 anything, we have to continue at all levels of
18 government to dedicate our resources to tackling
19 this problem. Apparently some republicans on the
20 senate judiciary committee disagree with this
21 assessment. Earlier this month, VAWA moved
22 forward without their support. Yes, sadly the
23 lives of women are expendable in the view of some
24 of our fellow legislators. Today we will hear
25 from advocates speaking on, among other issues,

1 provisions dealing specifically with lesbian, gay,
2 bisexual and transgender survivors of violence.

3 We will also hear about how VAWA has been used to
4 assist immigrants about the need to continue these
5 vital measures. Opponents of VAWA's

6 reauthorization have focused their attacks on
7 these two issues, and so it would be especially

8 helpful to gather pertinent information from our
9 esteemed witnesses. I hope this Committee will

10 consider their testimony about the LGBT and

11 immigrant related provisions, and include

12 appropriate language in the final version of this

13 bill. Finally, I want to thank Chair Ferreras for

14 her leadership on this issue, and thank you very
15 much.

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17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,

18 Council Member. And now we are--I'm very honored

19 to be able to introduce our first member of the

20 panel, and that is the Honorable Daniel Donovan,

21 Staten Island DA. Thank you for being here. That

22 mic is a little funny. You've got to press it.

23 DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.: We're

24 good? Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, for taking up

25 this important issue and for all the work and your

1 leadership in this area. I start my presentation
2 by saying that I am a 55-year-old single male, and
3 I don't say that for the women in the audience,
4 who has never been in a violent relationship. I
5 am the product of an alcoholic father who had
6 never been violent to myself or my mother. I
7 learned about domestic violence when I became the
8 District Attorney. I have the luxury every
9 morning--because the arrests in Staten Island are
10 so much smaller than the other counties--to read
11 every single arrest that happens in a 24-hour
12 period that preceded the day I'm looking at them.
13 And I put the cases in a pile. I put my
14 burglaries, my robberies, my drug cases. Every
15 single day without a doubt, the biggest pile I
16 have are domestic violence cases--and these are
17 the ones that are reported, in which an arrest was
18 made. And about 98% of my victims are women. I
19 have cases of same sex partner domestic violence,
20 where--between two men. And I have some cases
21 where the female is the aggressor and the male is
22 the victim, but 98% of my cases involve a female
23 victim. And I am shocked that on February 15th,
24 when I read the arrests that happened on
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2 Valentine's Day, how so many people celebrated
3 Valentine's Day unlike the way we did. How many
4 man thought that it was an appropriate--that it
5 was appropriate conduct to physically abuse the
6 person they were intimate with? And this crime is
7 so difficult for us to deal with because it's
8 unique to other crimes. It's the only crime in
9 which the victim lays down in a bed with the
10 person who is the perpetrator. If someone is
11 stealing my car right now, I'm not going to lay
12 down with them tonight. And it's just remarkable
13 to me how we as a society even look at this. I
14 always tell people that if you went home tonight
15 and saw someone climbing into the basement window
16 of your neighbor, you'll call 911. If you heard
17 him beating his wife you would say that's their
18 business. We've got to change this culture. And
19 with the VAWA grants that we've been able to
20 obtain in my office, through the first and second
21 reauthorizations, allowed us to do things like
22 hire people who speak 16 different languages now I
23 have on staff. I have a victims' advocate who
24 deals with our domestic violence victims. We used
25 to send victims to Housing Authority to change

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2 their housing, then if their children had to go to
3 a different school we sent them to the Department
4 of Education, and we sent them to social services
5 to get their financial support. We do it all
6 right in my office, because with this grant I was
7 able to hire a victim advocate who takes care of
8 all those things for that brave woman who finally
9 said last night that's the last time he's going to
10 hit me, and who at 1:30 in the morning grabs her
11 children with their pajamas on and leaves, and
12 then has to say where do I go now. Because even
13 their relatives sometimes say, oh, you know, she
14 has a black eye today at Thanksgiving Dinner, she
15 didn't have it yesterday and she says she fell,
16 and if she said she fell then I guess we should
17 believe her. So, we've been able to do wonderful,
18 wonderful things with the help of Violence Against
19 Women Act, and how it's helped my constituents and
20 how we've been better able to service women who
21 are in an abusive relationship. We just need to
22 be able to do it some more. So, I thank you for
23 the time just to express my sentiment about this,
24 to give you my support. My colleague, Cyrus
25 Vance, the Manhattan District Attorney, and I have

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2 both proposed a legislation to help battle
3 domestic violence because in New York City and New
4 York State, we don't have a crime of Domestic
5 Abuse. One doesn't exist. We treat a man abusing
6 his intimate partner the same as we treat a
7 barroom brawl; it's an assault in the third
8 degree. And so we've made many, many strides in
9 trying to help protect women better in our
10 communities; we just need your help to continue to
11 do that. And I commend you, because this is a
12 federal issue, and you at our City Council level
13 took this upon yourselves to advocate for our
14 victims, so I thank you. And I'll answer any
15 questions you might have, and you have a ton of
16 other people who--and if any of these women have
17 money, I still am single.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you so
19 much. You know, we're very honored in this
20 Committee and I'm sure my colleagues are, whenever
21 a District Attorney takes the time out to come and
22 testify.

23 DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.: This is
24 that important.

25 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Yeah. I

1
2 really appreciate it, and the women of New York
3 City appreciate it. And the women in Staten
4 Island are lucky to have you.

5 DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Now, I know
7 that you spoke of the new staffer that you were
8 able to hire. Were there any other resources that
9 you can speak of that were under the VAWA
10 initiative?

11 DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.: Our victim
12 advocates, we've been able to hire many victim
13 advocates who deal with all of the needs of--and
14 everybody's needs are different. And what we
15 needed to do was bring all the services in house.
16 So, we have victim advocates who help people
17 through the criminal justice process, but I needed
18 someone to help them through their lives. Their
19 lives have just changed dramatically. They had
20 the courage at some point to leave. And so, we
21 needed somebody to help them with the other
22 things. I have people on staff through the grant
23 that I was able to hire to help them through the
24 criminal justice process, help them to testify in
25 a grand jury, help them to testify if they have to

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2 testify at a trial. We have an integrated
3 domestic violence part on Staten Island, where one
4 judge hears all of that family's matters, their
5 domestic violence matters plus whatever--if
6 there's a custody battle or if there's child
7 support issues. So, we have one judge dealing
8 with all of this family's issues. So we've been
9 able to hire other victim advocates, but
10 particularly the woman that I hired, the
11 coordinator for my domestic violence services is
12 just tremendous, and she came totally out of the
13 grant.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: You know, I
15 can't go without mentioning that you are a
16 Republican.

17 DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.: I am.
18 Thank you for inviting me. See what happens when
19 you said that?

20 [laughter]

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: We're
22 powerful women here in the City Council.

23 DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.: You sure
24 are. You're about 55% of the voters.

25 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So your take

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2 and your opinion on this is greatly appreciated.
3 One of the obstacles that we've seen on this end
4 has been the Republican community.

5 DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.: In the
6 Senate.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: In the
8 Senate. What's your take? What needs to be done
9 to help move this on a federal level, if you have
10 an opinion on that?

11 DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.: As I said,
12 I think women are about 55% of the voters.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Yes, we are.

14 DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.: And
15 there's a lot of people up for reelection this
16 year, so that helps. The advocacy, I think our
17 two senators who are both Democrats, are great
18 advocates for us, particularly in this field. So
19 I think Senator Schumer and Senator Gillibrand
20 would be supportive of us. They fight constantly.
21 I was down in Washington for three days last week.
22 It's amazing they get anything done. If a
23 Republican has an idea, the Democratic Caucus is
24 against it; if the Democratic Caucus has an idea,
25 the Republican Caucus--it's just remarkable to me

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2 how stagnant and how long it takes to get
3 something done. And you guys are much more
4 effective in the City Council than they are. But
5 I do believe the continued push and advocacy--
6 they're going to cut. The Republicans don't want
7 to spend a time on anything.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Right.

9 DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.: So, they
10 are going to cut wherever they can. I think the
11 voice of the women in America will be one that
12 they will hear. Everybody has a constituency.
13 The fiscally challenged, juvenile--children
14 suffering from juvenile--everybody has a
15 constituency. The largest constituency in this
16 country is the women. So, I think they will hear
17 the voice of people like our City Council, and the
18 other committees throughout the Senate, the
19 Assembly, who advocate for women's issues. So, I
20 think this is a great, great start.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Yeah, I
22 think you make an incredible point, where this
23 isn't a political situation, it really is about
24 women and about women being protected. And if I
25 could just--and in your experience, and I know

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2 that you've seen more and more cases of domestic
3 violence and it's kind of interesting, because
4 although we don't want to see the cases, it's
5 good that we see the cases, because it means that
6 there's more women that are coming out of that
7 situation. How have you found the process of
8 helping women manage their lives afterwards?
9 Because we have a lot of organizations in the room
10 that are going to be testifying.

11 DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.: And
12 they've been great support for my victims. One of
13 the things we had to do is breaking barriers. I
14 understand some people are going to testify about
15 the violence in the immigrant communities. You
16 know, I have a large Mexican community in Staten
17 Island. They don't trust the police because where
18 they came from the police department is the most
19 corrupt organization in the country. There's a
20 language barrier, they're concerned with
21 immigration status. I took a political beating
22 when I publicly said I don't care about a victim's
23 immigration status, I will never turn somebody in
24 or talk about them--I don't even ask them what
25 their immigration status is if they're a victim of

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2 a crime if they're a witness to a crime. And we
3 went into the Spanish-speaking community with my
4 Spanish-speaking staff. And you know how we got
5 the women to come? We waited for the day laborers
6 to leave, the men to go to work, and we brought
7 diapers for their babies. And they all came for
8 the diapers, and we fed them. I don't know how
9 many came forward after that, but we got them to
10 at least appear and hear what we had to say. But
11 those thing are going to take a long, long time to
12 break down. And I think probably what's going to
13 happen at some point someone is going to be brave
14 enough to come forward, we're going to be able to
15 help them, and others will see that we mean it and
16 nothing bad happened to that woman. But the
17 ability to hire Spanish-speakers, like I said,
18 that we have people on my staff now that speak 16
19 different languages. That's been able to help us.
20 I asked my staff to imagine themselves being a
21 victim of a crime in China and not being able to
22 tell anyone what happened to them, and then you
23 saw one American where you could speak in your
24 native language. And in my business, we need a
25 lot of detail. And so we thought the only way to

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2 service the people of my community was to hire
3 people who could speak different languages. And
4 our Spanish-speakers have helped us make strides
5 in the Spanish-speaking community, particularly in
6 women's violence issues.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Well, I know
8 that there's many organizations that I'm sure are
9 very excited to hear you, and then your
10 perspective on this, and I would love to kind of
11 work and develop more outreach out in Staten
12 Island.

13 DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.: We welcome
14 it.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Yes. And
16 I'm sure you'll be getting calls. But, again, I
17 want to thank you very much for your testimony.
18 This has brought a lot of light, and always
19 hearing the legal perspective helps us help the
20 women and help our community a lot better, so I
21 thank you for your testimony today.

22 DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.: I thank
23 you for something that people would not think it
24 was a City Council issue, but you decided to take
25 it up, so thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you.

And we've been joined by Council Member Chin of the Committee and Council Member Wills. And Crowley. Oh, thank you. Council Member Crowley. And now we're going to call up the next panel. We have Wanda Lucibello from the Brooklyn DA's office, DA Hynes, who's going to testify, and Silda Palerm.

SILDA PALERM: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Oh. Thank you, sorry. From the Legal Momentum. If you can come up. Can we have them together? You can come up together, yes. I think you're both pro-VAWA.

WANDA LUCIBELLO: Yes.

SILDA PALERN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And you may begin your testimony when you're ready.

WANDA LUCIBELLO: Do you want to go?

SILDA PALERM: Sure. Chair Ferreras and Council Member Dromm, good afternoon and thank you for co-sponsoring the resolution in support of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, VAWA. Good afternoon also to

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2 the members of the Committee. I am Silda Palerm,
3 Executive Vice President and Legal Director of
4 Legal Momentum. With me this afternoon is also
5 Lynn Schafran from--Senior Vice President of Legal
6 Momentum. And we appreciate the opportunity to be
7 here and to present testimony in support of this
8 important resolution. At 42-years young and
9 located here in Manhattan, Legal Momentum, the
10 former NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, is
11 the oldest women's legal organization in the
12 country. Legal Momentum is committed to the
13 protection and expansion of economic and personal
14 security for women and girls. Although the issue
15 before us is the resolution supporting the third
16 reauthorization of VAWA, the history of both VAWA
17 and Legal Momentum's work on it predate enactment
18 of the original VAWA, which we now refer to as
19 VAWA 1. VAWA 1 was enacted in 1994 in recognition
20 of the insidious, pervasive nature of domestic
21 violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and
22 stalking. Legal momentum worked closely with then
23 Senator Joseph Biden to draft and pass VAWA
24 legislation 18 years ago, and we have continued to
25 be active with respect to both implementation of

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2 the law, and subsequent reauthorizations. We are
3 now focused on what will become VAWA 4. VAWA
4 supports comprehensive, effective, and cost-saving
5 responses to the crimes of domestic violence,
6 dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
7 Since VAWA 1 was enacted, reporting of domestic
8 violence has increased as much as 51%. All states
9 have passed laws making stalking a crime and have
10 strengthened rape laws. The number of individuals
11 killed by an intimate partner has decreased by 34%
12 for women, and 57% for men. VAWA programs
13 administered by the Departments of Justice and
14 Health and Human Services provide critical support
15 for victims and give law enforcement, prosecutors,
16 judges, the tools they need to hold offenders
17 accountable and keep the community safe. VAWA
18 must be reauthorized swiftly. And we're grateful
19 to the Council for both its interest and its
20 support. Allow me to clarify one technical matter
21 before I talk about the substance of the
22 reauthorization. Because VAWA is supposed to be
23 reauthorized every five years, the current
24 reauthorization lapsed last year. However, this
25 is true of very many federal statutes. Congress

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2 appropriated funds for the operations of the
3 Office on Violence Against Women for this fiscal
4 year, and we're currently in the midst of
5 discussions with both the Obama Administration and
6 the Congress about funding for next fiscal year,
7 fiscal year '14. We expect that OVW will continue
8 to do business as usual until the time as VAWA 4
9 will become law. In my brief time this afternoon,
10 I want to touch on three things: the current
11 posture of VAWA with regard to the timing of the
12 reauthorization, some issues addressed by the
13 bill, and the importance of the Council's
14 resolution. First, the bill and its trajectory.
15 The bill, as Chair Ferreras mentioned, was voted
16 out of the Senate Judiciary Committee in February
17 2, 2012. Atypically, but perhaps not unexpectedly
18 given that it is an election year, it was straight
19 party line vote. But outside of the judiciary
20 committee, the bill enjoys significant Republican
21 support. There is no date for a floor vote as
22 yet, but work is ongoing to amass additional co-
23 sponsors for the Senate bill. As of last Friday
24 there were 54 co-sponsors, including both senators
25 from New York. No bill has been introduced in the

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2 house at this point, though bipartisan discussions
3 are ongoing. The hope is to see the bill passed
4 by mid-to-late spring and on its way to the
5 President's desk. Second to the substance of the
6 bill, in significant measure, VAWA 4 reauthorizes
7 the current laws and grant programs, while at the
8 same time makes vitally needed improvements and
9 program consolidations. For example, some
10 programs for children and youth were consolidated.
11 I understand from your staff that both the
12 Committee and the New York advocacy community are
13 quite interested in how the bill addresses the
14 needs of the immigrant, LGBT, and later life
15 communities. It may not surprise you to know that
16 strengthening protections for immigrant survivors
17 of violence and making explicit what VAWA already
18 permits, providing services to the LGBT community,
19 were considered controversial and have come under
20 severe challenge. But our allies and our Senate
21 champions have persevered and stood strong. The
22 bill that was passed out of the Judiciary
23 Committee retains provisions making explicit that
24 LGBT survivors of violence, both men and women,
25 are eligible for services. The bill also contains

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2 provisions addressing the needs of immigrant
3 communities. These include the need for
4 additional U Visas, and ensuring the detention
5 facilities under the control of the Departments of
6 Homeland Security and Health and Human Services
7 adopt standards for preventing and punishing
8 sexual assault in those facilities. Also included
9 in the bill are robust provisions that address
10 abuse in later life, such as a requirement for
11 multi-disciplinary partnership among grantees, a
12 section that addresses violence against native and
13 Alaska native women, a strong housing section, and
14 sections addressing the needs of the campus
15 population as well as those of children and youth.
16 Finally, in a time of fiscal austerity, it is more
17 important than ever to ensure that every dollar is
18 spent wisely. VAWA 4 has new accountability
19 provisions to ensure transparency and to enable
20 both Congress and the constituents to rest assured
21 that the Department of Justice, the Department of
22 Health and Human Services, and their grantees are
23 fully accountable and adequately document the
24 expenditures of VAWA funds. Obviously I have
25 omitted much in the interest of justice. But in

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2 closing, I want to thank you for addressing this
3 important issue, and urge you to lend the weight
4 and authority of your resolution to the calls from
5 entities all around the country, advocates and
6 attorney generals, judges and law enforcement,
7 survivors and service providers, for the speedy
8 reauthorization of VAWA. Your support counts and
9 it helps. When we visit New York Delegation in
10 the House of Representatives and show them out
11 letters of support, they immediately look to see
12 who in New York has signed on. So, thank you for
13 being the champions of this vital resolution, and
14 I look forward to answering any questions.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
16 very much.

17 SILDA PALERM: My pleasure.

18 WANDA LUCIBELLO: Thank you. Good
19 afternoon and thank you for inviting me to address
20 you here today, and for your willingness and
21 commitment to focus on this very, very vital topic
22 of the reauthorization of the Violence Against
23 Women Act, and the critical funding that it
24 provides. So, I'm here today to tell you what I
25 suspect you already strongly know, and that is

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2 that VAWA has given prosecutors an expanded
3 toolbox to use within the criminal justice system.
4 Now, what do I mean by that? By the time someone
5 calls the police, you know, we're at the very top
6 of a pyramid. At the bottom of the pyramid, many,
7 many people are experiencing domestic violence and
8 not reaching out to anyone. As you go closer to
9 the top of the pyramid, that's where you begin to
10 have people who are working with advocates, so
11 they've disclosed that they're experiencing
12 domestic violence to someone else who might be in
13 a position of helping them. As you go even
14 further, maybe someone is going to as civil court
15 to get a protective order in family court. And
16 then finally at the very top is where you have
17 really the smallest percentage of people who are
18 calling the police. So, by the time a victim of
19 domestic violence is coming to a prosecutor's
20 office, we used to before the Violence Against
21 Women Act was authorized way back when, we would
22 have pretty much a prosecutor's toolbox and only a
23 prosecutor's toolbox to work with a victim of
24 abuse. What do I mean by that? The vast majority
25 of these cases are misdemeanor domestic violence

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2 cases. That's not to say that they're not serious
3 cases, because these are the most serious cases in
4 the criminal justice system. And the reason I'm
5 saying that is because when you look at homicide
6 cases from the point of the homicide backwards
7 into what, you now, led up to that situation, what
8 you find is that the vast majority of people who
9 are victims of domestic violence never ever
10 interacted with criminal justice before. When
11 they did interact with criminal justice, it was by
12 and large on those misdemeanor cases. So, what
13 that tells us is that if you're only using the
14 criminal justice toolbox in a vacuum without
15 community support and alliances, then you are only
16 able to get a small result for a victim of
17 domestic violence. And not that I mean to say a
18 conviction is not a small result, but that
19 conviction without the protection of community-
20 based advocacy and support, which is largely what
21 everyone in this room has been doing as a result
22 of getting authorization, money, and grants under
23 the Violence Against Women Act, that is in effect
24 the only way that criminal justice can be a
25 meaningful entry point. If an arrest takes place

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2 and a victim comes to the District Attorney's
3 Office, in Brooklyn for example, we have what was
4 the first VAWA-funded Family Justice Center in the
5 City of New York. That Family Justice Center
6 again, you know, as a result of having VAWA
7 partnerships that are funded--you know, not just
8 bringing people together, but you have to bring
9 people together and be able to build up their
10 capacity once they're together; and the only way
11 you do that is through funding. You can't say
12 everyone should come in, let's increase the
13 numbers, drive them up, you know, hundreds and
14 hundreds of percentage points, and then not have
15 supportive services in place. Again, with
16 funding. So that's, you know, sort of an overview
17 of what I'd like to say. But the numbers go as
18 follows, and this is just in the Brooklyn District
19 Attorney's Office. We have five victims services
20 unit, 100% funded counselors through the Violence
21 Against Women Act. We have one program
22 coordinator, also 100% funded. We have an
23 assistant district attorney, 25% funded under
24 this. We have detective investigator, half funded
25 through the Violence Against Women Act funding.

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2 But with our partner agencies, I mean the
3 important thing, which someone already said here
4 today, is the Violence Against Women Act funding
5 really put into place requirements that people
6 work together across community and government
7 lines. So, when VAWA was authorized, they
8 basically said, if you're applying to us under
9 these grants to encourage arrest programs, which
10 is the funding stream that we apply under, then
11 you must be partnering with community-based
12 organizations. And it's that very funding for
13 those partnerships, like the Jewish Community
14 House, Center for Family Life in Sunset Park,
15 Trinity Healing Center, Dwafanm working with
16 Haitian-Creole victims of domestic violence, the
17 New York Asian Women's Center, Barrier-Free
18 Justice, Tamkeen that works with Middle Eastern
19 women. Before we had Tamkeen partnering with us
20 at the Family Justice Center, it was an extremely
21 rare occurrence to see a veiled woman coming in to
22 a government building, essentially, to interact
23 with advocates and prosecutors in one place. So,
24 you know, without this kind of support, we will
25 drive people deeper into isolation, we will drive

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2 people deeper into the hidden places where they
3 are not going to get help and assistance. So, you
4 know, this becomes really, really important.
5 Brooklyn has 2.5 million people in its population.
6 A third of the New York City population of women
7 reside in Brooklyn. We prosecute the highest
8 number of domestic violence cases in the City of
9 New York, about 10,000 cases per year. It's about
10 a third of the entire inventory of criminal
11 prosecutions for domestic violence are in
12 Brooklyn. And as I said, the vast majority of
13 these cases are misdemeanor domestic violence
14 cases. So what that means is the criminal justice
15 outcome, even the highest level of prosecution
16 with the highest, you know, punishment, is going
17 to amount to a year in jail, which is by itself
18 not going to be sufficient to protect someone. It
19 is only with the community-based support that we
20 are going to push that criminal justice solution,
21 if you will, to a much deeper and higher level.
22 So, just to give you a little bit of an outlook on
23 what we have funded, what the Violence Against
24 Women Act has given us funding for, the Family
25 Justice Center, again under the grants to

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2 encourage arrest, which now has been replicated in
3 two counties besides Brooklyn, and I understand
4 will be replicated elsewhere, opened in July of
5 2005, named in memory of District Attorney Hyne's
6 mom, who was a survivor of domestic violence. So,
7 at our Brooklyn Family Justice Center, now we have
8 23 not-for-profit agencies located there. Now,
9 those agencies themselves are also in many
10 instances also the recipients of VAWA funding.
11 So, what the Violence Against Women Act has done
12 is not only provided, you know, support to, for
13 example, a prosecutor's office and its community
14 partners, but once you move in many community
15 partners into a Family Justice Center, they
16 individually are getting in many instances funding
17 as well. So, along with our funding we have
18 immigration attorneys who are co-located with us
19 at the Family Justice Center. And our immigration
20 attorneys have largely been responsible, together
21 with our prosecutors who do certifications for,
22 for example, U Visas, if a victim has been
23 helpful, is being helpful or is likely to be
24 helpful in a prosecution; that synergy between a
25 not-for-profit immigration provider and a

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2 prosecutor has resulted in us signing over 500 U
3 Visa certifications for battered women. So, that
4 becomes very, very important, again, in breaking
5 the isolation. We have a project called the Early
6 Victim Engagement Project. As many of you know,
7 when a defendant is arrested and arraigned within
8 24-hours in a criminal court in the City of New
9 York and the criminal courts in Brooklyn operate
10 almost 24-7, we end at, like, 1:00 in the morning,
11 but it's 365 days a year. Oftentimes the victim
12 is not present in court; they may have gone to a
13 hospital, they may be relocating with their
14 children. And what we've been able to do as a
15 result of Office on Violence Against Women funding
16 that went to the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic
17 Violence, and then is funneled to our office and
18 to their office with liaisons in court, to
19 actually call up victims on a, you know, Saturday
20 night at midnight to say, you have a protective
21 order, this is what that order will do for you if
22 you seek enforcement of the order, and this is
23 what the bail is. Without this funding, we would
24 not have that staff present in those court parts
25 to do that kind of outreach. So that becomes

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2 very, very, very important, and results in about
3 89% of victims actually getting notified. Our
4 Central Brooklyn Domestic Violence program, which
5 was first funded in 1998 by the Office on Violence
6 Against Women, has continuously focused on the
7 prosecution of domestic violence cases and the
8 provision of services to immigrant battered women.
9 The program has expanded now as a result of
10 further funding, to encompass all precinct areas
11 in Brooklyn, and to include the New York Asian
12 Women's Centers, Center for Family Life, Dwafanm,
13 Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst, and Trinity
14 Healing Center. And it has worked with over
15 18,000 victim, providing services in Spanish,
16 Creole, French, Russian, Chinese, Cantonese, Urdu,
17 Hindu, Punjabi, Gha, and Polish languages. Over
18 27,000 individuals have been served under this
19 particular grant, including over 1,150 trainings.
20 Our Barrier-Free Justice program, again, now this
21 is through the STOP grants, the Services Training
22 Officers and Prosecutor grant programs, which are
23 funneled to us through state government from the
24 Office on Violence Against Women. The Barrier-
25 Free justice Program has allowed us to have a

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2 special program working with victims of domestic
3 violence with disabilities. And what this program
4 has done, again, through partnerships with South-
5 Brooklyn Legal Services and Barrier-Free Living, a
6 shelter in New York City that provides shelter to
7 women with disabilities, it's allowed us to have a
8 deaf counselor work with women who are hard of
9 hearing. So, all of this would not be possible
10 without the Violence Against Women funding that we
11 receive. The Barrier-Free Justice program has
12 helped more than 2,000 people who have received
13 services. In addition, Project SHEILD has helped
14 women with domestic--with developmental
15 disabilities and intellectual disabilities, and
16 Project SAVE is the Sexual Assault Victim
17 Education program. So, you know, what are the
18 primary impacts? The primary impact has been that
19 this funding has been a catalyst for identifying
20 areas where there are gaps in services and or
21 communication in government at the community
22 level. So, for example, we are now working on
23 electronic orders of protection as opposed to
24 handwritten hand filled in orders of protection.
25 Why? Because when you bring many organizations

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2 together, working together you can identify places
3 where you really have to develop new projects and
4 new programs that will benefit everyone. Our
5 Central Brooklyn Grant has really caused greater
6 collaboration between us and community-based
7 organizations, and has brought about an increase,
8 yes, in arrests and in prosecutions, because
9 working together you can be more effective, and
10 you can raise confidence in--amongst citizens,
11 among people in the community when they know that
12 this is not just a criminal justice response, but
13 it's an all of community response. So, in
14 summary, we've made great strides, I think, in
15 recognizing domestic violence and addressing its
16 impact, but we have to continue to find ways and
17 programs that give people as many options as
18 possible to leave battering relationships. Three
19 of five counties now have a Family Justice Center,
20 and when victims are able to walk in and choose
21 from a variety of options including counseling and
22 advocacy and meeting with a prosecutor, a police
23 officer, getting career services assistance, civil
24 legal assistance, immigration assistance, housing
25 assistance, then people will be able, hopefully,

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2 to leave dangerous relationships at a much earlier
3 point in time, and that's important, because it
4 saves all of us money if people are living safely.
5 It saves money in a huge variety of ways. And the
6 simple hypothesis is, if you don't know what
7 choices are available to you then it stands to
8 reason you're going to stay in a dangerous
9 situation longer, and the longer you stay, the
10 more your danger increases, right, and then the
11 longer the kids witness the violence, then the
12 greater the chance is that their full potential in
13 society never gets realized. And then, you know,
14 altogether that makes for a much higher rate of
15 crime, because kids exposed to violence oftentimes
16 wind up in their own dangerous behaviors, either
17 being victimized or in turn victimizing someone
18 else. Every one of these programs that I've
19 mentioned to you is in jeopardy if the funding is
20 not available, to not only the Brooklyn DA's
21 office, but to everybody in this room. And thanks
22 to having a family justice center that has the
23 anti-violence project co-located in the Family
24 Justice Center. We are now seeing an average per
25 day of three or so LGBT cases, which again, if

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2 you're not building the capacity to receive
3 victims of domestic violence from the LGBT
4 community, then they're not going to come if you
5 don't have the capacity with community-based
6 support to work with them. So, that's why I
7 applaud you all for doing this here today.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
9 very much for your testimony. And I know Council
10 Member Dromm has a question. I'm actually going
11 to--I know he has another hearing to attend, so
12 I'm going to have you, let you ask your questions
13 and then I'll follow up.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you
15 very much. Thank you for your testimony. My
16 questions really have to do around immigrant-
17 specific provisions. I know you mentioned U
18 Visas, assistance with that. Are there any other
19 provisions that are provided specifically for
20 immigrant services?

21 WANDA LUCIBELLO: Well, I think,
22 you know, besides the special visa, it's the whole
23 idea of the funding that supports working together
24 with organizations like Legal Momentum that look
25 to provide support for battered women. I'm not

1
2 actually sure if the TVs are for trafficking
3 victims, I don't think it's under the VAWA
4 provision, but you know, the whole idea is to try
5 to create these opportunities with funding to
6 support not only the special visas and the legal
7 immigration work, but also the language capacity
8 and the cultural capacity of working with
9 different organizations to encourage those victims
10 to come in and get help and support.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: What
12 changes, like, if any, do you think we're going to
13 see under the reauthorization? I mean, with the
14 problems that we've seen with the Republican
15 Senate, etcetera, do you have any idea or any
16 feelings about what changes we might see?

17 SILDA PALERM: Well, certainly
18 there's been a decrease in budgeting for all the
19 services, so that's one of the ones you're going
20 to see. There's been some of the programs have
21 been consolidated, but some of those
22 consolidations probably are a good idea and needed
23 to take place anyway. But the Senate bill that
24 was passed contains and kept all the protections
25 to the immigrant community, to the LGBT community

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that we were really concerned with.

COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Do you keep numbers, I'm wondering in the DA's Office, in terms of the number of immigrants that you serve and the number of LGBT families that you serve?

WANDA LUCIBELLO: We don't specifically--well, I can go through our grants, but we don't break them down by specific ethnic groups. We collect the numbers on the grants as a whole. So--and I think I mentioned some of those numbers.

COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: You did speak about two cases--

WANDA LUCIBELLO: [Interposing] But within the Family Justice Center I know that--I believe the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence does draw out if not specific groups, at least communities so that we know who is coming from say, the East Flatbush section of Brooklyn. But what I do know is that just from being there day in and day out as I am, I mean you do, for example, see large numbers of people from ethnic groups that 15 years ago you would never see using--coming in to a government building, for

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2 example. So that has been, you know, incredibly--
3 we've had a fourfold increase, for example, in
4 Arabic women coming in to the Family Justice
5 Center as a result of having capacity at the
6 Center to work very closely with women from Arabic
7 communities. Asian--as a result of having Asian
8 Women's Center on site we've had many, many more
9 Asian women come in. You know, it just stands to
10 reason, as someone said earlier, you know, if you
11 build it they will come. And if word gets out in
12 the community that there is help available and
13 that somebody can help you, you know, sort of in a
14 much more tailored way than, you know, a generic
15 prosecutor ever could in getting somebody in to
16 prosecute a case. So, I mean, there have been
17 over 100,000 client visits since we opened in 2005
18 at the Brooklyn Family Justice Center. There's
19 been over 94,000--over 44,000 individual clients
20 have been served. So, you know, that's like an
21 incredible, incredible amount of people. Our
22 homicide rate for intimate partner homicides and
23 family-related homicides during the period of 2002
24 to 2010 has gone down, according to the Mayor's
25 Office to Combat Domestic Violence Fatality Review

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Report.

SILDA PALERM: So, and in terms of the numbers of people served, one of the improvements in the bill as it currently stands is that it broadens the definition of who are the organizations that are entitled to provide services to the victims. So, those organizations are more culturally sensitive, and therefore can reach our bigger communities.

COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: And this is the bone of contention in the Senate, am I right?

SILDA PALERM: In part.

COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Right. A large part of it. So, what would you think the impact would be if any of these provisions were to be removed from the existing legislation?

SILDA PALERM: Well, first we hope they won't be, and they haven't. And as I said before, 56 Senators already are co-sponsoring the bill, so, we're four short of having--

COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM:
[Interposing] A super majority.

SILDA PALERM: A super majority.
But definitely it would put women at risk again.

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And it would put communities that are traditionally under-served even more so without the outreach that the current bill provides.

COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Okay. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Council Member Dromm.

SILDA PALERM: Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: It's okay. You know, I wanted to perhaps have your perspective on Doomsday, if this doesn't pass. I know that funding was appropriated. Was it funded at the same amount? And well, you spoke that, you know the window of time, yeah.

SILDA PALERM: Yes, it has been for--the current fiscal year has been funded. And there are negotiations right now, and the expectation is that funding will be approved for fiscal year 2014, which is the next fiscal year. And hopefully the bill will be enacted into law by the end of spring?

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And if it is not, where does that bring us to? Because I think, you know, just to get this into testimony

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would be very important to our committee.

SILDA PALERM: Do you have a sense,
Lynn?

LYNN SCHAFRAN: One of the things--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS:
[Interposing] If you could give us your name.

SILDA PALERM: Yeah. Lynn Schafran
from Legal Momentum, who I mentioned is with us.

LYNN SCHAFRAN: Over the years as
there have occasionally been gaps in the
reauthorization period, entities which are running
on a hand-to-mouth budget, many of which are the
organizations that Wanda is talking about that
serve very particular groups from the immigrant
communities, have literally had to shut their
doors. We've had rape crisis centers that closed
down. They only had a few staff, maybe they had
one paid person and then they were able to bring
on some additional people and then the money dried
up or went away or wasn't authorized under the
Violence Against Women Act, and they're back to
being one person again. So the impact is
dramatic, and we--really we've already seen it,
because in periods of time as the monies have been

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2 moved around within the Violence Against Women
3 Act, I mean we certainly understand that there is
4 not unlimited money to do all that needs to be
5 done. But as decisions have been made about what
6 programs should be authorized or reauthorized or
7 where the emphasis should be, there have been
8 extremely worthwhile projects that have closed
9 down, literally closed down. So, if this bill
10 were not to be reauthorized timely or funded in
11 some way on a gap basis, it would have a dreadful
12 impact. And I mean, I think Wanda's testimony is
13 so valuable and so telling. If any of you have
14 not been to the Family Justice Center, I would
15 suggest you all go. I have had a personal tour,
16 and you really have this physical sense of what it
17 means to co-locate all of these services for so
18 many people coming from such different parts of
19 the community, knowing nothing, not knowing where
20 to reach out. And, you know, you could just
21 envision walking down the hall and seeing that
22 door is closed, that door is closed, we don't
23 serve Arabic-speaking women anymore. I mean, your
24 list of languages, I don't even know--

25 WANDA LUCIBELLO: [Interposing]

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Gha.

LYNN SCHAFRAN: Gha. I don't even know where that language is spoken. So, I don't think--literally it is not possible to emphasize how important this funding is to the safety of women, literally throughout New York City and New York State and across the country.

SILDA PALERM: And to put in perspective what my colleague Lynn Schafran was saying, Lynn worked on VAWA 1, so she can really tell you what the situation of services for victims of domestic violence before this was enacted, how things have improved and what a disaster it would be if it were not continued. So, in terms of a full history, we have it here.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you for that perspective, and I know that we're going to hear from other organizations that are going to speak more on the details of it. In the new reauthorization or the reauthorization of VAWA, is there anything legally that you feel should have more--or that we should be adding more legally on the reauthorization's perspectives. It could be a no.

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2 LYNN SCHAFRAN: Off the top of my
3 head I'd have to say I don't know.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay.

5 LYNN SCHAFRAN: Nothing leaps to
6 mind. Wanda, what about you?

7 WANDA LUCIBELLO: Nothing leaps
8 immediately to mind. I think that, you know, one
9 of the concerns we all have is that on the
10 immigrant level or in working with members--
11 victims from LGBTQ communities, you know, we all
12 worry that that's going to be less funded or that
13 that's putting everything in jeopardy. On the
14 legal side nothing immediately springs to mind. I
15 think that there's been a little more emphasis on
16 working with, for example, we have elder abuse
17 cases within our Family Justice Center, so there
18 may be some consideration about expanding
19 relationships a little bit, but I'm not really
20 sure about that, so I don't think that I would--

21 LYNN SCHAFRAN: [Interposing] Well,
22 there is a whole section on expanding later life--

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS:
24 [Interposing] Can you just--so that it can be
25 recorded?

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2 LYNN SCHAFFRAN: I'm sorry. There's
3 a section in the reauthorization about expanding
4 attention to issues of violence against women in
5 later life, so that's a plus. But what I can say
6 to you is that in--Legal Momentum has in
7 Washington, DC, a wonderful asset, Lisa Lynn
8 Jacobs, who has chaired the National Taskforce to
9 End Sexual and Domestic Violence, which Legal
10 Momentum created back in the early '90s in order
11 to get VAWA 1 passed. And we can certainly bring
12 that question to her and come back to you with any
13 ideas that she has.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I would
15 greatly appreciate that, and I thank you both for
16 your testimony. It helps to get this on the
17 record. Thank you.

18 WANDA LUCIBELLO: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And we're
20 going to call up the next panel. We're going to
21 do it in panels of four, because we have a lot of
22 great advocates here. So, for those of you that
23 have a ten-page testimony, let's make a shorter
24 version of it. We have Bitta Mostofi from Safe
25 Horizon; Emma Hansea [phonetic], from Sanctuary

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2 for Families; and Anna Ognibene, from New York
3 City Bar, and Brian Dworkin and Nangit [phonetic]
4 Schorr, from Legal Services, and I'm sorry if I
5 did not pronounce your names correctly. And you
6 can begin your testimony in the order that you are
7 called.

8 BITTA MOSTOFI: Good afternoon.

9 I'm Bitta Mostofi from Safe Horizon. Specifically
10 I work in the Safe Horizon Immigration Law Project
11 as a Staff Attorney. Thank you so much, Chairman
12 Ferreras and Chairman Dromm, and members of the
13 Committees for the opportunity to testify before
14 you today on the importance of VAWA
15 reauthorization, specifically for the clients that
16 I serve, immigrant women in New York City. As I
17 said, my name is Bitta Mostofi, I'm a staff
18 attorney with the Immigration Law Project at Safe
19 Horizon. Safe Horizon is, for those of you who do
20 not know, it's the nation's leading victim
21 assistance organization, and New York City's
22 largest provider of services to victims of crime,
23 abuse, their families and their communities. Safe
24 horizon creates hope and opportunity for hundreds
25 of thousands of New Yorkers each year whose lives

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2 are touched by violence, to that's just to shed a
3 little bit of light on how important this
4 reauthorization really is to our clients and to
5 the people that we serve. We're so grateful that
6 the City Council is taking a look at this
7 important issue and asking organizations like ours
8 to comment on our experiences. We would like to
9 share with you the nature of our work, our
10 population and the importance of the
11 reauthorization. Specifically with immigrant
12 victims of crime, we've been established since
13 1987 at the Immigration Law Project, and provide
14 free and low-cost services to victims of crime,
15 torture and abuse in immigration proceedings. We
16 do this with help from New York City Council, the
17 Department of Youth and Community Development, and
18 through VAWA, the Department of Justice. We serve
19 over 1,000 clients each year in many areas of
20 immigration law, including VAWA I-360 self-
21 petitions, U and T visas, work authorization,
22 naturalization, and individuals in deportation and
23 removal proceedings. Last year alone we provided
24 consultations, referrals, hotline assistance and
25 direct representation to over 3,000 individuals.

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2 ILP specializes in assisting victims of crime and
3 is unique in our community, because we not only
4 serve domestic violence victims, but as other
5 people who are victims of crime, be it an assault,
6 an abuse, torture, we serve asylees, etcetera.
7 some of these clients have either called us,
8 they've been referred to us, or they walked into
9 our office on their own, self-identifying as
10 immigrants with domestic violence issues,
11 something that takes an enormous amount of courage
12 to do. Additionally, the model of our agency is
13 such that we strive to provide a more holistic
14 approach to the needs of our people that we serve
15 through interagency referrals, through our
16 shelters, our case managers, counselors, and other
17 legal services that we provide. This helps us to
18 provide a more timely and efficient representation
19 to our clients. Sadly, as we've heard the needs
20 of our clients persist, and as stated in
21 Resolution 1064, violence against women is a
22 pressing issue in our communities. Organizations
23 like ours really rely on the tools provided under
24 VAWA and the funding that it creates to continue
25 the important work of combating violence. There's

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2 no better way, I think, to impress upon you the
3 importance of this law than to share with you the
4 stories of some of our clients. Recently one of
5 our clients, Natasha, who has three US citizen
6 children--herself is undocumented--was abused by
7 her husband for many years. She had filed
8 numerous police reports, but never wanted to have
9 him arrested because he would threaten her with
10 deportation. She came to our office after she had
11 already been placed in deportation proceedings.
12 When we reviewed her file we saw that a former
13 attorney had filed a VAWA self-petition but had
14 failed to submit the necessary evidence to
15 substantiate her claim for VAWA. The US
16 Citizenship and Immigration Services had also sent
17 two request for additional evidence, both of which
18 went unanswered, and then the VAWA was denied.
19 The immigration judge expressed her doubts that we
20 could do anything for the client, but our office
21 felt quite differently. We thought that under
22 VAWA she did in fact qualify for the relief and
23 could remain in the United States with her
24 children. We filed a proper VAWA self-petition.
25 The client's case has since been approved. She's

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2 been granted work authorization and just last week
3 the judge terminated her deportation case, during
4 which the client cried, because she never thought
5 that something like this was possible. We have
6 another client, Yaneth, she's 14 years of ages.
7 She was sexually assaulted by her teacher along
8 with other children and classmates in her school.
9 This case was particularly traumatic for her and
10 her mother because Yaneth was a previous victim of
11 rape at the age of eight. After coming to our
12 office and after assisting the District Attorney
13 in the prosecution of that case against her
14 teacher, we were able to get a U visa not only for
15 Yaneth, but also for her mother, both of whom now
16 feel much safer and are seeking the counseling and
17 the treatment that they need not only for this
18 crime against her, but for the crime she
19 experienced at the age of eight, the rape.
20 Because of the VAWA self-petition and the U visa,
21 relief that becomes available to us through the
22 reauthorization of VAWA, both of these clients are
23 now fully participating members of our society.
24 We're very encouraged to see the City Council
25 recognize the importance of the reauthorization of

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2 VAWA and we ask that--you know, I overheard you
3 asking recommendations. We actually have a list
4 of recommendations that service providers have put
5 together in our calls for VAWA renewal, ones that
6 we think will make us better advocates for our
7 community and keep our community safer. Included
8 in these recommendations are, adding dating
9 violence and stalking to the list of crimes
10 covered by the U visa; allowing any law
11 enforcement supervisor--not only the head of the
12 agency--to sign the U visa law certifications;
13 allowing victims who have sufficient evidence of
14 cooperating in an investigation or prosecution of
15 a crime to submit an application for the U visa
16 when law enforcement certification is not
17 available. Unfortunately we see many more of
18 these cases than we would like to. Clarifying
19 that if the principal U visa applicant files a
20 petition while a derivative child is under 21
21 years of age, the child will be treated as under
22 21 for the purposes of adjudication as a
23 derivative. This does apply to VAWA self-
24 petitions currently, but not to U visas, and many
25 of our cases have remained in a limbo waiting for

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2 guidance from immigration services. And also
3 allowing VAWA self-petitioners and U visa
4 applicants to be granted work authorization after
5 180 days of the filing of their petitions, or upon
6 approval, whichever actually comes first. And
7 this of course has to do with backlogs with
8 funding problems that immigration itself is
9 facing, where some of these cases are taking ten
10 months, 11 months, up to a year for adjudication.
11 The U visa and VAWA self-petitioning applications
12 are essential tools for us, for holding abusers
13 accountable to crime victims. And the funding
14 that we receive from VAWA and the protection that
15 it safeguards are essential to not only the safety
16 of the women that we serve, the communities that
17 we serve, but for our city, for people to come
18 forward and really hold perpetrators of crime
19 accountable. We're confident that the City
20 Council will pass resolution 1060 and call on
21 Congress to renew the Violence Against Women Act,
22 and I thank you again for allowing me to testify
23 here today. I'm happy to answer any questions.

24 EMMA HANSEN: Thank you to the
25 Committee on Women's Issues on the opportunity to

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address this important issue.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I'm sorry,
can you state your name?

EMMA HANSEN: Yes, that's my next sentence. My name is Emma Hansen, and I'm speaking on behalf of Sanctuary for Families, the largest non-profit organization in New York State dedicated exclusively to the needs of domestic violence and sex trafficking. We're currently serving 11,600 individuals, providing shelter, counseling, legal representation and economic empowerment services. Sanctuary for Families strongly supports the swift reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. VAWA is critical to the safety of New York City's women and girls. Reauthorization of VAWA is necessary to provide comprehensive, effective and cost-saving responses to the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. Annually, Sanctuary for Families helps thousands of domestic violence survivors and their children to build safe lives with a range of high-quality services to meet their complex needs. Through past reauthorizations, VAWA has expanded to better aid

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2 victims of more crimes and hold criminals
3 accountable. VAWA programs administered by the
4 Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services,
5 have dramatically changed federal, state,
6 territorial, and local responses to these crimes.
7 More victims are coming forward and receiving life
8 changing and life saving services, and the
9 criminal justice system has improved its ability
10 to keep victims safe and hold perpetrators
11 accountable. Since VAWA's passage, reporting of
12 crimes of gender-based violence of both men and
13 women has increased. The number of individuals
14 killed by an intimate partner has decreased, and
15 taxpayers have saved money due to net averted
16 social costs. Sanctuary for Families has seen the
17 real impact of VAWA on the lives of our clients,
18 including immigrant victims. With funding from
19 VAWA, Sanctuary runs a courtroom advocates
20 project, helping volunteer attorneys and law
21 students advocate for domestic violence victims,
22 seeking orders of protection against their
23 abusers. As Safe Horizons did, I would like to
24 share just a brief example of the Sanctuary
25 client, a victim of domestic violence with the

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2 courage to share her story of how the services she
3 received helped to change her life. After years
4 of abuse at the hands of her husband, Michelle
5 found the courage to call 911 and get herself and
6 her young daughter to a homeless shelter. For
7 eight months in the shelter, Michelle struggled
8 with her situation and with herself. I was so
9 angry when I was in the shelter, she said. My
10 counselor would say, if you need to be angry, be
11 angry; if you need to cry, cry. Years later,
12 Michelle has had the courage to start a new life.
13 As she turned the key in the lock of her new
14 apartment, it finally dawned on me, she said, I'm
15 really free; tonight he will not come here. The
16 key is mine. I am no longer a victim of domestic
17 violence. I will not be beaten. I will not be
18 forced into sex. I will go on the roof or stand
19 in the street and shout, no more abuse. Michelle
20 has since graduated with Honors from Metropolitan
21 College of New York, and she applied to a Masters
22 program in Public Administration. Michelle's goal
23 is to start a domestic violence shelter for women
24 like herself, but of course, she needs funding.
25 The 2011 VAWA reauthorization should improve

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2 programs to prevent, respond to, and hold
3 criminals accountable for sexual assault, dating
4 violence, stalking and domestic violence against
5 both women and men. Reauthorization of VAWA is
6 necessary to preserve services to and for victims
7 of these crimes, and funding must continue, both
8 for direct services and for the programs that work
9 with other systems, community supports that help
10 women, men, and children be safe and recover.

11 This includes housing and economic supports, as
12 well as training for both health care providers,
13 judges, the child welfare system, and employers.
14 The proposed improvements upon reauthorization
15 include provisions to help reach victims who are
16 not currently being served or could be better
17 served by community-based programs, including
18 Americans living abroad, women with disabilities,
19 teens and youth, elder victims, and victims who
20 are under-served due to sexual orientation or
21 gender identity. There are also additional
22 protections for the confidentiality of victims'
23 personally identifying information and explicit
24 prohibition of employment discrimination for VAWA
25 related activity. Prevention programs must grow

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2 and expand with the help of grant purposes added
3 in the 2011 reauthorization. These include
4 programs focused on primary prevention, directed
5 at men and boys as well as women and girls, and
6 services for children who have been exposed to
7 violence. In addition, existing prevention
8 programs focus on domestic violence or sexual
9 assault can be better integrated at the state
10 level. Please show your support for survivors of
11 domestic violence by promoting the reauthorization
12 and funding of VAWA to save lives, rebuild
13 families, protect children and teens, conserve
14 taxpayer resources and prevent future crimes.
15 Thanks.

16 ANNA OGNIBENE: Good afternoon. My
17 name is Anna Ognibene, and today I'm speaking on
18 behalf of the Committee on Domestic Violence of
19 the New York City Bar Association. Thank you for
20 the opportunity to be here and speak to you today
21 about resolution 1064 and the Violence Against
22 Women Act. The City Bar believes that
23 reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act is
24 critically important to victims of domestic
25 violence and sexual assault, in New York City and

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2 across the country. We've already heard today a
3 lot about the importance of the funding in the
4 VAWA reauthorization act, but VAWA is not just a
5 funding bill; it contains key legal protections
6 for victims of domestic violence and sexual
7 assault. So, today I'd like to talk to you a
8 little bit about some of the ways that VAWA has
9 expanded legal protection for victims. I've
10 provided the Council with written testimony
11 detailing the specific ways that VAWA expands
12 these protections. I'd like to keep it short here
13 on the record today, so please feel free to refer
14 to my written testimony. VAWA Reauthorization Act
15 of 2011 does expand key legal protections in the
16 area of housing and immigration especially, and
17 regardless of gender or sexual orientation of the
18 victim. Today I'd like to focus specifically on
19 the immigration sections of the act, because we
20 believe that these are very, very important. The
21 VAWA Reauthorization Act expands immigration
22 protections in five key ways. First, it allows
23 victims of domestic violence, rape, dating
24 violence and stalking to apply for legal
25 immigration status if they help prosecute these

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2 crimes. We've heard already about the U visa
3 protection. Victims may qualify for a U visa if
4 they cooperate with law enforcement in a case
5 against their abuser. We heard from the Staten
6 Island DA today that there's been a challenge
7 encouraging people to come forward from immigrant
8 communities because of the fear of authorities.
9 The U visa encourages people to come forward who
10 might otherwise have been too afraid of the
11 authorities to report the crimes against them.
12 The new act includes dating violence among the
13 crimes that could receive U visa protection. And
14 this helps protect young victims and also victims
15 in same sex relationships. Second, the
16 Reauthorization Act preserves that U visa
17 protection, even if something happens to the case
18 against their abuser that is beyond the victim's
19 control, or if a law enforcement entity refuses to
20 help them apply for the U visa. An arbitrary
21 denial of a U certification previously meant that
22 a victim forever lost his or her opportunity to
23 apply for a U visa, even if they wanted and tried
24 to cooperate and do the right thing. There's no
25 right to appeal from a decision by a law

1 enforcement entity not to sign a U visa
2 certification. With the new bill, victims will be
3 able to submit secondary evidence directly to
4 immigration showing that they tried to cooperate
5 and they tried to get a certification. This
6 allows them--pardon me--this protects them from
7 mistakes or misapplications of the law by local
8 law enforcement entities. It also ensures that
9 the ultimate discretion, whether or not to grant
10 immigration status, rests where it belongs, with
11 the Department of Homeland Security. Third, the
12 reauthorization bill contains protections for
13 children of domestic violence victims, allowing
14 them to continue their immigration application if
15 their parent, the victim, dies. Fourth, the new
16 bill makes clear that victims can access public
17 benefits without fear of negative immigration
18 consequences, which gives them an emergency safety
19 net and empowers them to leave their abusive
20 relationships. Finally, the new bill helps
21 victims to start working legally sooner, while the
22 remainder of their immigration application is
23 processed. Getting a job sooner allows them to
24 become financially independent from their abusers,
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2 regardless of how long their immigration paperwork
3 takes. The previous Violence Against Women Act
4 went a long way to helping victims of domestic
5 violence and their children. The New York City
6 Bar Association believes that the 2011 bill goes
7 even further. It contains much needed expanses
8 and fixes of the current law. Thank you so much
9 for the opportunity to testify this afternoon, and
10 I would welcome any questions.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
12 very much. I think we're going to need to--

13 [off mic]

14 NANETTE SCHORR: Yes. Hello,
15 greetings. Good afternoon. We left some. Thank
16 you. My name is Nanette Schorr, and next to me is
17 my colleague Brian Dworkin, and I'm the Family Law
18 Unit's Supervisor at Legal Services for New York
19 City's Bronx Office, and Brian holds the same
20 position in our Queens office. We are here to
21 testify today on behalf of Legal Services for New
22 York City. And thank you very much for the
23 opportunity to do this. We first want to express
24 our appreciation to the City Council for its--and
25 for the Council Members for your continued support

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2 for the work of combating domestic violence and
3 for supporting people who are affected by it, and
4 in particular for these hearing son
5 reauthorization. We think they're very important.
6 And one of the way the Council has been helpful to
7 survivors is through funding for the DOVE program,
8 so I did want to acknowledge that and thank you
9 for that. And VAWA funding, of course, also
10 supports much of this work. And this funding
11 continues to play a very important role in
12 maintaining the continuity of our legal assistance
13 work. Without it, many survivors of domestic
14 violence would not be able to get the legal help
15 they so desperately need, so our testimony is
16 going to address the impact of VAWA funding for
17 civil legal assistance on the lives of New
18 Yorkers. Just to give you a little background,
19 Legal Services for New York City is devoted to
20 providing free civil legal services throughout the
21 City. We have neighborhood offices in every
22 borough. Each year our offices, and we note in
23 particularly 2011, provide approximately 1,500
24 low-income domestic violence survivors with free
25 comprehensive legal services for their problems,

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2 to help them get back on their feet. Looking at
3 the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence
4 website, in most recent statistics, we see that in
5 2011 police responded to over 700 domestic
6 incidents per day, and the City's domestic
7 violence hotline answered 114,760 calls. That's a
8 vast number. So, in our work, and I'll speak in a
9 moment about our work with the Family Justice
10 Center, we represent survivors, many of whom are
11 immigrants, in their custody, visitation, support,
12 order of protection, matrimonial and immigration
13 cases. And because our work is embedded in a
14 program that serves a broad range of legal needs,
15 we can offer survivors access to other kinds of
16 legal assistance that support their emerging
17 independence, such as housing, benefits, income
18 tax, employment representation, consumer, economic
19 development. So, it all weaves together to help
20 the survivor get back on their feet and achieve
21 long-term sustainability. Using VAWA funding, our
22 Brooklyn, Queens, and Bronx programs have been
23 able to provide staffing to each of those
24 counties' Family Justice Centers, and we see many
25 clients at the centers for advice and counsel as

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2 well as legal representation. And though there
3 is, as yet, no Family Justice Center in either
4 Staten Island or Manhattan, our offices in those
5 programs do still work in coordinating services in
6 community collaboratives that serve similar goals
7 as the family justice centers. Each of our
8 offices, also using VAWA funding in many cases,
9 partners with community organizations. In think
10 in earlier testimony Ms. Lucibello talked about
11 the importance of community partnerships in the
12 VAWA funded collaborative, and that is very much
13 the case in our work. We work with social service
14 providers, domestic violence advocacy groups. WE
15 use our VAWA funding to conduct community
16 education and outreach, which is a good source of
17 sort of early intervention to hopefully prevent
18 situations from developing further. And of course
19 they also access, help survivors access free legal
20 services as well as counseling and case
21 management. And research has demonstrated that
22 really one of the key services that reduces
23 domestic violence and abuse in the long term is
24 legal assistance, so funding that is invested in
25 domestic violence legal services also saves other

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2 future costs. And now I'm going to turn it over
3 to Brian Dworkin, who will complete our - -
4 testimony.

5 BRIAN DWORKIN: Thank you, Nanette.
6 VAWA reauthorization however is not just about
7 funding. There are important substantive
8 provisions that you have heard some about earlier
9 today. VAWA reauthorization provides funding for
10 programs supporting victims who have had
11 difficulty accessing traditional services because
12 of sexual orientation or gender identity. VAWA's
13 housing protections, which help survivors attain
14 housing stability would be extended, and
15 additional supportive housing programs and to
16 victims of sexual assault, and would address the
17 circumstances of those who need to move quickly
18 when threatened. VAWA programs also help
19 immigrant survivors by providing a pathway to
20 legal immigration status for those whose abusive
21 spouses fail to cooperate when completing
22 immigration applications, for those who cooperate
23 in the investigation of crimes, and for victims of
24 human trafficking. To illustrate the importance
25 of the work Legal Services NYC has to the lives of

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2 New Yorkers, I'll just share one example of recent
3 successful advocacy from our Bronx Office. Ms. R.
4 is a young single mother of two children,
5 struggling to maintain a safe home for her family.
6 Ms. R. was referred to us by one of our housing
7 attorneys who was representing her in Bronx
8 Housing Court to prevent eviction and obtain
9 repairs to her apartment. The father of her one
10 and a half year-old child was extremely abusive.
11 He had strangled Ms. R. in front of the children
12 and had threatened to kill her and the children.
13 Ms. R. and the father of her child had an order of
14 joint custody from the Bronx Family Court, which
15 had been encouraged by a judge who was not
16 sensitive to the history of domestic violence in
17 this family. In the past Ms. R. had not been
18 represented by an attorney and had already been
19 involved in four cases in the Bronx Family Court
20 in an attempt to modify the original order of
21 joint custody. Our Bronx office represented Ms.
22 R. and was able to obtain an order of sole
23 physical legal custody so she could live safely
24 with the children. VAWA has played in a crucial
25 role in responding to domestic violence here in

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2 New York City. It allows our organization to help
3 many domestic violence survivors who would
4 otherwise have no place to turn, and it provides a
5 range of additional vital protections. We at
6 Legal Services for New York City support the
7 Council's bill supporting the reauthorization of
8 VAWA. Thank you.

9 NANETTE SCHORR: And we have
10 submitted this in writing. We have more case
11 examples, we just didn't want to read them all
12 into the record right now.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I thank you
14 for your testimony, and actually I was reading the
15 one about the Queens Iranian woman who was married
16 over the phone, a telephone ceremony, which was
17 part of your Queens--or the story from the Queens
18 office. And I think they're all very touching.
19 And I thank you for your testimony. You know, we
20 do read through these testimonies, and we get back
21 to the office. I don't know if--Council Member
22 Chin has some questions, and I will follow up. If
23 you can kind of reorganize over there.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I just have a
25 quick question from, I guess, Bitta?

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BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: In your testimony, your organization made some recommendations. So, are these recommendations, do they have to be included in the bill to make it happen?

BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes and no. Some are, which Anna was kind enough to indicate and put in her testimony. Some of them we're waiting for fixes, I guess you would say, from headquarters, guidance from US CIS on certain issues. But really, the quick fix is to get them reauthorized in the VAWA. So, there are--the ones that I've listed are ones that service providers like myself and those at this table basically came together and advocated for. And like Anna pointed out, some of them are actually in the renewal.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. And then the other one, you're talking about administrative fixes that can be done.

BITTA MOSTOFI: Some are, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. Now, also with reauthorization, would there be additional funding that can help us set up family

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2 justice centers in the other boroughs, like in
3 Manhattan and Staten Island? Would anybody know
4 that?

5 NANETTE SCHORR: I don't know the
6 answer to that.

7 BRIAN DWORKIN: I think that it's
8 in the planning stages. What we've heard is that
9 initially they're going to have--they're going to
10 open one in Manhattan to serve both Staten Island
11 and Manhattan.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. Thank
13 you.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: That is
15 correct. They are in the planning stages and
16 identifying further funding. And if I could just
17 ask, and I guess one of you, each of you, can kind
18 of get back to me. And I asked this earlier of
19 the other two, the organizations and the DA that
20 testified earlier, but in your experience, what
21 would be the dollar impact, if you can, if this
22 reauthorization doesn't happen, so that we have an
23 understanding? I think that some of our
24 testimony, especially a lot of the testimony as
25 Chair of Women's issues, we talk about services,

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2 we talk about kind of the support that women are
3 getting. But unlike in other committees, we don't
4 necessarily always tie that to a dollar amount,
5 and I think people need to understand the severity
6 of what this dollar amount is. And sometimes with
7 a--just a few dollars we can make a huge impact,
8 where in certain other areas we're talking about
9 billions and millions of dollars, and this can be
10 saving a lot of organizations for a couple of
11 hundred thousand dollars, which makes a really big
12 difference in our communities. So, if you could
13 just--if you have it, if you don't that's fine
14 also. But the dollar amount impact that this will
15 have for your organizations.

16 BRIAN DWORKIN: I think I can
17 address that in part. I mean, there's really two
18 parts to it; one is specifically the VAWA dollars,
19 and one is the effect of the cumulative cuts that
20 are coming from other places. For Legal Service
21 NYC organizations, the VAWA funding is a
22 significant part of our family law practice
23 funding. And if these grants were zeroed out, we
24 would probably lose, I would say we would lose a
25 third of our family unit staff that addresses

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2 these issues. And that sort of--in the macro
3 level, Legal Services coming out of Washington,
4 Legal Services funding coming out of Washington is
5 already impacting New York State in a severely
6 negative way. In the economic climate we've been
7 in, as sad as it is to say, New York's share of
8 people who are living in poverty has actually--
9 relative to the rest of the country--New York City
10 and New York State are doing better, and as a
11 result our share of federal dollars going to
12 support federal legal services is declining. So,
13 a VAWA cut on top of the cuts that are already
14 coming out of Washington will cause our program to
15 shrink significantly.

16 NANETTE SCHORR: Just to add one
17 thing to that, which is each of our organizations
18 that has VAWA funding has a partnership with a
19 community-based organization. So, not only would
20 we lose the funding and the staffing to provide
21 these services, but the groups that provide the
22 services in conjunction with us would also lose
23 very key funding for themselves.

24 BRIAN DWORKIN: I mean, in some
25 cases some of our partner organizations are

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2 running, you know, maybe on a quarter of a million
3 dollars or a half million dollar budget. And if
4 they're receiving as a share of the grants in
5 which they're participating, you know, \$20,000 or
6 \$30,000, that's like saying they're going to have
7 a 10% or larger cut right off the bat. And for
8 them that means they will, they'll lay off their
9 frontline advocates who are out there doing the
10 counseling work and the emergency services work
11 for the clients.

12 NANETTE SCHORR: As well a lot of
13 VAWA funding helps to support the operation of the
14 Family Justice Centers, so the staff members that
15 sit at the Justice Centers and provide the
16 services, many of them are funded by VAWA funding,
17 and so that would have a profound impact on the
18 centers as well.

19 BRIAN DWORKIN: I'm sorry. I feel
20 like we're tag teaming here. The important part
21 about that is, while the Mayor's Office has done a
22 wonderful job in helping get these centers set up,
23 all of the organizations that are working at these
24 centers, none of them are receiving funding,
25 money, from the Mayor's Office for being there.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
3 very much for your testimony. I think, and it is
4 an important one, the Family Justice Center is as
5 good as the partnerships and the organizations
6 that are at the Center. I know that in speaking
7 to Commissioner Jimenez, she has stated that, you
8 know, she's providing--or in a way, the Family
9 Justice Center provides space so that everybody is
10 kind of in a cohesive--and so that there's synergy
11 amongst the organizations, the law enforcement.
12 But you're absolutely right, it's about the
13 partnerships that many of you have in the room
14 with the Family Justice Center. So, I thank you
15 very much for your testimony, and I'm sure there
16 are other organizations that are going to be
17 testifying to that effect also, so thank you for
18 coming in today. We're going to call up another
19 panel of four. So, Nick, maybe we can adjust
20 those chairs. Again, apologize for pronunciations
21 of your name. Mary Hariland [phonetic], New York
22 City Alliance Against Sexual Assault; Mercedes
23 Matias, from Connect; Sharene Roig, from Connect;
24 and Chai Jindasurat, of New York City Gay and
25 Lesbian Anti-Violence Project; Marguerite Cordice,

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2 Flushing Holistic Legal Advocacy Center of Queens.
3 And if you have any testimony--there we go. Hi.
4 You may begin your testimony in the order you were
5 called up.

6 MARY HAVILAND: Good afternoon. My
7 name is Mary Haviland. I'm the Executive Director
8 of the New York City Alliance Against Sexual
9 Assault. And I applaud the Women's Issues
10 Committee for having us here this afternoon. I
11 think it's a great thing. I think it really will
12 raise our voices to the federal level, hopefully.
13 And I'm very impressed with the testimony so far.
14 I'm going to try not to repeat too much, if I can.
15 I wanted to talk specifically from the sexual
16 assault point of view and VAWA. I do think the
17 Violence Against Women Act is probably one of the
18 most important pieces of legislation for women and
19 victim of violence in the United States since its
20 first passage in 1994. We have a little bit of a
21 picture of the problem from a recent national,
22 large scale and carefully executed survey, which
23 is called the Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence
24 Survey. It found high levels of violence. And in
25 fact we heard in the news that they were

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2 shockingly high. I don't think anybody in this
3 room though that they were shockingly high. But
4 it specifically found that 24 people are victims
5 of rape, physical violence or stalking by an
6 intimate partner every minute in the United
7 States. With regard to sexual assault, the survey
8 found that 1 in 5 women, or 18%, experienced
9 attempted or completed rape in their lifetime, and
10 1 out of 74 men have experienced the same. Women
11 of color had significantly higher rates of rape
12 and attempted rape, with 22% of Black women and
13 27%--a shocking 27%--of Native American women
14 experiencing rape sometime in their lifetime.
15 Over the years, VAWA has been expanded to provide
16 multiple streams of funding to address domestic
17 violence and sexual violence in as many ways. One
18 of the greatest successes of VAWA is its emphasis
19 on a coordinated community response to domestic
20 violence, dating violence, sexual assault and
21 stalking. I wanted to talk a little bit about
22 tall the panoply of granting and program support
23 that VAWA supplies, because I thought it might be
24 helpful to have kind of an overview of that.
25 There are three legislated restricted streams of

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2 funding that go to all the states in the United
3 States, and they are administrated by state
4 agencies. These three forms of funding are the
5 STOP grants, which you've heard people talk about
6 this morning, which stands for Services Training
7 Officers and Prosecutors, and more recently Courts
8 have been added. New York State received \$7
9 million in STOP grant funding in fiscal year '11.
10 69% of these funds were used for DV, 29 for sexual
11 assault, and 2% for stalking. The Sexual Assault
12 Services Program is another funding stream that's
13 solely dedicated to victims of sexual assault, but
14 the amounts dedicated are much lower, with New
15 York State receiving \$300,000 for the entire state
16 for fiscal year '11. With approximately 65 rape
17 crisis centers in the state, each receive under
18 \$5,000. Then the third legislated restricted
19 stream is the State Coalition Funding, that goes
20 to both DV and sexual assault statewide
21 coalitions. In addition to this, we've heard this
22 morning about distinct granting programs from the
23 Office on Violence Against Women. There are 18
24 different streams of funding that come out of that
25 office, and they include--I'm not going to list

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2 them all--but they include things like enhancing
3 culturally specific services, legal assistance to
4 victims, grants that address youth violence, funds
5 for tribal communities, and many others. There
6 are also provisions for immigrant victims of DV
7 and sexual assault that allow victim self-petition
8 for lawful permanent residency, and an
9 undocumented victim of either DV, sexual assault,
10 or trafficking, who cooperates with the
11 prosecution of crimes to receive temporary
12 authorization to work through U and T visas.
13 Finally, I think one thing that's less well known
14 about VAWA is that there are prevention funds that
15 are funneled through the Center for Disease
16 Control. There are funds for 14 states to work on
17 domestic violence prevention; this stream is
18 called Delta. And then there is a rape education
19 program, a rape program education funding, which
20 in New York State provides about \$50,000 to each
21 rape crisis program in the state to conduct
22 educational or community mobilizing prevention
23 programs. This is an incredibly rich, diverse
24 group of funding sources that has given rise to an
25 incredibly rich panoply of services that you've

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2 heard about from the DA's Office to Legal
3 Services, to Sanctuary for Families. It touches
4 rape crisis programs. It touches DV programs. It
5 touches criminal justice solutions, law
6 enforcement, and touches diverse women throughout
7 the United States. The provisions that are in the
8 current reauthorization of Violence Against Women
9 Act, would make even further improvements in these
10 rich funding sources. It would apply the Prison
11 Rape Elimination Act, which works to detect,
12 prevent, reduce and punish instances of rape to
13 all immigration detention facilities under DHS and
14 HHS. It would expand housing protection to
15 victims of sexual assault that currently only
16 apply to victims of domestic violence. It would
17 require the state to allocate at least 25% of
18 their stop grants to sexual assault. New York
19 State currently allocates 29%. It would add
20 dating violence and stalking to the list of crimes
21 covered by the U visa. It would allow the
22 Department of Homeland Security to issue up to
23 5,000 additional visas to victims of domestic
24 violence or sexual violence by recapturing unused
25 U visas. It would clarify the definition of

1
2 individuals who are eligible for VAWA protection
3 and services to include LGBT communities. It
4 would also finally allow for tribal prosecution of
5 DV and sexual assault crimes that take place on
6 tribal lands, regardless of whether the
7 perpetrator is a member of the tribe or not. So,
8 these last three provisions, the addition of U
9 visas, the protections for the lesbian, gay,
10 transgendered, queer community, and the tribal
11 protections are apparently the protections that
12 some of the Republican Senators and a few
13 conservative organizations are objecting to. The
14 provisions to LGBT and the Native American
15 communities are fundamental. A report in 2010 by
16 the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
17 found that there's an increasing severity of
18 violence against gays, lesbians, and transgendered
19 individuals, and that access to service is very
20 limited, with more turned away from shelters than
21 in 2009 and only about 50% of those who request
22 orders of protection are granted them. Native
23 Americans are 2.5 times more likely than US women
24 to be battered, raped or stalked. Our activism on
25 the part of victims of violence has had an effect,

1
2 at least in the domestic violence community. Non-
3 fatal intimate partner violence has decreased from
4 10 in 1,000 women to 3.6 in 1,000 women, between
5 1993 and 2005. We're on the right track, but much
6 more needs to be done. I want to just highlight
7 for a moment what these funds have meant to the
8 sexual assault community. They've meant funding
9 to rape crisis programs. They've meant funding
10 for the prevention of sexual assault. And as the
11 Alliance is one of the two centers of excellence
12 in the State of New York, we've had the
13 opportunity to work on prevention in three diverse
14 communities in New York City. VAWA has provided
15 that opportunity. It's improved the criminal
16 justice response for sexual assault victims. It's
17 improved prosecution of sexual assault cases. It
18 provides linkages between programs through what we
19 have now in New York City--we have five borough-
20 based multi-disciplinary task forces that work on
21 sexual assault issues, because of the VAWA grant.
22 And it also in our particular case at the Alliance
23 has allowed us to work with a group in Queens
24 called Rosas Latinas, on bringing interventions to
25 women who are working in bars in local

1
2 communities, who are being HIV tested. In sum,
3 without VAWA, victims will suffer immeasurably.
4 Violence causes long-lasting health and
5 psychological repercussions. No one deserves to
6 be a victim of violence, and everybody deserves
7 the opportunity that VAWA offers to heal from it.
8 Thank you.

9 SHARENE ROIG: On behalf of Connect
10 we would like to thank Council Member Julissa
11 Ferreras, Chair of the Committee on Women's
12 Issues, and all the Committee Members for
13 convening this hearing and giving organizations
14 such as our the opportunity to give testimony to
15 the impact of VAWA on the lives of victims,
16 survivors, that we serve throughout New York City.
17 My name is Sharene Roig. I'm an Educator with
18 Connect's Community Empowerment Program.

19 MERCEDDES MATIAS: And I'm Mercedes
20 Matias. I'm a legal advocate with the Legal
21 Advocacy Program.

22 SHARENE ROIG: In the last year New
23 York City witnessed an increase in crimes against
24 women, including domestic violence, femicides and
25 rapes. In 2011, there were 92 family-related

1
2 homicides in New York City, and the NYPD responded
3 to 252,813 domestic violence incidents, averaging
4 to over 700 incidents per day. We also know that
5 a significant portion of crimes against women are
6 underreported. Immigrant women are especially
7 vulnerable because of the multiple barriers that
8 they face, thus putting them at an ever-greater
9 risk. Working with the immigrant and newer
10 immigrant communities, I can testify that VAWA
11 funding has provided agencies like Connect the
12 ability to provide training for a wide variety of
13 professionals and community-based organizations,
14 helped to ensure that victims of violence have
15 access to knowledgeable advocacy networks, faith
16 leaders, other stakeholders, and a well-informed
17 and responsive justice system, not to mention that
18 VAWA funding has enabled organizations to provide
19 the most needed and critical immigration services
20 to the survivors of domestic violence. As many of
21 you are aware, crimes in New York City have seen a
22 decline, except for sexual assault and domestic
23 violence. Currently VAWA is the only major
24 federal funding that is available to combat
25 domestic and sexual violence. Even with the

1
2 current rate of VAWA funding Connect and other
3 victims' service organizations in the City can
4 hardly meet the needs of victims and or survivors.
5 Now, imagine what will happen when the existing
6 funding is withdrawn. Immigrant women and their
7 children who are victims of domestic violence
8 often do not report incidents of domestic violence
9 for fear of retaliation and deportation. Without
10 this much-needed funding, women will not be able
11 to self-petition or have access to U visas, and
12 therefore remain ineligible for public benefits,
13 reasonable lengths of stay in shelter, priority in
14 public housing, etc.--all of the safety nets our
15 society turns to in encouraging battered women and
16 their children to leave. All of the immigration
17 remedies also act as a gateway to our civil and
18 criminal systems. The fragile network of services
19 and collaborative efforts that we have built in
20 the City will be destroyed, and large numbers of
21 women and children will be vulnerable to
22 escalating violence. Without continued VAWA
23 funding, the gateway to economic self-sufficiency
24 will be closed. Too many families will be forced
25 into deeper poverty and isolation. This will have

1
2 a negative impact on an environment of instability
3 and fear.

4 MERCEDES MATIAS: Very recently,
5 when I came on to Connect in April of last year,
6 in August of 2011, one of our clients was at risk
7 of becoming undocumented because she had a
8 conditional residency and her batterer was
9 refusing to proceed with the rest of the
10 proceeding in order for her to become a legal
11 permanent resident, and we were able to assist her
12 with that. And through the VAWA battered spouse
13 waiver, she was able to get her residency here and
14 move towards self-sufficiency and kind of get away
15 from her domestic violence situation. And I think
16 that, as previously mentioned by other peoples'
17 testimony, this really speaks to the impact that
18 VAWA has on our communities. It's increasing
19 women's self-sufficiency, it's creating more
20 positive environments for children, and in turn it
21 influences kind of the quality of life that we
22 experience in New York City, by the word of mouth
23 by survivors, that they're telling other women and
24 other victims that there are access to services,
25 that there are people who are engaged and

1
2 committed to the movement, to end domestic
3 violence and to end sexual assault. And so
4 without the funding, there won't be those
5 entryways for other victim survivors to kind of
6 find their own path through their experience.

7 CHAI JINDASURAT: Good afternoon.

8 My name is Chai Jindasurat, and I am the
9 coordinator of the National Coalition of Anti-
10 Violence Programs, NCAVP, at the New York City Gay
11 and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project. I am here to
12 testify about Resolution 1064, and before I begin,
13 I would like to relay the regrets of AVP's
14 executive Director, Sharon Staple, who has been
15 out of the country and was unavailable to testify
16 today. AVP empowers lesbian, gay, bisexual,
17 transgender, queer, and HIV affected communities
18 and allies to end all forms of violence through
19 organizing and education, and support survivors
20 through counseling and advocacy. We envision a
21 world in which all LGBTQH people are safe,
22 respected, and live free from violence. AVP
23 coordinates the National Coalition of Anti-
24 Violence Programs, NCAVP, a national coalition of
25 local member programs and affiliate organizations

1
2 that work to prevent, respond to and end all forms
3 of violence against and within LGBTQ and HIV
4 affected communities. AVP's executive director
5 and NCAVP members have worked extensively on the
6 Violence against women act, and specifically to
7 make the reauthorization of VAWA LGBTQ inclusive,
8 to protect all survivors of violence. Recognizing
9 this need, Senators Leahy and Crapo introduced
10 Senate Bill 1925, a bill to reauthorize VAWA that
11 explicitly includes LGBTQ survivors and victims in
12 VAWA protections. The New York City Gay and
13 Lesbian Anti-Violence Project urges the New York
14 City Council to pass a resolution that supports
15 the LGBTQ-inclusive S 1925, that acknowledges the
16 specific need to have a federal VAWA that is
17 inclusive of the specific needs of LGBTQ victims
18 and survivors of domestic violence, dating
19 violence, sexual assault and stalking. AVP's
20 program, NCAVP, has been advocating with other
21 national stakeholders for the past two years to
22 ensure that the reauthorization of VAWA has
23 explicit protections for LGBTQ survivors. NCAVP
24 was the first national LGBTQ organization to gain
25 a seat with the National Taskforce to End Domestic

1
2 and Sexual Violence against Women, and has been
3 the leading voice of the Steering Committee's
4 LGBTQ subcommittee. LGBTQ survivors of domestic
5 violence, dating violence, sexual assault and
6 stalking must be included in VAWA in the following
7 three provisions of the legislation. First, as
8 explicitly included as under-served populations in
9 VAWAs definitions. Second, as explicitly included
10 in non-discrimination provisions for VAWA-funded
11 service providers. And third, included as a
12 specific purpose area under VAWA's STOP formula
13 funding. Including LGBTQ victims and survivors in
14 these specific protections is critical due to the
15 prevalence of this violence and the lack of
16 services available to LGBTQ survivors. Domestic
17 violence, dating violence, sexual assault and
18 stalking--the four crimes addressed by VAWA--are
19 serious public health problems that threaten the
20 wellbeing of thousands of individuals and families
21 across the United States every year. Generally
22 when we think about domestic violence we think
23 about heterosexual relationships in which men are
24 violent towards women. Less universally recognize
25 is the occurrence of domestic violence in LGBTQ

1 relationships. Research indicates that LGBTQ and
2 non-LGBTQ individuals experience domestic
3 violence, sexual assault and stalking at
4 comparable rates. In 25% to 33% of all
5 relationships domestic violence exists. LGBTQ
6 women make up the majority of domestic violence
7 related murders in the LGBTQ community, and
8 account for nearly half of all reports of LGBTQ
9 domestic violence. Since 1994, VAWA has provided
10 billions of dollars of funding for life saving
11 services for domestic violence, dating violence,
12 sexual violence, and stalking victims across the
13 country. However, these services are not
14 universally accessible for LGBTQ survivors.
15 NCAVP's membership works directly with LGBTQ
16 survivors on a daily basis across the nation.
17 NCAVP also compiles and documents this violence in
18 an annual published report about intimate partner
19 violence in LGBTQ communities within the United
20 States. In 2010, NCAVP's national report found
21 that 45% of LGBTQ survivors were turned away from
22 domestic violence shelter, and only 7% of all
23 LGBTQ survivors called the police after an
24 incident of domestic violence. Additionally,
25

1
2 nearly 55% of LGBTQ survivors seeking an order of
3 protection in the United States were denied. In
4 another 2010 study, 96% of victims services and
5 law enforcement agencies in the United States said
6 that they did not have specific services for LGBTQ
7 victims. LGBTQ people must be protected by non-
8 discrimination provisions that prohibit service
9 providers from discriminating against victims
10 based on sexual orientation or gender identity. S
11 1925 does this in the definition section of the
12 legislation, and we at AVP believe that this I the
13 most effective way to include LGBTQ people, as
14 under-served populations. A 2011 survey of NCAVP
15 Coalition members and affiliates found that nearly
16 85% of survey participants responded that they had
17 worked with an LGBTQ survivor of domestic
18 violence, intimate partner violence, dating
19 violence, sexual assault or stalking, who reported
20 that they were turned away or denied services such
21 as shelter, crisis intervention, police or legal
22 response, because of their sexual orientation or
23 gender identity. Of those advocates who had
24 worked with survivors who had been denied services
25 because of their sexual orientation or gender

1
2 identity, 100% had worked with someone who had
3 been denied shelter, 91% had worked with someone
4 who had been denied direct services from a
5 mainstream organization, 64% have worked with
6 someone who have been denied services from law
7 enforcement, 54% have worked with someone who has
8 been denied services in the form of court
9 response, and 9% have worked with someone who has
10 been denied services from crime victims'
11 compensation. LGBTQ survivors and all survivors
12 must be free from bias and discrimination when
13 seeking support to end domestic violence, dating
14 violence, sexual assault, or stalking. S 1925
15 does this by including sexual orientation and
16 gender identity in non-discrimination protections
17 in the definitions section of the legislation, and
18 AVP and NCAVP believe this is the most effective
19 way to protect LGBTQ survivors from bias. Only
20 approximately 1.5% of the 2,500 victims service
21 organizations in the United States are LGBTQ
22 specific. This means that most LGBTQ victims and
23 survivors must seek services at mainstream
24 organization that may not have the cultural
25 competency to address issues related to sexual

1
2 orientation and gender identity. STOP funding,
3 which provides funds for each state to address
4 domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault
5 and stalking, should be explicitly LGBTQ inclusive
6 so that each state can develop LGBTQ resources for
7 LGBTQ victims and survivors in their state. Some
8 states, such as New York, already provide the STOP
9 pass through funding, however, the vast majority
10 of states do not. Explicit inclusion of LGBTQ
11 populations in STOP funding provisions in VAWA,
12 such as that proposed in S 1925, would address
13 this. To give you an idea of what this looks like
14 for LGBTQ survivors, I'd like to tell you the true
15 story of Davis. Davis, a gay man, was in danger
16 because his ex-boyfriend, Jason, the abuser he had
17 fled, had just found him. Davis had just received
18 a death threat in the form of a note on his car
19 from Jason. Davis had been with Jason for seven
20 years. During that time his partner was always
21 controlling. He monitored his phone calls, wanted
22 to know where he was at all times, and controlled
23 all of their money. One day, when Davis came home
24 from work, Jason was already home with friends.
25 Jason and Davis got into a fight and Jason

1 sexually assaulted Davis. A few days later, Davis
2 grabbed a few things, got in his car and just
3 started driving. Davis stayed with a friend that
4 Jason didn't know and got a job. He was away from
5 Jason for a month before he got the note on his
6 car, which threatened Davis's life. Davis sought
7 help with domestic violence shelters, but was told
8 we don't shelter men. Davis faced a world in
9 which services for LGBTQ people were scarce. Few
10 service providers understood his needs as a gay
11 man, and where he had to cross the country to find
12 an LGBTQ specific service provider to help him.
13 No victim or survivor of violence should have to
14 face this world, especially not while they are
15 also dealing with intimate partner or sexual
16 violence. Currently, S 1925, which reauthorizes
17 VAWA, has passed the Senate Judiciary Committee
18 with protections for LGBTQ survivors intact, but
19 continued explicit support for these provisions is
20 necessary to ensure its continued success. I
21 speak today not only on behalf of LGBTQ
22 communities, but also on behalf of all survivors
23 in ensuring that everyone, regardless of their
24 identity, has access to safety. The New York City
25

1
2 Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project believes
3 that S 1925, the real VAWA reauthorization
4 legislation, does this. And we urge the New York
5 City Council to specifically and explicitly
6 support this legislation. I thank the City
7 Council for the opportunity to speak with you
8 today and offer this testimony. I also thank you
9 for considering this resolution in support of the
10 passage of the Violence Against Women Act, and I
11 encourage New York City with its strong history of
12 LGBTQ leadership, and the birthplace of the LGBTQ
13 movement, to be a national leader by explicitly
14 including LGBTQ survivors in their resolution.
15 LGBTQ victims of domestic violence, dating
16 violence, sexual assault and stalking can receive
17 the recognition and help they need by being
18 included in the protections in the Violence
19 Against Women Act. Thank you for your time and
20 your consideration of this important matter.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
22 for your testimony. And I believe we have one
23 more. We're going to have to squeeze her in, like
24 a good happy family.

25 MARGUERITE CORDICE: Good

1
2 afternoon. My name is Marguerite Cordice, and I
3 probably have the smallest law office in New York
4 City. I operate from my home and I have the
5 pleasure to serve a predominantly Spanish-
6 speaking, solely or primarily Spanish-speaking
7 clientele, and many of my clients are LGBTQ
8 clients. I do a great amount of VAWA work and U
9 visa work. And since I had the chance to listen
10 to the testimony given so far today, and much of
11 it has covered many of the points I would like to
12 share with you, I'm just going to keep it short
13 and touch on a few things I would suggest and hope
14 that you will keep in mind as you're pushing
15 forward on the reenactment of the VAWA Act. A few
16 things. I'm not a recipient of VAWA funding at
17 all. I'm a for-profit office, but I have
18 organized myself as the Holistic Legal Advocacy
19 Center of Queens. It's a big name for a very
20 little office. But I did that in a way to address
21 a problem that I saw in the U visa certification
22 problem. There are times when I reach out when a
23 client has been aiding and helping with the
24 prosecution of a case, a criminal matter against
25 her or his abuser, and I'm not able to easily get

1
2 the certification. So, I tried on one case to
3 certify my own case. I came out of law school and
4 went directly to the Queens District Attorney's
5 Office, where I supervised the complaint room for
6 many years. And so I have a backwards, forwards,
7 in my sleep command of the penal law, and I
8 believe I'm able to certify what crime has been
9 committed and what sections of it. And so I went
10 ahead and certified, filled out and signed the
11 certification of one of my own cases that the
12 police department refused to certify. And while
13 Vermont--while the Office that handles the VAWA
14 cases for Vermont refused to accept that
15 certification, and unfortunately the client wasn't
16 prepared to appeal--and I would have loved to
17 appeal that issue--that's a problem, a real
18 serious problem for the prosecution of the U visa
19 cases. So, there might be something that can be
20 put into the VAWA act that can assure that when
21 there is approved that a person has been, when a
22 victim has been cooperating and helping in the
23 prosecution of a case that those cases can be
24 certified some other way, or that certification
25 can be dispensed with. I think that would help a

1
2 great deal. Another issue that I understand the
3 new act will be addressing is the issue of the
4 elderly as victims of domestic violence. And I
5 came across a fact pattern that I could do nothing
6 about, and it was involved in a 70-year-old woman,
7 approximately 70-year-old woman, who was the
8 daughter of a legal resident, and she was living
9 in the home with the daughter, and the daughter's
10 son, US citizen son, and she was being for all I
11 can--in my opinion--abused. She was verbally
12 abused. The money was controlled. Her telephone
13 calls were controlled. She was threatened with,
14 you know, if you don't behave yourself I'm going
15 to send you back to the birth country where there
16 was no more family. In other words... And under
17 the state of the law as it stands today, there is
18 no way for--to file a VAWA case for that
19 individual. Now, I understand that some of that
20 will be changed, hopefully, with the new law. And
21 I certainly hope that will be the case. I
22 understand that the elderly son and daughter of a
23 US resident maybe can file the VAWA case, but of a
24 US resident apparently that's not allowed at this
25 time. And one other--two other little points. I

1
2 think we might consider renaming the VAWA Act,
3 just because I see so many men who are victims of
4 abuse, and I see--I think maybe VAPA, you know,
5 Violence Against People Act, I don't know. But
6 it's--I know that it hinders some men when I say,
7 well, there's something called the Violence
8 Against Women Act, and as it is, men are not so
9 apt to come forward and tell you easily what
10 they've been through. So, just something I'm
11 throwing out there, that's come to my head from
12 time to time and I thought I would suggest it to
13 you. And one other thing about VAWA is that there
14 are places in the world where a couple living
15 together and holding themselves out as husband and
16 wife for instance, I'm thinking of another fact
17 pattern of a man from North Africa, and he meets
18 someone on the internet, she goes over, they are
19 together and she becomes pregnant, they do not
20 have a marriage that is registered civilly in that
21 country. She convinces him to come over on a
22 fiancée visa. She's pregnant. She travels to him
23 again. The whole community sees she's pregnant,
24 they're together, they're living together, they
25 are a married couple in that community. But when

1
2 he comes here, right after the birth of the child
3 on a fiancée visa, which means he only has a very
4 short amount--90 days--in order to marry and
5 submit his application for residency, she decides
6 that there are religious problems and differences
7 that before they thought they could surmount, that
8 are not surmountable. And she decides to send him
9 packing. She packs him up, she puts him on a
10 plane, the plane has a connecting stop in another
11 city, he gets off in that city, and a few months
12 later he lands in my office. And the question is,
13 what can I do? This is my son, I can't see him,
14 my firstborn, I'm going home with nothing to show
15 and everybody knows. Shameful. Shameful. And
16 hurtful and humiliating and all the things that we
17 are so careful to outline in our VAWA petition,
18 so, again, you know, I researched it. I said, we
19 could try this. It's--most of my cases are like
20 that. I have the office of impossible cases, so,
21 you know, I try these cases that are right on the
22 line. I said, we could try it, but I don't know.
23 Unfortunately he decided that he didn't want to
24 take the risk. So that's something else that
25 should be put into VAWA. When a couple has really

1
2 held themselves out as married and there are
3 indicia of a real relationship, as the birth of a
4 child, and there's threats of, you know, never
5 seeing that child again and actual attempts to get
6 rid of this person, that should be covered, I
7 think also by VAWA. And so, I want to thank you
8 for allowing me to give my short testimony here
9 today, and it's the first time I've ever testified
10 before the City Council. It's very exciting, and
11 I thank you very much.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
13 for describing it as exciting. And thank you for
14 choosing my committee to do that. I also want to--
15 -I don't know if Council Member Chin has any
16 questions? Okay. I want to thank in particular
17 the organizations that have testified today, the
18 New York Alliance Against Sexual Assault--thank
19 you for your testimony, it was very informative
20 and has allowed us to kind of hash out some things
21 and some accuracies that we were kind of not
22 accurate on, so you helped a great deal. Anti-
23 violence project, you brought in a voice that
24 sometimes isn't very clear in a lot of our
25 conversations, so I greatly appreciate that. And

1
2 both organizations together have helped remind us
3 that this is not only about domestic violence,
4 this includes many layers of resources and help.
5 And Connect, you guys are just the best, so.
6 Thank you very much for your testimony, and we're
7 going to call up the next panel. And I know that
8 everyone is eager to testify. If we've already
9 heard it, maybe--I'm not saying that you shouldn't
10 say it, but maybe in a shorter version. Is this
11 the...? Okay, this is five. That's a lot of
12 people. Right? Too many. Five people is too
13 many. We're going to call up Zeinab Eyega.

14 FEMALE VOICE: She actually had to
15 leave. I have a copy of her testimony.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Oh. Okay,
17 if you can just give it for the record. And she
18 was from Sauti Yetu Center in Staten Island and
19 the Bronx, right?

20 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Reshmi
22 Sengupta, from Sakhi for South Asian Women.
23 Karina Aybar-Jacobs, Dominican--oh, of course. .
24 Dominican Women's Development Center, Happy
25 Dominican Independence Day. Rosita Romero from

1
2 the Dominican Women's Development Center, and
3 Bobbie Sackman and Pat Brownell, Council of Senior
4 Centers and Services. Oh, of course. This is an
5 awesome panel. Thank you for coming to testify,
6 and you may begin in the order that you were
7 called.

8 RESHMI SENGUPTA: Hello? Hi, my
9 name is Reshmi Sengupta, and I'm a Domestic
10 Violence Program advocate at Sakhi for South Asian
11 Women. Sakhi--thank you for having us here and
12 giving me an opportunity to speak in support of
13 the VAWA Act. Sakhi for South Asian Women is a
14 community-based organization in New York dedicated
15 to ending violence against women of South Asian
16 origin. We provide a range of services to
17 survivors of domestic violence against women,
18 including case management, monthly support groups,
19 legal advocacy, civil legal referrals, court
20 accompaniments, translation services, counseling
21 and shelter referrals, health and financial
22 literacy classes, as well as information on job
23 resources. I'm going to keep it short. Many
24 things have been said. I just wanted to talk
25 specifically about some of the experiences of the

1
2 South Asian immigrant community. In the
3 population that we work with, we see a significant
4 amount of--number of people, women who come to
5 this country after marriage, on a conditional
6 green card, and some on a fiancée visa. And at
7 this point they are solely dependent on their
8 husbands for their immigration status. When there
9 is a DV situation at home, there are of course
10 many reasons that deter a woman from reporting the
11 abuse, and primarily one of the reasons is usually
12 the fear of deportation. Many survivors of DV,
13 they also do not have access to their documents,
14 personal and legal documents, as they confiscated
15 by their spouses. In this situation, when the
16 survivors come to us, to an organization like us,
17 we try to direct them to the various resources
18 that are available out there, and especially like
19 self-petition under the VAWA act, and that's when
20 we work with our partner agencies, like Queens
21 Legal Services and Legal Aid, whom you heard about
22 before, and so make that referral, and then they
23 continue the work, good work, after that. So, I
24 just wanted to say a quick case study. We had a
25 client who was married and was brought to this

1
2 country on a conditional green card. There was
3 excessive physical, sexual, mental abuse, not only
4 in the hands of her husband but also the whole
5 family. She of course did not, could not, report
6 the violence because she didn't have any personal
7 or legal documents on her, and there was fear of
8 deportation, isolated--language barrier plays a
9 big part in the immigrant community. Eventually
10 she was taken back, forcefully taken back to her
11 home country and abandoned there. She managed to
12 go to the consulate there, get some paperwork to
13 come back to this country, and that's when--and
14 stayed with a distant relative. Then they
15 contacted us. And then our work started. She had
16 no legal documents at this point. That's when we
17 made the referral to our partner agencies, and
18 they were able to get her a self-petition, and now
19 she has a work permit. She's working, and she
20 doesn't need--she's on the pathway to self-
21 sufficiency. So, there are many cases like this.
22 I don't think I want to go on and on, but I guess
23 I'll--thank you for hearing us out.

24 ROSITA ROMERO: Okay. My name is
25 Rosita Romero. I am the Executive Director of the

1
2 Dominican Women's Development Center in Washington
3 Heights. I would like to thank Julissa Ferreras
4 as the Chairperson of the Women's Issues Committee
5 in the City Council, and the rest of the Council
6 Members for your support and the introduction of
7 Resolution 1064, which we are talking in favor of,
8 for the record. The Dominican Women's Development
9 Center is a multi-service organization, and we
10 have an anti-domestic violence program called
11 Nuevo Amanecer, which we have had for 14 years.
12 We have this program because we believe that
13 violence against women in all of its forms is a
14 crime. We believe that perpetrators should be
15 prosecuted to the full extent of the law. We also
16 believe that they should be zero tolerance of
17 domestic violence and all kinds of violence
18 against women, and also because we see violence
19 against women as a human rights issue. We believe
20 that in the sense that everybody has a right to
21 live a life free of violence, and that violence,
22 it's a problem in our society that erodes the very
23 fabric of society. It destroys families, it
24 destroys communities, it affects the health of
25 women physically, psychologically, and also that

1
2 of children for generations to come. It is an
3 added cost of healthcare to our nation. And we
4 also believe that violence against women
5 diminishes the human spirit of those who are
6 perpetrators who are radically in need of changing
7 their behaviors and attitudes against women. We
8 believe that if the Violence Against Women's Act
9 is not reinstated, we will not be able to provide
10 services to the hundreds of women that we service
11 every year in an area with a high level of needs,
12 and we will not be able to reach out to the
13 thousands of people that we reach out with the
14 message of prevention and intolerance against
15 domestic violence, whether it is through our
16 Brides March against Domestic Violence or the
17 other services that we provide. And to speak
18 about the services that we provide and the impact
19 of cutting VAWA to the women that we service, I
20 brought Karina Aybar, who is the--our new program
21 director of our anti domestic violence program, an
22 emerging leader within our organization and our
23 community.

24 KARINA AYBAR-JACOBS: Good

25 afternoon and thanks for having us in. We

1
2 appreciate the fact that you're taking action and
3 bringing attention to this issue that I'm
4 surprised that hasn't made any headlines, so, it
5 tells us a lot. We provide bilingual services,
6 individual counseling, support groups. We work
7 very closely in collaboration with organizations
8 such as Sanctuary For Families, Northern Manhattan
9 Improvement Corporation, Steps to End Family
10 Violence, among many others, to provide legal
11 assistance for self-petition, VAWA self-petition,
12 and U visas. And also, an extension of the VAWA
13 provision is also asylum in cases that provide
14 evidence and the legitimate of the domestic abuse.
15 Now, with that being said, we've been servicing
16 the community, not only the Latina community, but
17 we service Asian women, African-American, are
18 becoming more common. So, we service any women
19 that is victim of domestic Violence at Nuevo
20 Amanecer. And I just--I was surprised because
21 some people have called this a women's issue, but
22 it's a family issue. It's a global and societal
23 issue that affects us all, and eventually the
24 children are the ones that pay the consequences.
25 It has a domino effect. And some people have

1
2 called it a man hating issue, a law that promotes
3 divorce. And let's clarify that. For example,
4 when we have cases where the woman wants to work
5 things out and the abuse is not severe, they are
6 able--if the perpetrator is willing and
7 acknowledges that he is being abusive and wants to
8 seek help--then we refer for family therapy. So,
9 we are here promoting non-violence in the family,
10 and I think it's very important to clarify that
11 VAWA, the VAWA Act, even though it stands for
12 Violence Against Women Act, because the vast
13 majority of victims are women, it does protect men
14 and children. And if you allow me to translate
15 for--we are 11 of us here from the Dominican
16 Women's Development Center, I will not name some
17 of the survivors that are here today, but I want
18 to thank them for their time in coming forward,
19 which is very difficult. [Spanish] Thank you.

20 BOBBIE SACKMAN: That's a hard act
21 to follow. Thank you for that testimony. My name
22 is Bobbie Sackman, Director of Public Policy with
23 the Council of Senior Centers and Services. I'm
24 here today to talk a little bit about elder abuse.
25 And nationally, the Violence Against Women Act,

1 we've heard today, has made tremendous changes.
2 Nationally there's only about \$4 million within
3 VAWA that goes for elder abuse, and I'm told a
4 fraction of that goes for services; it's mostly
5 for training. I can't sit here today and say that
6 VAWA has made a tremendous difference nationally
7 in the lives of older women. And yet, we have
8 \$800,000 that every year City Council restores for
9 us to the Department for the Aging, which we thank
10 you for, but that's about as much as gets spent
11 nationally on services through VAWA. So, we can
12 get you copies, but I have a copy with me today,
13 the New York State Study on Elder Abuse Under the
14 Radar was published last year by the new York
15 State Office of Family and Children's Services.
16 It was funded through them. There was an Elder
17 Abuse Summit in Albany last year. Long story
18 short, for every 24 cases of elder abuse victims,
19 one goes reported, so 23 or 24 actually that would
20 go unreported, so the estimate is over 1/4 of a
21 million elder New Yorkers that are victims of
22 elder abuse. Now, 65% of them are women, so it's
23 about 170,000. Many of them are physical, sexual,
24 emotional. A lot of them are also financial abuse
25

1
2 as well, in the case of elderly people. And in
3 New York City, it would be about 120,000 people,
4 also about 65% would be women, so it's 70,000,
5 80,000 women. We need to strengthen the language.
6 For your consideration we've given you some draft
7 language for this resolution. I'm only sorry I
8 didn't know about it sooner. I know you've gone
9 through a whole process, but I'm hoping the door
10 is still open for this. In New York City, and I
11 think around the country, most people seem to
12 think that Adult Protective Services can take care
13 of elderly women or older women that are being
14 abused, when in fact APS, about 20% of the
15 referrals on elder abuse that they get get
16 accepted, the other 80% don't. And APS deals with
17 women--well, men too of course--but women who
18 can't make their own decisions, while many elder
19 abuse victims can make their own decisions, but
20 they're stuck. So, they're not appropriate. And
21 some of the language that we've included today
22 actually comes right--I'm here with Pat Brownell,
23 who is a Professor Emeritus at Fordham University,
24 has worked in the Elder Abuse field for decades
25 and also works as a volunteer at an NGO at the UN.

1
2 And so, they have language that we've suggested
3 into this resolution on the convention of
4 elimination of all forms of discrimination against
5 women, to add older women wherever you can insert
6 it into the resolution where it makes sense, which
7 we've suggested. And so that women are free of
8 violence throughout a lifetime. And sometimes it
9 may change some of the definitions of what's
10 considered abuse. Most of the perpetrators are
11 family members. They're adult children, they're
12 grandchildren and other relatives, which is why
13 many don't get reported, because of the shame and
14 the fear. And so, it could be mother and adult
15 child, that might be a category that needs to be
16 funded and addressed through VAWA. We would also
17 like to just, I think in general just say that
18 because of the demographics here in New York City
19 and nationally, where the older adult population
20 is booming, more to come with the Baby Boom
21 generation, however we can work to bring the
22 domestic--what's historically been the domestic
23 violence community, which obviously is doing
24 incredible work--how do we bring them together
25 with those organizations that do address elder

1
2 abuse so that it's built into everybody's culture?
3 And I hope by the next time there's a
4 reauthorization of VAWA, I hope first of all we
5 have a different congress, but I also hope that we
6 can sit here and say, hey, we made some progress
7 on elder abuse, locally and nationally.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
9 very much for your testimony, and I do have your
10 suggestions. A lot of what was written in the
11 resolution speaks to the VAWA act itself, but I
12 think you made an incredible--well, you made a
13 very important point that we should be more
14 sensitive to ages, as you've highlighted here.
15 And I think in everything we discuss in the City
16 Council, but definitely on issues, you have my
17 commitment on issues of women's issues, that I can
18 have some oversight on, we will be more sensitive
19 to that. And I think that speaks to a lot of the
20 advocacy also that the LGBT community has done,
21 and we kind of automatically do that now, and it
22 should definitely be done regarding age. And so I
23 thank you for bringing this to our--and the
24 Committee Staff is here, so they definitely know
25 how important this will be for me. And as for,

1
2 you know, it's interesting that both groups come
3 up to testify, they're both a growing--a community
4 that is growing in our neighborhoods, and
5 spreading, the Dominican and the South Asian
6 population, as we kind of come out of a lot of the
7 shadows that we are accustomed to being under. I
8 think we're very lucky to have organizations such
9 as yours to be able to provide this strength and
10 this voice for women. And if you could just
11 speak--one of the things, and as I mentioned
12 earlier, I want to really hash down on the
13 financial support that VAWA brings. Oftentimes we
14 don't correlate women's issues with a dollar
15 amount. And I would like to hear, if you can let
16 me know, what impact this has on your direct
17 budget, what impact does VAWA have on your budget,
18 if you can, if you have those numbers.

19 KARINA AYBAR-JACOBS: Well,
20 unfortunately our STOP funding has been reduced
21 throughout the years. We are now down to, like,
22 \$62,000. But let me clarify that. We were, when
23 I first started in 2006, we were a program that
24 operated with four fulltime counselors, a child
25 psychologist, a counselor, and an outreach worker,

1
2 which was myself at the time. And now we're being
3 reduced to four employees, which is myself, the
4 hotline coordinator, which is sitting here, and
5 two other counselors. And despite the decrease in
6 funding, we continue to provide services, even out
7 of our own volition to provide workshops in local
8 schools and hospitals and clinics. And we receive
9 funding from VAWA, STOP funding and Crime Victims
10 Support and the DOVE initiative from the City
11 Council, which we really appreciate, and we just
12 tired to come up with creative ways to serve, but
13 this honestly, will be the downfall, and we'll be
14 going backwards, back to even before 1994. This
15 is really a disgrace that we are even here
16 discussing an issue that affects everyone, despite
17 of their political affiliation.

18 RESHMI SENGUPTA: I personally
19 don't have numbers on me, but if the funding
20 decreases on the legal service side, Legal Aid,
21 all them, that will directly affect our work,
22 because we partner with them. So, that's Brian
23 Dworkin, the other people we refer our clients to
24 and the other people we go to. So their funding
25 will directly affect our--yeah.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
3 very much for your testimony today. We have one
4 final panel. Jin Kim, Howard Beach, and--oh,
5 Gracias, Rosita. And Ying Yao Yue [phonetic] I
6 hope you pronounce it correctly, because I know I
7 just killed your name. Jugba Santi [phonetic],
8 and Attia Nawaz [phonetic]. And you may begin
9 your testimony in the order that you were called.

10 JIN KIM: Good afternoon Chairwoman
11 Ferreras and members of the Women's Issues
12 Committee. My name is Jin Kim, and I am simply
13 here as a concerned constituent of District 27. I
14 would first like to take this opportunity to thank
15 you for holding a meeting for such an important
16 cause. The Violence Against Women Act has changed
17 the ways in which victims are viewed and treated
18 by training professionals and creating regulations
19 on how cases are handles. And as a woman, and
20 personally knowing victims of domestic abuse and
21 sexual assaults, I feel that it is vital that this
22 act is reauthorized in order to continue to
23 protect the rights of women, men, and children. I
24 would just like to provide you with a couple of
25 statistics to illustrate the prevalence of

1
2 domestic violence and sexual assault and stalking
3 in the United States, and then just highlight a
4 couple of ways in which VAWA has helped improve, I
5 guess, society and how we handle these cases. As
6 stated earlier, based on the National Intimate
7 Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, conducted by
8 the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, 1
9 in 6 women and 1 in 19 men in the United States
10 have been stalked at one point in their lifetime.
11 Nearly 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men in the United
12 States have experienced severe physical violence
13 by an intimate partner. Studies have also shown
14 that roughly 3 in 10 women and 1 in 10 men in the
15 United States who have experienced rape, physical
16 violence or stalking, have reported feelings of
17 fearfulness, experiencing post traumatic stress
18 disorder systems, being concerned for their safety
19 and missing at least one day of work or school.
20 Victims have also reported experiencing anxiety as
21 well as having difficulty sleeping. Some actually
22 speculate that up to 10 million children have
23 witnessed some form of domestic abuse. And
24 studies have found that these children who have
25 been exposed to domestic violence exhibit post

1
2 traumatic stress disorder symptoms themselves as
3 well as grow up to have behavioral and health
4 issues as adults. Since the enactment of the
5 VAWA, according to the National Domestic Violence
6 Hotline, the percentage of women who have reported
7 an incident was much greater in 1998 than in 1993,
8 and that since 1996, the hotline has answered an
9 average of 21,000 phone calls per month. More
10 than 660 state laws have been passed regarding
11 stalking, dating violence, rape and sexual
12 assault. As stated earlier by the--by a woman,
13 there are an average of 24 rape, physical
14 violence, or stalking victims per minute, and that
15 equates to more than 12 million men and women who
16 are victimized in a span of one year. And as I
17 have stated in the beginning of my testimony, it
18 is imperative that the act is reauthorized. The
19 rights of abused men, women and children need to
20 continue to be protected, regardless of their age,
21 gender and race. And once again, thank you for
22 giving me an opportunity to present my testimony.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
24 very much.

25 YINGHUA YUE: Good afternoon. My

1
2 name is Yinghua Yue. I'm currently a student and
3 sociology major, and I am here to testify on
4 behalf of myself. As a woman myself, especially
5 one that is educated and training into a
6 responsible citizen, I eagerly feel that I should
7 voice out to support the reauthorization of the
8 VAWA, which will help protect my fellows who are
9 facing physical or mental threats, or even
10 suffering abuses. Here I will express my opinions
11 on why it is important to reauthorize the VAWA.
12 When we look at the facts and data about violence
13 against women, it should be sufficient for all of
14 us who are conscious citizens with sympathy and
15 sense of justice to stand by the victims. As
16 findings of some surveys show, nearly 1 in every 4
17 adult women are beaten or raped by their partners.
18 1 in 6 have experienced an attempted or completed
19 rape. Three women are killed by intimate partners
20 each day in this country. More than 22 women
21 surveyed reported being assaulted by their
22 partners. Approximately 2.3 million people each
23 year in this country are raped or physically
24 assaulted by a current or former partner, and
25 about 37% of women seeking injury-related

1
2 treatment because of injuries inflicted by their
3 partners. All of this shows that violence against
4 women is prevalent and severe. Thousands of women
5 are suffering mistreatment that no single human
6 being or even an animal should deserve. Such kind
7 of violence, usually called domestic violence,
8 which involves various forms of coercive or
9 controlling behaviors including physical abuse,
10 emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, or
11 financial abuse upon the victims. Sometimes it
12 can be life-threatening, have consequences caused
13 by domestic violence can be easily observed and -
14 - health-related consequences could be non-fatal
15 outcomes, including both physical injuries and
16 mental injuries like depression, fear, and post
17 traumatic stress disorder, and even fatal outcomes
18 including suicide, homicide, maternal mortality
19 and HIV or AIDS. However, some of the
20 consequences are also so severe that it should
21 never be allowed. According to UNICEF's report
22 about domestic violence against women and girls,
23 consequences left by domestic violence also
24 include denial of fundamental rights, human
25 development goals being undermined, and impacts on

1
2 children. As the report states, series of
3 international treaties on human rights have
4 reached the consensus that violence against women
5 and girls should be eradicated by the efforts of
6 government and local laws, no matter how deeply
7 these practices are imbedded in culture. Thus, in
8 the United States, women should also be protected
9 from violence by effective laws. Women being
10 protected from violence is regarded as their
11 enjoyment of human rights. Also, as the
12 Declaration of Independence--

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS:

14 [Interposing] I'm so sorry, I just wanted to--I
15 know that you have testimony, and we're going to
16 be reading through it, but I want to be able to
17 give everybody an opportunity to also testify.
18 So, if you can summarize, I would greatly
19 appreciate it.

20 YINGHUA YUE: Oh, okay.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you.

22 YINGHUA YUE: And then also, just
23 now I have thought about why there were some - -
24 health related consequence caused by domestic
25 violence, and also there are also economic costs

1
2 not only for the victims themselves, but also to
3 the whole society. Just, for example, in the
4 United States some surveys show that domestic
5 violence already costs annual expenses of more
6 than \$5.8 billion, with \$4.1 in direct healthcare
7 expenses, and also costs employers up to \$13
8 billion each year, and also, this also causes the
9 government to pay more for the welfare that the
10 domestic violence victims depend on. And also, we
11 can also know that the domestic violence will have
12 serious lasting impacts on our children, which
13 will last into the future. Surveys also show that
14 it usually costs the--no matter the children are
15 witness or the victims themselves, it also causes
16 them serious mental injuries, which will lead to
17 more deviant behaviors in their adulthood.
18 Evidence also shows that in the whole society
19 there are--even though people are--many, many
20 people are suffering domestic violence, that
21 because the - - economic, the government is going
22 to cut a lot of funds that originally supporting
23 this progress. But I think that in this such kind
24 of economic situation we need to pay even more
25 attention to distribute more resources to such

1
2 kind of field, because surveys show that even
3 though the economic factors--the factors that will
4 directly cause the domestic violence, but it shows
5 that it will exacerbate the factors that lead to
6 domestic violence. So probably we can see that in
7 such kind of situation, there may be more women
8 will become the victims of such kind of
9 misconduct. So that's why I think, I think all of
10 us, we show our support to the reauthorization of
11 VAWA. That's it. Thank you so much.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
13 very much for your testimony. You may begin.

14 JUGBA SANTI: Good afternoon. My
15 name is Jugba Santi, and I'm here speaking in
16 support of calling on Congress to reauthorize
17 VAWA, which is Violence Against Women Act. I'm
18 going to briefly highlight just some statistics on
19 the affects of violence on women and their
20 children and how the support of VAWA needs to be
21 continued, and we should urge Congress to pass it.
22 As a member of several community organizations,
23 one of them primarily does community work at a
24 domestic violence shelter--so I've seen firsthand
25 the experience of violence against women and the

1
2 affects that it has on them as well as their
3 children. Just some statistics. 1 in 4 women
4 will experience domestic violence during her life,
5 so 25% of women in the US. Every year, 1 in 3
6 women who is a victim of homicide is murdered by
7 their partner. And for women of color the
8 statistics are even more alarming. Approximately
9 885,000 African American women were victims of
10 violent crimes during 2001. In 1994, a survey of
11 243 women, the rates for adult rape showed that
12 African American women disclosed the highest rate,
13 37.9%, followed by white women, 25.5%, and
14 Latinas, 17.9%, and Asian Americans, 10.5%. Women
15 are often afraid to come forward because of the
16 abuse, for fear that nothing will be done to their
17 attacker, or the retaliation from members of their
18 family and in their community. For every white
19 woman that reports her rape, at least five white
20 women do not report theirs, and yet for every
21 African American woman that reports her rape, at
22 least 15 African American women do not report
23 theirs. As of January 2012, every Democrat in the
24 United States Senate Judiciary Committee has voted
25 in favor of this act. Every Senate Republican on

1
2 the Committee has voted against it. We should not
3 let partisan politics interfere with the safety
4 and the lives of the women in this country who are
5 directly affected by domestic violence and sexual
6 assault. We need to continue to prosecute the
7 perpetrators of the violence and ensure that the
8 lives of the victims and their children are safe.
9 We must continue to protect them under the eyes of
10 the law. By not supporting this act, we are
11 putting millions of women's lives in danger, and
12 that's unacceptable. Thanks to the VAWA 1994 and
13 VAWA 2000, non-fatal violent victimizations
14 committed by intimate partners have declined by
15 49%. This is proof that programs that exist as a
16 result of the Violence Against Women Act do help
17 to deter crimes against women in our society.
18 That is why I'm encouraging every member of this
19 committee to step up to the plate, be an ally to
20 the women who have fallen victim to violent crimes
21 and support the Violence Against Women Act, and
22 ensure that Congress continues to support it, and
23 the victims that it helps to protect. It's the
24 fair, and it's the right thing to do. Thank you.

25 ATTIA NAWAZ: Good afternoon. My

1
2 name is Attia Nawaz. I have Bachelor's in
3 Sociology from Hunter College, and I have a plan
4 to do my Masters Degree. I am a volunteer at
5 Coney Island Hospital. Okay. My - - why the
6 government should reauthorize the resolution about
7 the Violence Against Women. I will also talk
8 about the causes of the violence and the ways we
9 can prevent it. The government should reauthorize
10 the resolution about the Violence Against Women,
11 because there are a number of women are getting
12 killed by the violence. According to National
13 Organization for Women's website statistics in
14 2005, 1,181 women were murdered by an intimate
15 partner. That's an average of three women every
16 day. Of all the women murdered in the US, about
17 one-third were killed by an intimate partner. In
18 this statistic we can see how much violence is
19 increasing among women, a big part of women are
20 being killed through domestic violence. As we can
21 see, mostly murders belong to the partners with
22 whom the woman had been living. Just in one year
23 a large number of women were killed, 1,181 women,
24 that's really very high. There are so many types
25 of women's violence, such as sexual harassment,

1
2 physical beating, emotional abuse, and violence
3 against women with disabilities. Women are more
4 victimized by their male partners who are living
5 with them compared with strangers. - - of outside
6 violence against women, sometimes women are
7 attacked by strangers, but most often they are
8 hurt by people who are close to them, a husband or
9 partner. Whether you are attacked by a stranger
10 or mistreated by a partner, violence and abuse can
11 have terrible affects. From the last - - we can
12 understand that the violence can have terrible
13 impacts on females, which can make them suffer
14 physically and emotionally. In addition to that,
15 this other category called domestic violence, in
16 this spouses attack their female partners. They
17 beat the women up so badly or wound them. A lot
18 of women get beaten by their spouses every year,
19 and some of them get injured and they need medical
20 treatment after that. According to statistics and
21 facts and figures, domestic violence can be
22 defined as abusive behavior in any relationship
23 that is used by one partner to gain or maintain
24 power and control over an intimate partner.
25 According to the National Center for Injury

1
2 Prevention and Control, women experience about 4.8
3 million intimate partner related physical assaults
4 and rapes every year. Less than 20% of battered
5 women sought medical treatment following an
6 injury. I want to talk about sexual assault and
7 its effects on women. Sexual assault or rape is
8 when a male touches a female without her will or
9 desire. It is when a man touches her without her
10 permission. In the website Violence Against
11 Women, it mentions that rape is sex you don't
12 agree to, including forcing a body part or an
13 object into the vagina, rectum, or mouth. Ladies
14 who suffer from rape have impacts last on them,
15 they have more physical or psychological problems
16 as well. Through rape there is the possibility
17 for the woman to get pregnant, which can make them
18 also stressed out and angry, because they had
19 never planned for this; someone has misused them
20 physically. It will be very hard for them to cope
21 with this kind of sudden anxiety, which they were
22 not prepared for. There will be more sexual and
23 health related problems for the raped females.
24 Women who are sexually abused - - health problems,
25 such as sexually transmitted infections, stomach

1
2 problems, and ongoing pain. They also are at risk
3 of emotional problems, like depression, anxiety,
4 and post-traumatic stress disorder. Moreover, now
5 I want to talk about some solutions to prevent all
6 types of violence against women. Women should
7 learn self-defense to protect themselves. They
8 can learn judo, karate, and kung fu to keep them
9 safe when any victim tries to hurt them.

10 According to the website Idea connection, any
11 cities in the US offer self-defense classes via
12 through their police or other law enforcement
13 agencies. The basic self-defense moves are
14 effective in physically foiling an attacker, and
15 they don't require physical strength. You have to
16 know the way to do the moves. Call your police
17 department and ask them for info about classes.
18 Women need to take this class. It's all free.
19 Furthermore, men can learn at anger management
20 courses in school or agencies, which can help them
21 come out from stress. They can learn cope well
22 with their emotional problems. According to the
23 website Idea connection, men who physically abuse
24 women cannot actually control their aggression.
25 They don't know how to control their anger and

1
2 they don't have strategies to deal with their
3 violent emotions. Everyone experiences anger at
4 some point in time, but many have no knowledge or
5 ability to control these feelings. Anger
6 management courses are widespread and proven to
7 learn. Thank you for--that was all of my
8 testimony.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
10 very much. Thank you for your testimony, and I'm
11 always excited to see when we have students and
12 graduates and the future. You guys will be the
13 executive directors of many of the organizations
14 that testified here in the future. And while
15 you're there, I just want to announce that for the
16 record, the New York County District Attorney,
17 Cyrus Vance, has submitted testimony, Sauti Yetu,
18 has submitted testimony, and so has Planned
19 Parenthood. Again, I'd like to thank Council
20 Member Chin for holding Court with us and I will
21 call this meeting to a close. Thank you.

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Signature

Date 3/15/2012