

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL
OPERATIONS STATE & FEDERAL
LEGISLATION JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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April 16, 2025
Start: 10:11 A.M.
Recess: 1:33 P.M.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Room, 16th
Floor

B E F O R E: Lincoln Restler,
Chair of the Committee on
Governmental Operations State and
Federal Legislation

Justin Brannan,
Chair of the Committee on Finance

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Gale A. Brewer
Daid M. Carr
Amanda Farias
James F. Gennaro
Jennifer Gutierrez
Shahana K. Hanif
Farah N. Louis
Vickie Paladino
Keith Powers
Yusef Salaam
Pierina Ana Sanchez

COUNCIL MEMBERS: (CONTINUED)

Lynn C. Schulman
Althea Stevens
Inna Vernikov
Nantasha Williams

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

Jacqueline Sherman,
Independent Budget Office

Sarah Parker
Independent Budget Office

Andrew Rein
Citizens Budget Commission NY

Joseph Rosenberg
Catholic Community Relations Council

Alana Tornello
HSC

Rachel Klepper
United Neighborhood Houses

Melony Samuels
Bed-Stuy Against Hunger (The Campaign Against
Hunger; TCAH)

Andrew Sta. Ana
Asian American Federation

Mohammad Razvi
Council Of Peoples Organization

Alice Mo
Homecrest Community Services

Jeehae Fischer
Korean American Family Service Center

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

Miranda

La Colmena

Aaron Sanders

Grand Street Settlement

Bryan Ellicott-Cook

SAGE

Kevin Kiproviski

LiveOn

Jade Vasquez

WINNYC

Gina Cappuccitti

New Destiny Housing

Rev. Terry Troia

Project Hospitality

Victoria Leahy

Homeless Services United

Adrienne Abbate

The Staten Island Partnership for Community
Wellness

Janet Magnuson

Nonprofit Staten Island, Richmond Home Need
Services, Inc.

Tatiana Arguello

Nonprofit Staten Island, NFPA

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

Celestine Cox
Nonprofit Staten Island

Janice Monger
Staten Island Museum

Justin Wood
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

Hannah Lupien
Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty

Dr. Sophine Charles
Council of Family & Child Caring Agency

Naima Dahir
Arab American Family Support Center

Sabrina Hargrave
Brooklyn Org

Hailey Nolasco
Center for Justice Innovation

Philip Duncan
Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation

Rosalind Black
Legal Services NYC

Yesenia Mata
La Colmena

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

Jonee Billy
PowerPlay NYC

Emma Bessire
City Meals on Wheels

Kayt Tiskas
Collective Public Affairs

Christopher Leon Johnson
Self

Janice Holt
Central Harlem Senior Citizens' Center, Inc.

Sierra Kraft
ICARE Coalition

My Chang
Asian Americans for Equity

Andy Bowen
Formerly Senior Advisor within Mayor's Office,
The Popular Front Project

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning. Good morning.

This is a radio check, a microphone check for the
Committee on Finance joint with the Committee on
Governmental Operations. This recording is being
done on the 16th Floor hearing room. Today's date is
April 16, 2025 and this recording is done by Ginelle
Yearwood(SP?).

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning and welcome to
today's New York City Council hearing for the
Committee on Finance joint with the Committee on
Governmental Operations State and Federal
Legislation. Please silence all cellphone electronic
devices. If you wish to submit testimony, you may
send it via email to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

Please do not approach the dais. This is a
governmental proceeding and decorum should be kept at
all times. Thank you for your cooperation. Chair,
we're ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: [GAVEL] Good morning. My
name is Lincoln Restler and I have the privilege of
Chairing the Committee on Governmental Operations
State and Federal Legislation. I am pleased and
honored to be Co-Chairing this hearing with my
friend, our esteemed Finance Chair Justin Brannan and

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I would like to recognize my colleagues who have
joined us today, Council Member Farah Louis, Council
Member David Carr Brooklyn zone, Council Member Gale
Brewer and Council Member Amanda Farias.

Today, we're holding an oversight hearing on the
impact of federal funding cuts on New York City.

From the second that he was sworn into office, Donald
Trump and his side kick Elon Musk began implementing
the project 2025 blueprint, making staggering cuts to
our federal workforce decimating our countries public
health system, politicizing public safety initiatives
and threatening to pull funding from municipalities
and institutions alike if we refuse to comply with
their extreme demands.

The City of New York relies heavily on federal
government funding, expertise and partnerships across
every facet of city operations. All New Yorkers are
impacted, whether it's resources for your kids
school, a Section 8 voucher to keep your rent
affordable, or the piece of mind knowing that you're
protected from disease outbreaks and terrorist
threats.

Federal resources have been essential to keeping
our city running and our people safe but we can no

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1 longer depend on our federal partners. The city
2 budget receives \$9.7 billion in federal funds, over 8
3 percent of our city budget but federal funding
4 impacts are far broader. Public entities like NYCHA,
5 CUNY, Health + Hospitals, the MTA, rely on many
6 billions of federal funding that's on the chopping
7 block. Federal funding cuts and negligence have
8 already impacted the most vital government programs
9 like Social Security and republicans in congress have
10 made clear that Medicaid is a top target in their
11 sites. Slashing \$880 billion in Medicaid nationally
12 would absolutely devastate the health care of
13 coverage and outcomes of low income and older adults
14 and put the future of safety net hospitals, nursing
15 homes and home healthcare agencies in jeopardy.
16

17 As we appear likely to be entering an economic
18 downturn, caused directly by president Trumps chaotic
19 policies, more and more New Yorkers will rely on all
20 levels of government to stay afloat. And yet we have
21 a mayor that has demonstrated he is unwilling to
22 challenge the Trump Administration and fight for New
23 Yorkers. We've seen our governor, our Attorney
24 General stand up and defend New Yorkers.
25

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Mayor's and Governors across the country are upholding their values and planning and preparing for the worst in their communities. But here in New York City, Mayor Adams has enthusiastically accommodated President Trump and by extension, his disastrous policies. Now, is the time for robust federal advocacy and rigorous contingency planning. We must engage with our New York delegation in Congress and mobilize city leaders to champion our needs. It will take competent management and strong leadership to navigate these challenges. We must build up our reserves and identify new opportunities for efficiencies and savings to whether this federal upheaval.

At the same time as the federal government retreats from its core responsibilities, the City of New York must step up. While we cannot fully cover the gaps created by the federal government - uh created by federal government cuts, we need to make targeted investments to protect the health and safety of New Yorkers. This morning, alongside our speaker Adrienne Adams, Chair Brannan and I released a plan to Trump proof New York City by making critical investments to ensure the health and safety of New

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Yorkers by preventing measles outbreaks, ensuring
preparedness from extreme weather events, and keeping
New Yorkers safe from attacks.

While the chaos in Washington deepens and the
economic outlook worsens and we prepare for budget,
the impact of budget reconciliation, we are committed
to both expanding savings and reserves and Trump
proofing New York City with smart and necessary
targeted investments.

A budget is a moral document and it has never
been more urgent that our city budget reflect our
values to demonstrate that we refuse to bow down to
the recklessness and bellicosity in Washington and
to prove to New Yorkers that they can trust us to
protect them through this unprecedented moment. But
today, no one, no one from the Adams Administration
is here to answer our questions. The Mayor once
again has chosen to be silent while Donald Trump
makes us less safe, destabilizes our economy and
deports our neighbors. The lack of planning and
preparation by this administration for the impending
tsunami of cuts is a complete dereliction of duty.
These cuts will have a devastating impact on the
lives of every day New Yorkers. Each of our

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1 constituents and it's only getting worse. Again,
2 unfortunately it's becoming abundantly clear that
3 this Mayor is more loyal to Donald Trump than to the
4 people of New York City. We also will be hearing a
5 Preconsidered Introduction to address a technical
6 error relating to employees, communications and
7 adjudicative proceedings. With that, I'd like to
8 thank the staff who prepared us for this hearing.
9 Governmental Operations Committee Counsel Jayasri
10 Ganapathy, Finance Committee Staff Julia Haramis, and
11 Brian Sarfo and my amazing team lead by Chief of
12 Staff Molly Hayley and Communications Director Neve
13 Mooney.
14

15 With that, I will turn it over - well, I will
16 just recognize Nantasha Williams, Council Member from
17 Queens. Did I miss anybody else? I did and Althea
18 Stevens is here from the Bronx. Thank you for being
19 with us and with that, I will turn it over to my
20 friend Chair Brannan.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you Chair Restler and
22 good morning everyone. Welcome to today's oversight
23 hearing on how New York City is preparing or failing
24 to prepare for a fiscal assault from Donald Trump and
25

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his so-called Department of Government Expenditures
or DOGE.

Before we begin, let me say this. It's an
absolute disgrace that the administration chose to
refuse to show up today. We were told late last
night, the night before this hearing, that instead of
testifying, they'll just be submitting written
remarks. That's not just disrespectful, it's a slap
in the face to every New Yorker who deserves answers.

At a moment of unprecedented budget threats, the
Administration at City Hall should be standing with
us and not ducking accountability. When we held our
March hearing on the preliminary budget, we were
warned that cuts were coming, well now they're here
and they're hitting hard. Let's be clear,
approximately 10 percent all in of our city budget
comes from federal funding and just a few months into
Trump's return, the federal government has already
clawed back hundreds of millions in legally
appropriated dollars from Congress, money we counted
on to provide housing, healthcare, food and shelter
for New Yorkers.

In February, FEMA yanked \$80 million meant for
migrant shelters. In March, the feds announced they

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1 were pulling all remaining COVID relief for city's
2 and states. And just last week, Mayor Adams
3 confirmed another \$188 million in migrant
4 reimbursement funds were being pulled.
5

6 And while working people are getting squeezed,
7 the billionaires are doing just fine. Let's talk
8 about Elon Musk. He's taken more than \$38 billion in
9 government handouts, federal contracts, tax breaks,
10 you name it. Now, he's the defacto president since
11 he spent some \$300 million to buy the election in
12 charge of crafting a federal budget that slashes aids
13 to seniors, veterans and working families. You'd be
14 surprised to know what federal programs didn't get
15 cut a single cent. That would be Elon Musk billions
16 in defense contracts.

17 While every day New Yorkers pay their fair share,
18 Elon Musk games a system and laughs all the way to
19 the bank. Our tax dollars built his empire but now
20 that it's time to reinvest in our communities,
21 suddenly it's all cuts and claw backs. It's always
22 socialism for the rich and austerity for the rest of
23 us.

24 This isn't about belt tightening. It's about
25 broken priorities. That's why today's hearing

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1 matters. That's why the Administration should be
2 here with us telling us what their plan is to fight
3 back against these cuts from the federal government.
4 We need a real plan to protect New Yorkers and their
5 services. One that doesn't cater to Trump or cater
6 to billionaires and one that stands up for the
7 working people who make this city work. Before I
8 hand it back to Chair Restler, I want to thank the
9 folks behind the scenes on the Council side who make
10 these hearings happen, especially our incredible
11 Finance division team Brian Sarfo, Committee Counsel,
12 Julie Haramis, the Finance Unit Head, Michael
13 Sherman, the Principal Financial Analyst, and my
14 Senior Advisor John Yenin.

15
16 I'll now turn it back over to my Co-Chair today,
17 Councilman Restler.

18 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I just want to ask, we have
19 not actually received this supposed written testimony
20 from the Administration? Nobody has that right? No,
21 okay so the written testimony that they were
22 preparing because they didn't have the courtesy to
23 show up and answer questions or to explain what the
24 Administration is doing to prepare for this federal,
25 the chaos coming out of the Washington is quite

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2 remarkable. I think it speaks to just the complete
3 incompetence that we are all experiencing on the
4 other side of city hall right now.

5 With that, we will begin with IBO. Where are
6 they? So, we've got, I know we have Jackie Sherman
7 and Sarah Parker. You guys can start us off and the
8 Committee Counsel will swear you in.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good morning. Can you please
10 raise your right hands? Do you affirm to tell the
11 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in
12 your testimony before this Committee and respond
13 honestly to Council Member questions? Thank you.

14 JACQUELINE SHERMAN: The red is on, yeah, great.
15 Good morning Chairs Brannan, Restler, Majority Leader
16 Farias, members of the Finance and Government
17 Operations Committees. I am Jackie Sherman from the
18 Independent Budget Office and I'm joined this morning
19 by my colleague Sarah Parker.

20 My testimony builds on IBO Director Chafee's
21 testimony last month, highlighting IBO's concerns
22 about risks that ongoing federal actions pose to New
23 Yorkers and to the city's fiscal health. Since
24 January 20th, New York has phased a cascade of
25 announcements of reductions in federal spending.

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Direct federal funding currently around 8 percent of the city's expense budget supports a range of core services. Federal dollars also flow through the state to the city, to the MTA and NYCHA and directly to New Yorkers such as social security payments. National, economic uncertainty further complicates the picture. Volatility and trade policy poses significant risks for inflation, consumer spending, tourism and ultimately state and local revenues.

The Administration has not yet publicly discussed how these risks can effect New York City's budget. Today, I will focus on questions that IBO believes should be answered in the upcoming executive budget. The city's budget process must embrace transparency and fiscal realism. The budget continues to understate costs for uniform personnel overtime, Charter cases, and funding for City FHEPS.

Meanwhile the budget overestimates the city's payroll costs and costs for services to asylum seekers. At the same time, the city also faces a critical policy decision. What to do with the projected fiscal year 2025 budget surplus?

IBO encourages the Council to weigh the merits of two options, placing funds into reserves or using

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2 them to prepay next years expenses. While prepayment
3 may offer short term flexibility, applying the
4 surplus to reserves provides more long term stability
5 as the city faces challenges posed by the federal
6 administration.

7 Some city agencies rely heavily on direct federal
8 funding. Federal funding totals over half of the
9 budget of HPD and more than 40 percent for ACS.
10 Separate from the city's budget, funding is also
11 critical, federal funding is also critical to NYCHA,
12 Health + Hospitals, and the MTA. Here, critical
13 questions include what specific federal programs has
14 the administration identified as most vulnerable to
15 cuts? And what planning is underway to assure that
16 the city continues to meet the needs of New Yorkers
17 served by those programs.

18 Have any city agencies particularly those facing
19 the greatest risks been asked to prepare contingency
20 plans to address potential loss of funding?

21 What is the Administration doing to protect
22 public health as the federal administration reduces
23 support for the prevention of communicable diseases?
24 And many federal workers who oversee program
25 administration and process payments have lost their

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1 jobs and more are threatened? Has the city noted any
2 slow downs in the processing of funds it expects to
3 receive?
4

5 The absence of a final state budget further
6 complicates the picture. Reductions in federal aid
7 for New York City layer additional risks on the city.
8 The state funded 17 percent of the city's fiscal year
9 2025 budget and federal funding totaled 38 percent of
10 the states budget last year. Public education
11 appears to be at particular risk with 41 percent of
12 DOE's budget funded by the state, including federal
13 dollars that flow through the state.

14 Furthermore, close to \$3 billion in state
15 requests by OMB for asylum seeker aid and childcare
16 assistance remains up in the air. With this in mind,
17 some important questions include what assumptions is
18 the city currently making about fiscal year 2026
19 funding from the state in the absence of an enacted
20 state budget? Given announced cuts and plans to
21 close the Department of Education, how does the
22 Administration, that's the federal department of
23 education. How does the Administration plan to fund
24 the 3700 new teachers it just announced would be
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hired in Fiscal Year 2026 to meet the states class
size mandate?

Governor Hochul recently indicated the federal
department of homeland security has revoked hundreds
of millions of dollars in infrastructure resiliency
program, including millions of dollars that flow to
the city. How will the city address critical capital
budget priorities to prevent and respond to future
natural disasters?

The Administration has yet to publicly detail its
economic assumptions in light of current discussions
around trade, immigration and tax policy and how
those underly its revenue and expense forecasts. The
administration should explain its assumptions
regarding how inflation, GDP growth, and the chances
of recession effect the local economy. Rapidly
changing federal trade policy could effect local job
creation and the city's income, business and sales
tax bases. Tariffs could change the city's
purchasing power for goods and supplies and
volatility in the bond market may hinder the city and
authorities ability to borrow.

Finally, the city's nonprofit sector faces
mounting fiscal stress as many organizations reel

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1 from material cuts to their own budgets while
2 simultaneously witnessing devastating policy changes
3 aimed at the communities they serve. These providers
4 operate with thin margins and delayed reimbursements.
5 The Administration should articulate a clear strategy
6 for supporting this critical sector in the face of
7 compounding risks. The serious fiscal uncertainties
8 facing the city have real implications for the
9 services all New Yorkers rely upon. Now, more than
10 ever, New York City needs a budget process that is
11 transparent, realistic, and focused on long term
12 stability. IBO remains committed to providing
13 analysis to support policy making and responsible
14 fiscal management. Thank you for the opportunity to
15 testify. We welcome your questions.

17 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you very much Ms.
18 Sherman for your testimony today and for your many
19 years of government service. I wanted to ask about
20 kind of reserves and the rainy day fund. According
21 to OMB's calculations, reserves for FY26 are at \$8.6
22 billion. Do you think that we should be increasing
23 reserves- that the Administration should be
24 increasing reserves in the executive budget and also,

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has IBO considered under what scenarios you think
it's appropriate to spend down the rainy day fund?

SARAH PARKER: Good morning. I'm really glad we
have this opportunity to talk about the reserves that
the city currently has. There is about \$8.2 billion
in reserves but they are in different forms,
different accounts. So first, just for the general
public, I'd like to explain a little about what each
of these reserves are. We have about \$1.5 billion in
a general fund reserve and this is split between a
general reserve and a capital stabilization reserve.
This is money that we park in the budget and as the
year winds down we start spending it. So, that year
to year will be spent down in the budget.

Separately and this is I think going to be the
focus of what we're talking about today; the city has
something called the colloquially known as the rainy
day fund, which also goes by the technical name of
the Reserve Stabilization Fund and OMB documents
that's how it's referred to. And this is about,
currently about \$2 billion. This allows the city to
take surplus money and separate it from the general
fund in a way that previously to this being created
under the de Blasio Administration with Albany

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2 passing legislation, the city had to have a balanced
3 budget and was much more limited on its ability to
4 have a reserve account.

5 Before we created the rainy day fund, the city
6 largely used the Retiree Health Benefits Trust, which
7 is another place that we have money that could be
8 considered a type of reserve. Essentially the trust
9 is how we pay for retiree health benefits. It acts
10 similar to a pension and that is investments but
11 currently it has roughly about \$5 billion in liquid
12 assets and annually the retiree health benefits costs
13 about \$3.5 billion. So, in theory, the city could
14 put less money into the Retiree Health Benefit Trust
15 and therefore free up money to use elsewhere.

16 All this to say the city has a cushion but right
17 now at least as of the preliminary budget, the
18 Administration Independent Budget Office, City
19 Council Finance, all projected a surplus for the
20 current fiscal year. The size varied but the
21 question is right now what are we going to do with
22 that surplus? And as our testimony focused, there is
23 the option to prepay next years expenses, so to use
24 it to create a cushion for next year or the option to
25 put some or all of it into the rainy day fund. I

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1 think the question at hand; you can put some or all
2 of it into either of those options to be clear. The
3 question at hand is right now, we're facing what we
4 know is going to be a fall. There's going to be
5 cliff in funding and the question is how much of a
6 cushion are we able to build right now?
7

8 The rainy day fund when it was authorized in
9 Albany through legislation, was for periods of
10 economic turmoil and a loss of revenue. That was the
11 discussion around how it was created. When it was
12 created, I don't think anyone foresaw a world in
13 which federal dollars were going to be part of this
14 equation but I think it was four times when the city
15 was facing unforeseen circumstances and needed a
16 cushion to rely on and it created that mechanism.

17 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you. I'll just do
18 one or two more and kick it over to colleagues. As
19 we - as I imagine you're all in conversation with
20 city agencies and OMB and we certainly are as well.
21 What information do you - and transparency do you
22 think we should be seeking from OMB about the
23 precarious financial situation we find ourselves in
24 with the federal kind of upheaval? Are you aware of
25 kind of centralized tracking of federal grants at

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city agencies, how many staff are funded by federal grants? What vulnerabilities city agencies are facing as a result of unstable federal funding? Do you know if that information from IBO's engagement and analysis is being tracked centrally in any way? Do you believe that it is? Anything along those lines would be helpful.

JACQUELINE SHERMAN: Thank you for the question Council Member and we are in communication with the Administration as we prepare for the next publication on the executive budget. I can't comment on specifics of the Administrations management and plans.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Or lack thereof.

JACQUELINE SHERMAN: At this time. Our focus has been and the focus of our testimony has been as the focus of your question, is on questions that need to be asked throughout the executive budget process.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Can I ask this question? Are you aware as of now that OMB tracks total federal spending that we're receiving by agency you know staff that are covered vulnerabilities. Do you know if there's a central taskforce in OMB from your

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experience that evaluates and assesses that risk? Is
that something that is to your knowledge?

SARAH PARKER: So one thing that is trackable is
how much money we receive from the federal government
and how much has actually been received, so not only
what we submit for reimbursements but what has
actually come in. So, that is something that we are
very much actively tracking.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: And have you noticed, has
the city made any improvements in actually spending
down the federal grants that we've received to make
sure that we don't have additional claw backs of
federal money like we've experienced in the first 90
days of the Trump Administration?

SARAH PARKER: So, one of the interesting things
about that timing of receiving the money is that a
large share of federal dollars are received by the
city after the end of the fiscal year, in which they
are reimbursing expenses. So, I think right now as
we wind down this fiscal year, that's going to become
a crucial question.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Okay and then lastly, you
know we've already seen some claw backs, some
significant cuts at the federal level impacting the

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Head Start New York Office or public health grants,
to the Health Department. Are there any ways that
IBO can share any analysis to date of how the cuts
that have already happened are impacting New York
City Government or is it too preliminary for you all
to share any insight there?

SARAH PARKER: There's - the question that we're
waiting to really see an answer to and would look for
the Adams Administration and also the Hochul
Administration to provide more clarity on is if
federal dollars dry up in a particular area, what is
the plan to use state or city dollars to backfill
that, which then could impact places those city
dollars and those state dollars otherwise were
intended for. So, there's - I want to be clear and
really have everyone listening particularly a broader
audience understand that a federal cut in one
particular area could also ripple through a
completely different area of policy and of
programming depending on how the state and the city
choose to respond.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Yeah.

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CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. If you were in
charge of the most popular city in the country, what
would you be doing right now?

JACQUELINE SHERMAN: Thank you for the question
Council Member. We're here to testify from the
perspective of the City's Independent Budget Office.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I understand. What are
some of the things that you think the Administration
could or should be doing right now?

SARAH PARKER: As we've highlighted in our
testimony, one thing that we feel very strongly about
is having accurate and realistic and transparent
budgeting on what we do know. So, there's a lot of
uncertainty around what is happening in federal
policy and federal reimbursements. There's a lot of
uncertainty in what's happening with the national
economy, the local economy, but there are areas that
IBO has highlighted in its preliminary budget report
and we will continue to highlight of the budget that
we know are either underspended, underfunded or that
are over stated, and that is not providing a clear
picture of our - of the financial position of the
city in places that we know with more certainty
about.

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And so, first and foremost, transparency on the things that we do have information on.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, colleagues.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Council Member Williams followed by Council Member Brewer. Oh Council Member Williams and go right to Council Member Brewer.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: For me, okay, Jackie, given the many years you had of the attorney for general welfare, which I remember, uhm, I'm interested particularly in the human services cuts and do you have a sense of IBO between obviously Medicaid being on that list, ACS being on that list, etc.? Do you have some sense of what those cuts could impact in terms of our human services? And what could be the result?

JACQUELINE SHERMAN: Conducting a thorough and comprehensive assessment of the cuts across many areas have been complicated by the pace, the breath and the ongoing uncertainty surrounding many of the announced cuts. Collectively, they threaten the wellbeing of millions of New Yorkers and particularly as you state, people who depend on safety net programs.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: So, IBO hasn't because we
don't know yet, hasn't done a study of what exactly
those cuts could mean for New Yorkers, right because
we don't know exactly -

JACQUELINE SHERMAN: We don't have enough
information definitely at this point. We are
tracking changes. We are analyzing and we are
looking forward to being able to present further
information.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, second question is
regarding the either rainy day or other kinds of
payment for the future. It's hard to understand for
the public because you know you want to use what you
have now because you don't have healthcare, you don't
have etc., food.

So, how do you balance that, those two because I
do as having been on this Finance Committee for the
last 100 years, I understand the need to do the -
wait for the future and bank it but how, I mean do
you have some sense of how that could work?

I know Andrew Rein in Today's Daily News; thank
you Andrew, very good op-ed also said, you know put
your money aside. But it's hard for people to

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understand when they are starving. How do you
balance that?

JACQUELINE SHERMAN: Great question. We
presented in our testimony two options of what to do
with any surplus that we do have out of the current
fiscal year 2025. The first is a prepayment. And
so, again to unpack this because it is hard to
understand, when the city runs a surplus, it uses
that extra money to prepay down expenses that we know
are going to incur next year. This is usually debt
service. So, the cost of money that we've borrowed.
What that does, that allows the city to maintain a
balanced budget. The city is legally required to
have a balanced budget in its current fiscal year and
as it plans it next year.

Prepayment is a shift from dollars from this year
to next year. The rainy day fund as a shift of
dollars from this year to whenever you choose to use
it. And I think one of the questions is the rainy
day fund was newly created under the de Blasio
Administration and we've put money in it but we
haven't tapped it yet and I think that's a question
for everybody is, what does it look like - what does
this emergency that we set this money aside look like

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and I think that's really the question we're asking ourselves today.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: So, that will be one of the issues if you were in charge to decide what should be done with that money to take care of current challenges?

JACQUELINE SHERMAN: It's really a question of thinking about, is this a question of money this year and next year or money this year, next year, and the following year and the following year. Like it's really a time horizon question.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I never worry about the future but everybody else does and so do the bonding agencies, I understand that. Alright, one final question is the - I mean the concern of the lawsuit because what's going to happen is you will end up with okay, this is a disaster, we go to court. The issue gets reversed and it's very confusing for everybody. It's happening already in terms of the federal agencies. Do you have any sense? I mean, it's hard to know. What are the courts going to do? We don't know but do you have any sense of how that could play out or how you would suggest managing in that kind of a situation? I'd like to hope the

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1 courts are going to do the right thing and that you
2 know how can you end up with you know today's papers
3 are full of one agency that has literally nobody
4 there to administer the program.
5

6 So, that to me would be a lawsuit. So, I'm sort
7 of wondering where you think that's going to go or
8 what you would suggest handling that in terms of
9 money?

10 JACQUELINE SHERMAN: We don't - we can't tell you
11 exactly where it's going to go and I think that's
12 only one layer of uncertainty that the city is
13 facing. There are so many layers of uncertainty,
14 which leads us to call for the city to have a more
15 transparent and realistic approach that assesses
16 risks and for the city to engage in contingency
17 planning. Because we're clearly in an environment of
18 rapid change where whatever our plan is today or
19 tomorrow or on July 1st, may change very rapidly.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I mean I agree with you.
21 I do worry that people starve and don't have
22 healthcare. So, I'm you know this is life and death
23 as we know, so I'm worried. I mean US aid is already
24 - those cuts are already killing people around the
25 world. So, I'm worried that as we're talking about

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transparency, it's important but then we have to know
exactly where we need to fill the gaps. Alright,
thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I think - oh, Council
Member Williams.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: You may not be able to
answer this but one question I had asked city
agencies during the Prelim Budget hearings was about
the racial equity plans and the racial equity plans
were supposed to be essentially in tune to the budget
and reflective of the budget. As you may know the
Mayor's Office has not released them, they're over
like 400 and maybe 60 days late now and there are
some series around why and so, do you think that as
the city continues to strengthen our equity plans
that may also have federal implications and that
could be a reason why the Mayor's Office hasn't
released the ratio equity plans or what's your
thought about that? Because I know it was like a
leading question but just wondering your thought
about that.

JACQUELINE SHERMAN: Council Member that's an
excellent question that we have not had the
opportunity to focus on and if you'd like we are

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happy to follow up with you and your staff after to
further spell out the questions and look into it
further.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, thank you. I'll
follow up.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Great and that is a very
important question that I think we were eager to ask
the Administration about today for how they're you
know planning and coordinating. We saw what the
State Education Department said and underscored the
commitment to DI. We've heard silence from the
Administration and you know we have 50 people that
have come here today from dozens of nonprofits from
CUNY, from the IBO, from the CBC and the Adams
Administration not only fails to attend, OMB doesn't
come, federal legislative affairs doesn't come, City
Hall doesn't send a representative. No agencies are
coming. No agencies are here. A majority of our
city's housing, our HPD budget comes from the federal
government and nobody is here to talk about what's
happening. What's happening to childcare funding?
What's happening to public health funding? What's
happening to emergency management? It is mind
boggling to me that the Adams Administration is so -

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it's worse than being asleep at the wheel. This is negligence. This is a total dereliction of duty.

With that, thank you for all being here. We're going to shift it over to public testimony but I first want to acknowledge my colleagues who are here with us and I apologize. On Zoom we have Council Member Shahana Hanif, Council Member Francisco Moya, Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala and in person, we've had with us Council Member Inna Vernikov and Council Member Yusef Salaam. Thank you all for being with us today for this important issue, we wish the Administration did as well.

With that, I'm now going to open this hearing to public testimony. I want to remind members of the public that this is a formal government proceeding and that decorum shall be observed at all times. As such, members of the public shall remain silent at all times. The witness table is reserved for people who wish to testify. No video recording or photography is allowed from the witness table. Further, members of the public may not present audio or video recordings as testimony but may submit transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant of Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

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If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please fill out an appearance card, even if registered in advance, with the Sergeant at Arms and wait to be recognized. When recognized, you will have three minutes to speak at today's hearing. If you have a written statement or additional written testimony you wish to submit for the record, which the Administration has failed to do, please provide a copy of that testimony to the Sergeant at Arms. You may also submit written testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72 hours of this hearing. Audio and video recordings will not be accepted. I will now call up our next panel which will just include Andrew Rein from the Citizen Budget Commission. Thank you very much Mr. Rein. And you know what? We'll just give a heads up to the next panel who is going to follow. We'll have Melony Samuels from the Campaign Against Hunger, Mohammad Razvi from Council Of People's Org., Rachel Klepper from UNH, United Neighborhood Houses and Alana Tornello from Human Services Council. You all are on deck following the CBC. Thank you.

ANDREW REIN: Thank you all for having me today.
I am Andrew Rein, President of the Citizens Budget

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Commission. Good morning Chairs and all the Council
Members, thank you for the opportunity.

The range of possible federal cuts is broad and
the magnitude uncertain. Cuts in direct funding to
city government will not be the only challenge.
Possible funding reductions will affect the State,
NYCHA, Health + Hospitals, as well as New Yorkers who
directly receive federal benefits such as SNAP and
enhanced Obamacare care enhanced premiums.
Additionally, regulatory changes and economic
policies such as tariffs could lead to higher
inflation and a greater chance of a recession.

CBC urges a proactive, forward-looking response
to protect New Yorkers. The City should prepare now
while resources remain available and flexibility
remains intact. Waiting for clarity on which
specific risks pan out would not be fiscally prudent
and only increase potential harm to New Yorkers.
Federal aid cuts could have profound impacts.
Federal aid comprises \$7.4 billion of the City's
Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget, including funds
for educating low-income students, childcare
vouchers, school food programs, family shelters and
more.

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NYCHA relied on \$1.4 billion in federal operating support for public housing last year, while \$2.7 billion in federal funds supported more than 133,000 housing vouchers across NYCHA and the City. Additionally, the State receives \$91 billion from the federal government, primarily for public health insurance, Medicaid, the Essential Plan, Child Health Plus and Education and capital funding for transportation.

In response to federal cuts, the State may reduce aid to the City or have to slash services to directly runs, such as unemployment insurance and State parks just for examples. Medicaid and the Essential cuts would also sap H+H revenues, at the same time, potentially increasing demand for its services if New Yorkers lose public health insurance coverage.

The City will not be able to backfill all federal reductions. Rather, it should preserve the services that provide the most critical support for high-need New Yorkers, our economy, and our quality of life. The City may rightly choose to shift funds from other programs to cover federal reductions to critical services, meaning federally funded programs are not the only ones at risk.

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CBC recommends that the City:

1. Hold the line on new spending in the Executive
and Adopted Budgets.

2. Buttress the General Reserve with at least \$1
billion next year to help absorb the immediate blow
of federal cuts.

3. Strengthen the Rainy Day Fund by depositing
\$500 million and reserve the Fund for a short-term
emergency like a recession.

4. Implement a Program to Eliminate the Gap to
restrain spending growth but focus on efficiency and
shrinking programs that deliver less value.

And finally, end the budget gimmickry and present
accurate, reasonable estimates of expenses and
revenues.

These recommendations are not about austerity,
they are designed to strategically manage risk,
protect critical services New Yorkers need, and build
resilience. Unfortunately, it's even harder now
because the city has built up spending more than it
can afford. In fact in 2024, we spent \$1.1 billion
more than we took in. \$1.1 billion more in '24 than
we took in year. So, thank you very much for the

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opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer
any questions you might have.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you very much for
being with us today. We really appreciate your
expert testimony and well, I think the CBC is
consistent in its calls for more savings and fiscal
responsibility, this does feel like a moment where
these calls ring particularly true. I just wanted to
reiterate a question that I asked to the IBO.

From your extensive experience in city government
and your close working relationship with the
administrations, what centralized tracking are you
aware of that OMB does of funding that we receive?
Both how many jobs are associated with it in city
government. How efficiently that money is being
spent down and what we can to you know ensure that we
are planning and preparing effectively for the
upheaval that we're experiencing now. I just worry
that kind of in the OMB model of every taskforce is
focused on its set of agencies. Is there somebody
with a global view that's looking at the broader
risks that we're facing as a city?

ANDREW REIN: Yeah, rarely talked to OMB. We
have not had this discussion. I do not know the

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specific answer on how they are planning. I will say we get publicly available data. Your staff, I assume has you know more access. We know for example, and we have an appendix in our testimony, about what programs are federally funded and I think the appendix is helpful because it's federal grants over \$100 million. So you can see that TANF is \$1.5 billion spread among two agencies. You can see how much Title I money is, federal food money is. So, that's helpful. We know from publicly available documents that there are 54,300 full time and full time equivalent staff that are state and federally funded. I don't know the division of that but I assume that OMB does.

What they are doing to plan, listen these are professionals who know about the world and I assume they are doing some planning. I do not know specifics and I think it would be helpful. I do know that 15 days from now, we're going to see an executive budget and as we recommend money in the rainy day fund, general reserves and transparency so that all the revenues and all the spending is accurately reflected so that we can plan. We should see that in the executive budget.

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CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: And if I may in your
previous hat in the key leadership role in the Health
Department over a number of years, your analysis of
the significant shrinkage that we're seeing from HHS,
you know the lack of reliability that we I think can
no longer count on the CDC and FDA in the same ways
that we have historically forever. What should we
be- what are the ways in which you think the city and
our you know impressive public health department
needs to step up and help fill some of the gaps that
are - have been created by the federal government?
Recognizing this is a moment for fiscal restraint,
which I know is your overarching point. I think, I
know you would agree that these are really important
functions.

ANDREW REIN: Yeah, I spent a lot of my life in
public health.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Right.

ANDREW REIN: Listen, New York City Health
Department still is one of the greatest health
departments in the world. I wouldn't say the
greatest because you know I'm a researcher and I
haven't analyzed everything yet.

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Uhm, in the first two terms when I was of the Bloomberg Administration, when I was there. I did over 12 PEGs. I think it was 12, you know I'd need to go back. We figured out how to improve health while we were dealing with you know budget problems. What we see coming, what we've already seen come and what we see coming might be much more extreme than that. Again, as we know, we know what might be at risk but we don't know what cuts will happen at the federal government and we don't know how big they will be.

I think the approach is the same, which is to identify the impact of every program. What has the most critical impact on the most high need New Yorkers today and prevents disease and protects the public health you know in the future, and make sure that the resources that are available what is from the federal government, state and of course the city, is focused on those resources and other things that have benefits but might not be as impactful will have to shrink. That is the approach. That is the right approach to use and I think the experts at the Health Department I hope, because every day they're focused on health. These are people who no offense to myself

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care about health every day and think about it and I
hope they are doing that work right now, as they
should be all the time but now as you said, it's even
more important.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: You know we've seen five
rounds of PEGs or whatever it is in the Adams
Administration. The Health Department has
experienced significant shrinkage under this Mayor.
There's less staff than there was you know during the
de Blasio years, significantly so and yet if we're no
longer able to count on the research functions of
HHS, if we're no longer able to count on high quality
data around infectious disease outbreaks like measles
and how that puts us at risk. If we're no longer to
count on the food and drug administration to ensure
that we're preventing outbreaks of salmonella
effectively, it puts a greater onus on the Health
Department to keep New Yorkers safe. And so, I just
while both reckoning with the fiscal downturn and the
lack of federal funding coming in, we do need to make
sure that we are making the smart and necessary
investments to protect the health and safety of New
Yorkers. And I worry greatly about the scale of the
layoffs that Secretary Kennedy has imposed and his

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deeply misguided and dangerous policies and how that
really does require us and the state to do more to
keep us safe.

ANDREW REIN: And I think what this speaks to and
I think about what Council Member Brewer was talking
about. If you follow the federal money, the smart
thing if we get cuts will not just be to shrink the
money where those programs are. It's to allocate the
city resources that remain and whatever federal
government remains and whatever flexibility we have
to make sure that we protect New Yorkers in the
future.

You're exactly right and I think it speaks to as
you said, the Health Department but throughout city
government. Those programs that receive federal
money or most approximately at risk but frankly for
you and of course the Mayor, it's about allocating
the resources to protect New Yorkers in the best way
possible, which might mean backfilling some and
shrinking some city funded programs.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: We're going to shift to
Council Member Brewer and if anyone else would like
to jump in please just let us know.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I mean I suppose that if
it was a very, as you suggest transparent executive
budget, then you could know to answer some of those
questions but if it's not, then we're going to have
trouble figuring out where are the worst cuts that
would impact New Yorkers the most.

So, my question is with this rainy day fund, at
what point do you think it should be used? How would
you decide that etc., etc.?

ANDREW REIN: So-

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Like I said, I'm not so
good on the future. I like the current.

ANDREW REIN: You know, my grandmother who came
over with her you know 16 year old sister and twin
brother on a boat many years ago always told me you
know I keep some money aside in the coffee jar. I
think it's a rule that we all think about personally
and hopefully we have the discipline and I think it's
a rule to protect New Yorkers today.

As the IBO said, we have \$2 billion in a rainy
day fund. We should protect that for a short term-
ish emergency like a recession. We might be entering
one. We will enter one, I can't tell you when. We
know that prior to COVID, the average recession set

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the city revenues scale to where we are around \$10 billion. We have \$2 billion in that fund right now. You can do the math, that's around - we should protect that for that. Now we have the retiree health benefits trust. It was used, it should be to pay for as a city retiree, all of our health. We have \$100 billion liability for all of our health insurance when we retire. We have \$5 billion in the trust. That ratio ain't so good. Although the de Blasio Administration and the Bloomberg Administration used it as a rainy day fund. We should actually protect that you know to the extent we can. It's the right thing to do because we have that liability. So, therefore, we have the rainy day fund. We have a general reserve next year. We need to bolster that but the rainy day fund, let's hold it for the rainy day and whatever we have of the surplus role in the general reserve, it might be our transition fund. But remember the federal cuts for the foreseeable future will be recurring. You sap the fund one time, then you're just creating another fiscal cliff and we need to remember, the cuts right now that are being challenged in courts are based on

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a federal continuing resolution, based on the
authorizations of the last Biden budget.

The next federal annual budget will be written by
this Congress and this President.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: A lot worse, a lot worse.

ANDREW REIN: With fewer restraints, let alone of
course reconciliation on the tax cuts, to pay for the
tax cuts, which is where the Medicaid cuts might have
the - get most effective.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What do you think of OMB
suggestion that the more money we put into reserves,
the more we might be vulnerable to -

ANDREW REIN: You know this was a question that
came up when we you know we strongly advocated for
the city to create the City Charter change and the
state law to change the rainy fund. To create the
rainy day fund and we think there should be mandatory
deposits and limited withdrawals. There's always
been the question, well, if we can prepare, no one
will come to the rescue.

My observations of federal policy right now is
that I have not seen it being dictated by how much
New York City is holding in any one bank account.

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So, I don't think that that concern, which might be a state local concern at times. Again, I think it is over plated and should be ignored because we need a rainy day fund but I don't think that that's what's driving the federal government right now. I think if we prepare for potential cuts we will protect New Yorkers more.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Can I just, last question I wanted to ask is about Medicaid. \$4 million rely on Medicaid. We already have many safety net hospitals, multiple safety net hospitals. I mean we just experienced a major hospital closure in Lower Manhattan. We have multiple safety net hospitals that are in a very vulnerable position.

Has the CBC begun to do any analysis if the full \$880 billion in proposed federal cuts to Medicaid were enacted on what impact that would have on healthcare in New York City and the stability of our in-patient facilities and other healthcare institutions that rely on this funding?

ANDREW REIN: We have not because Family Foundation has run some scenarios. It's worth looking at what they funded. I think the way to

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think - to start thinking about this and again, it is uncertain both what the cuts will be and what the magnitude will be and as we see the federal scoring rules might be influx as well. So, how they pay for the tax cuts, you know it may require that 880 Energy and Commerce Billion, Energy Commerce cut or not. I don't know and I can't predict that. I do know that when you look at New York we're special in ways. We have the essential plan, which is the Obama Care base health plan which only we and Minnesota have. It is an outlier. If I look at risk, I generally, whether it be a corporate merger and acquisition or cuts, I look at the things that are different in different places. So, maybe the essential plan, which covers \$1.7 million New Yorkers lower income to making too much for Medicaid but still covered by the essential plan and some immigrants. 1.7 million New Yorkers state wide, 1 million New Yorkers in the city. That might be more at risk. Again, we don't know where it will come but we've thought about it in those ways but haven't modeled what that would do cascading down.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I just want to thank you for being with us today and for your thoughtful

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testimony and great opened this morning and very much
look forward to continuing this conversation, as it's
going to be an intense period of time.

ANDREW REIN: Thank you, we're glad to be of
service.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you very much. Okay,
we're going to make a slight modification in our next
panel per request from the audience. It will be
Alana Tornello from the Human Service Council, Rachel
Klepper from United Neighborhood Houses, Melony
Samuels from the Campaign Against Hunger and Joseph
Rosenberg from Catholic Community Relations Council.

I did not know that was the acronym that Joe
Rosenberg used but you learn something new every day.

JOSEPH ROSENBERG: I'm sorry, what was that?

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I didn't know that that was
the acronym you used, Catholic Community Relations
Council. I just always associate you with Catholic
Charities but -

JOSEPH ROSENBERG: No, it's broader than that.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: It's broader. That's good
to know. You learn something new every day but Gale
already knew, as we could have anticipated. Thank
you. Okay you guys can begin in which ever order

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you'd like and the fourth person who is no their way,
hopefully they can bring up a chair. Could the
Sergeant help us with the fourth chair? We'll get
that going. Thank you very much, appreciate it.

JOSEPH ROSENBERG: Good morning Chair Brannan,
Chair Restler and members of the City Council. Thank
you for giving us three minutes to testify. It's
much appreciated.

I am Joseph Rosenberg, the Executive Director of
the Catholic Community Relations Council. Thank you
for holding this hearing, it's focus could not be
timelier. Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of
New York and the Archdiocese of Brooklyn and Queens,
have been providing shelter, food, and clothing to
New Yorkers for more than one century. Not just
during disasters such as Superstorm Sandy and the
COVID 19 pandemic, but on every day of every year.
We also assist thousands of immigrants in New York
with legal service and operate the New York Americans
Hotline and the MOIA Immigration Legal Support
Hotline that serves more than 160,000 people
annually.

In late March, we were notified that 80 percent
of our legal services contract with the federal

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government to assist unaccompanied minors was being
terminated resulting in the loss of \$4.3 million. We
also learned four days ago that our \$1.45 million
federal contract to provide workshops, legal
consultation, as well as pro se assistance in New
York's three immigration courts has been cancelled.
We will try to find ways to continue to represent
unaccompanied minors and asylum seekers without
having to rely on the federal government but it will
be a daunting and long term challenge.

Both Catholic Charities combined operate over 80
food pantries throughout the 5 boroughs and serve
more than 8 million meals annually. We have faced
many challenges assisting New Yorkers over the last
century but we currently face a crisis in hunger and
food insufficiency we have not seen before.

This is due to the rising poverty rate of New
Yorkers, the dramatic increase of New Yorkers who are
rent burdened, and the unprecedented federal attacks
on many programs that protect our clients. Two of
these are SNAP and the Emergency Food and Shelter
program. SNAP provides essential funding to address
food insecurity for vulnerable Americans. A proposed
Congressional reduction of nearly \$230 billion from

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this program is particularly troubling and will have significant consequences by increasing the number of Americans who face hunger on a daily basis.

The Emergency Food and Shelter program is also a crucial federal resource. This was placed on hold by the federal government in March and as a result both catholic charities and both diocese, have lost over \$850,000 each, a challenging blow to our ability to feed clients.

We've seen the number of New Yorkers at food pantries increase significantly. We're not just assisting more working families, seniors and children. Newer clients include college students, recent college grads who are either unemployed or under employed. Youth aging out of foster care, and many new migrants with infants.

The plight of hungry children is particularly heartbreaking with more than 1 in 4 children in our city living in poverty. There are so many New Yorkers going hungry and termination of federal programs, we urge that \$20 million in emergency food funding for federal pantries be included in the FY26 New York City budget for both Catholic Charities as

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well as our partners Met Council and the Hispanic
Federation.

An additional challenge that nonprofit human
service providers face is a lack of prompt payment
when awarded social service contracts. With
unprecedented federal budget cuts targeted
nonprofits, it's especially important the city
expedite late contract payments. Otherwise New
Yorkers will not receive the services they need.
There is no justification for funds to be provided
months or years after contract has been awarded and
to tolerate a business as usual mentality when it
comes to paying providers, especially during these
unprecedented times. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you very much and I
just want to thank Council Members Powers and
Schulman for being with us as well and move on to the
next panelist.

ALANA TORNELLO: Good morning and thank you
Council Members for this oversight hearing. My name
is Alana, representing the Human Services Council.
We're a coalition of over 180 human services
organizations in New York. Our sectors collective
contracted work with the city provides lifelines for

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millions of New Yorkers and maintains a workforce in
the hundreds of thousands. We urge the City of New
York to act now to protect human services from
proposed cuts to nearly every federal funding stream
touching our sector. We are facing a perfect storm.
Threatened programs, Medicaid, SNAP, Head Start,
Social Security, Disaster Grants and more are direct
lifelines for the communities we serve. For human
services workers living on government sanctioned
poverty wages and for organizational budgets
providing critical care.

It hits on all fronts and in all subsectors.
This is not a drill. The disaster is here and we sit
in a critical window to respond. With that in mind,
we outline four actions for the city. First,
urgently expedite all delayed contracting and
payments with human services providers. A UNH survey
highlighted this week found that \$88.9 million was
owed to 15 settlement houses in retroactive
contracts. A survey of HSC membership at the close
of 2024 found that 90 percent of respondents had
delayed payments from the city totaling \$365 million
with over half experiencing over six months of
delays.

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Fixing this is an immediate action that builds on recent progress and providers and provides needed and already allocated resources in preparation for mass cuts. Second, initiate strategic and rapid draw downs the city manage federal funds. Third, prioritize protecting critical human services in the use of existing and new emergency reserves as was earlier discussed and last and critically, implement a comprehensive counter strategy with the state.

This could include clear assessments of which funding streams and contracts are at risk. Consistent proactive notification across city agencies to nonprofit partners regarding those at risk funds.

Preparing continuity of operation plans and flexible budgeting with contract holders and closely coordinating with New York State and national and state nonprofit coalitions who are challenging federal actions. Take a moment and picture our city without these lifelines because the rest of this testimony has some very concrete recommendations but we have to root it in that because in that extreme, caregivers are without childcare or support for aging loved ones. New Yorkers navigating our economic and housing crisis, lose access to safe food, shelter,

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health services, case management, advocacy and more,
and potentially thousands fall to the cracks of large
scale disasters and every day emergencies.

Our leaders are gambling with our city's future
and versions of New York City without its critical
lifelines are right now on the table. We are
fighting for a different one. City leaders need to
act now and act fast to support us. Thank you and
please refer to our written testimony for more
information.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you.

RACHEL KLEPPER: Thank you for the opportunity to
testify. My name is Rachel Klepper and I'm a
Research Analyst at United Neighborhood Houses, a
policy and social change organization representing
neighborhood settlement houses that reach over
800,000 New Yorkers.

UNH thanks the Council for its leadership as we
strive to protect New Yorkers from potentially
devasting actions from the federal government.
Settlement Houses report that an average of 22
percent of their entire organizational budgets are
funded from federal sources, either a direct or state
and local pass through with some as high as 50

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percent. The elimination of federal funding could
decimate programs while depriving settlement house
community members of needed resources.

As we speak today about how to prepare for
changes to federal funding, cuts and reductions in
infrastructure are already underway. The crisis is
already occurring. One federal funding stream under
attack is Head Start, which provides early childhood
care, education, and supports for 19,000 New York
City children.

When community based organizations run Head
Start, they do so with attention to the needs of
entire families. At one settlement house, a three
year old attends Head Start while their parent is in
job training and their grandparent visits the senior
center. Recent headlines indicate that the very
existence of Head Start is in jeopardy. The abrupt
closure of five regional offices has left providers
unsure of how to move forward with payments, budget
modifications or contract renewals. Providers
continue to run programs but they are deeply
concerned, which I share more about in my written
testimony.

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Without Head Start, thousands of children would lose their programs and parents would be unable to afford childcare, meaning many might leave their jobs. It is vital that city leaders reach out to members of Congress to oppose all cuts to Head Start.

These threats compound the catastrophic impacts of other funding cuts affecting low income families. UNH and our members are bracing for the devastating effects of enacted or potential cuts to programs, including the emergency food and shelter program, Medicaid and SNAP. Settlement Houses were already struggling to meet the need for food, healthcare and housing. A 2023 UNH survey found that nearly 1 in 3 Settlement House families were sometime often or always unable to afford food for their children. Funding cuts don't just effect programs, they harm the children, seniors, and families who rely on them.

Federal funding cuts reveal the Administrations rejection of policies that support the most vulnerable. Some Settlement Houses are concerned that they will be retaliated against if they speak out, putting their communities at even greater risk. UNH needs you to speak out, share these stories and urge federal law makers to oppose funding cuts.

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We also urge city leaders to support their CBO's. Settlement Houses are places that people trust through challenges. Reliable funding will go far to ensure communities have access to supports they need to thrive. We look forward to continuing to partner with you to keep New Yorks neighborhood strong.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much and Ms. Samuels. I know four is a tight fit but we appreciate you all accommodating.

MELONY SAMUELS: That's alright, I'll do the best I can. See, we know how to work together. Good morning Chair Restler, Chair Brannan and esteemed members of the community and Committee of Government Operations and Committee on Finance. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the campaign against hunger TCAH. A leading antihunger and social service not-for-profit that has proudly served New York City for over 26 years.

My name is Dr. Melony Samuels and I appear before you with deep sense of urgency. Our non-for-profit, like many others, stand at a breaking point. While our mission has always been to fight hunger and poverty through emergency food assistance, workforce development, urban agriculture, today we must also

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fight to defend the very infrastructure that allowed
us to serve. Non-for-profit like TCAH are essential
to the functioning of this city. We are not
peripheral; we are a lifeline.

In the past year alone, we distributed over \$17
million culturally responsive meals to more than \$1.5
million New Yorkers including seniors, working family
veterans and newly arrived asylum seekers. Recently,
the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA awarded
TCAH over \$1.3 million through a shelter and service
program SSP to support migrant families. This grant
intended to sustain emergency food distribution
through 2026 has now been frozen without due process
or cause.

TCAH was the only New York City nonprofit
selected for this funding. No violations were cited.
No wrong doings alleged and yet we were being
punished through vague, politically charged policies
that indiscriminately target organizations under the
guide of border enforcement rhetoric. This funding
freeze is more than a blur or - this funding freeze
has become inconvenient. It is a direct threat to
food access for thousands. We have already invested
hundreds of thousands of dollars in staffing, food

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procurement, and operation. Now we are being told to wait indefinitely while the families we serve cannot wait another day for a meal. We presently obtained a lawyer because we are now in violation. This moment calls for bold municipal advocacy. We ask the City Council to:

1. Advocate on the federal level for a fair and expeditious review process for funding disbursements to non-for-profit, especially those caught in the broader enforcement dispute that do not apply to them.

2. Introduce or support legislation that protects non-for-profit contractors from harmful and arbitrary funding freezes.

3. Ensure transparency and accountability mechanism in how federal funding administered through city agencies are allocated and to withheld from nonprofit partners.

4. And last, champion emergency stabilization funding for non-for-profit facing interruptions in federal funding streams and jeopardizing essential services.

While we remain focused on our mission to feed, empower, and uplift our communities, we cannot do it

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1 with our hands tied behind our backs. Thank you for
2 your leadership and for the opportunity to testify.
3 Please refer to the written testimony. Are there any
4 questions?
5

6 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you very much to the
7 panel. I just had two brief questions. For Mr.
8 Rosenberg, you mentioned I think it was \$5.75 million
9 in federal cuts in your testimony to Catholic
10 Charities Legal Services. Could you just speak to
11 the scale of that cut as a percentage of the total
12 budget? Is that leading to layoffs? Obviously with
13 the heightened actions, dangerous illegal actions by
14 ICE, there's a greater need for legal services now
15 than ever. What has been the impact day to day for
16 Catholic Charities and your ability to support
17 immigrant communities?

18 JOSEPH ROSENBERG: Well, this is a devastating
19 hit and one of the things that's most confusing about
20 it is that it changes by the day. Sometimes
21 contracts are terminated. Sometimes they're revised.
22 Like for instance, the loss of the \$4.3 million to
23 assist legal services for accompanied minors.
24 There's another \$1.4 million in that contract, which
25 after some negotiations won't be terminated for

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another six months but that might be changed as well.

So, we're influx. I don't have the specific totals

of the amount of federal funding but it is

overwhelmingly what we rely upon for legal

representation. Just as an example, us getting away

from fiscal numbers, the number of unaccompanied

minors that have legal representation through these

programs through Catholic Charities is over 600 and

there were over 14,000 undocumented and documented

immigrants who receive consultations, pro se

assistance and other things. We also have desks that

are staffed at the three Immigration courts in New

York City that has exclusively relied upon federal

funding. That too has been terminated. So, this is

just a partial list of what we're facing. No doubt

there will be many more in a week or two but this is

something that's important to say.

The mission of the Catholic Church is to provide

funding and assistance for those who need it. So,

right now, despite the loss of funding, we're going

to try to find ways, whether it's through donations,

moving funds in other directions to try to continue

this. Once people have representation it's not like

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they can just all of a sudden lose their attorney's.
That is just unacceptable for anyone including us.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: That's very helpful and
wanted to just ask, UNH and HSC if you've done a
survey of your members of what percentage of their
funding is coming directly from the federal
government and if you haven't done a survey like that
to date, is that something you're considering to just
better understand the specific risks that your
members are facing?

RACHEL KLEPPER: What we have done so far is
analyze our members audits, which share the funding
streams that come from the federal government. So
that's where the statistic that an average of 22
percent of their budgets is from federal sources and
that goes all the way up to 50 percent. So, we
started there but we are continuing this conversation
with our members.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Wow, that is devastating.
Thank you.

ALANA TORNELLO: And thank you for the question.
There are a few surveys, both subsector, national and
state that are trying to get to this answer and we're
trying to support those and also will explore working

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with both our coalition and the subsector coalitions
we work with to get that information. If we do so,
we'll make sure to reach out.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: And we should collaborate
on these efforts to make sure that we're thinking
through whatever we can do at the city level to
support. It's you know I've just heard from so many
nonprofits in my own district who are - who have lost
funding already and are just terrified for how
they're going to balance their books and continue to
employ their staff and provide their essential
services when you know so many different funding
streams are on the chopping block.

We'll go to Council Member Brewer followed by
Council Member Williams unless you want to jump in.
Oh sorry, Chair Brannan.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Would this moment be a
little bit easier for you if the city paid its damn
bills on time?

RACHEL KLEPPER: Absolutely.

MELONY SAMUELS: No, I'm saying yes, definitely.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Right, okay thank you.
Council Member Brewer.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Absolutely yes. My question is, in the papers today and previously, there is this discussion when people are laid off in Washington and then of course it's like a budget cut to you because there's nobody there to answer the question. So, it's horrific. It's a story of a Health and HHS laying people off so that nobody can get cooling during the summer and you know people die when their apartment is you know 100 degrees. So, my question to you although you may not know the answer because I feel so terrible about these cuts to your amazing staff and the services that you provide is are you finding that in addition to budget cuts or maybe in lieu of budget cuts; they lie and say, "oh we don't have budget cuts." But in fact they do because there's nobody there to administer. So, I just didn't know that's something that's coming up. Now that may get handled by the courts but God knows when.

JOSEPH ROSENBERG: Yes, thank you that's an extremely good point. That's happening not just to the nonprofits here but to everyone, it's very difficult to get any questions answered. Websites go down, phone lines that require - that provided

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information have been extinguished. Even when you
get a hold of someone who in good faith is trying to
be helpful, they might not have information that
happened the night before. So, a tremendous amount
of the information coming out of the agencies we deal
with in Washington is either nonexistent or not
reliable.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: That's a crime. Thank
you.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you and Council
Member Williams.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah, I just wanted to
know if any of your organizations or coalition
organizations have been contacted by [INAUDIBLE
01:14:56]. I was reading an article that they've
extended their reach to also nonprofit organizations
receiving federal funds. So, just wondering because
I know there was an article today about Vera but
we're at the other day.

MELONY SAMUELS: I can answer. The closest I
have been is where we have gone a letter that we're
in violations of serving migrants and we had to
obtain a lawyer because we have to appeal. And so,
with that came the cancelation of our contract and we

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have already spent close to \$600,000 to be reimbursed
a few weeks ago and it was not and so there is
nothing there. So, we have gotten two letters
already.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: They say you were in
violation because you were serving food to migrants?

MELONY SAMUELS: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Whew okay. With that, I
want to thank this panel for your thoughtful
testimony and for being with us today and we look
forward to partnering together to try and protect
your organizations and members most effectively. We
will now invite Mohammad Razvi from the Council
Peoples Organization, Alice Mo from Homecrest
Community Services, Jeehae Fischer from Korean
American Family Services Center, and Andrew Sta. Ana
from the Asian American Federation to join us on the
panel. And I will just do the next panel to so the
people are ready. We have Miranda from La Colmena,
Aaron Sanders from Grand Street Settlement, Bryan
Ellicott-Cook from SAGE and Kevin Kiprovski from
LiveOn New York and I will apologize to everyone
whose name has been butchered.

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You all can testify in whatever order.

ANDREW STA. ANA: Okay, shall I start? Okay
great. Thank you Chair Restler and Brannan and
members of the City Council for holding this
important and timely testimony on preparing New York
City for changes in federal funding. My name is
Andrew Sta. Ana and I am the Interim Co-Executive
Director at the Asian American Federation.
Representing the collective voice of over 70 member
nonprofits serving 1.5 million Asian New Yorkers. We
are here today because New York's Asian community
faces a trifecta of crises that signal the brewing of
agile mentioned, a coming storm: a sharp rise in
anti-immigrant policies, wild swings in the economy
from job losses to tariffs, and, of course, draconian
cuts in federal funding. And - while our member
organizations continue to exhibit resilience and
extraordinary courage in this unstable climate to
serve, house, feed, educate, and protect low-income
Asian New Yorkers, our community is signaling that
the clouds are gathering and the sky is darkening.

Indeed, despite the model minority stereotype
surrounding Asian Americans as wealthy and
successful, our community faces significant hardship.

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Two-thirds of our community are foreign-born; 20 percent of our community are non-citizens. And while we have grown 35 percent from 2010 to 2020, one in three Asian residents lives in low-income households, and we are twice as likely to experience poverty compared to White New Yorkers. 48 percent of our community is limited English proficient and 42 percent of older adults are low income, many of them living in poverty.

In addition, through the cuts of federal funding, there are devastating impacts of domestic violence. According to the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence, up to 55 percent of Asian women in the United States have experienced some form of physical violence or sexual violence in their lifetime. So as we say our member organizations provide a critical service bridge and human connection to our community that is experiencing hunger, fear, poverty, isolation, and hate violence. In addition, we know that across the city that our community members are hesitant to access services because of fears of unwarranted ICE raids. They are disenrolling from benefits, avoiding seeking medical care from hospitals, and disengaging from the

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community. And so on top of that, we know that the cuts of federal funding effect our community through food insecurity for older adults, through TEFAP and the Emergency Food Assistance Shelter program. Our member and partner organizations rely on SNAP and food pantries. We rely on funding from the Office of Violence Against Women to protect survivors of domestic and sexual violence and through Head Start programs to educate low income youth and early childhood development.

The Asian American Federation believes it is more critical than ever that the city reinforce its support for addressing these interconnected issues by supporting the community-based organizations that provide these services.

Indeed from the turmoil and tragedy of 9/11 to the 2008 financial crisis, through the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resurgence once again of Asian violence, our member organizations have protected our community and provided a critical lifeline

Our recommendations are simple. Of course protect this funding and strengthen partnerships with Asian led and Asian serving nonprofits that

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understand the needs of their communities to address
these long term needs.

These challenges are complex and we recognize
that there are no easy answers. We thank you for
your vital and courageous leadership at this time and
please hold the line for all New Yorkers. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you very much and I
failed to acknowledge that we have Council Member
Paladino with us online who represents one of the
larger Asian American communities in the city and
whoever is up next.

MOHAMMAD RAZVI: Wonderful, thank you Chair
Restler and Chair Brannan. My name is Mohammad Razvi
and I run one of the largest South Asian Muslim
organizations in Brooklyn. I just wanted to give you
a sense of when someone says there's a few thousand
people that come to your office for services, this is
that data. This is how many thousands and thousands
of people are coming to our offices for services.

Secondly, during COVID, this book was multiplied
by ten. So during COVID, I had ten of these books.
That's how many people are coming to our offices. We
serviced over 20.5 million pounds of food and I can't
even explain to you how desperate the people were.

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1 You just had to see them on the line that you know
2 people who were average New Yorkers who had good jobs
3 and how they were trying to survive.
4

5 At this moment, all these cuts that are
6 happening, I know some folks say the food you know
7 the COVID is over but it's not over for our folks.
8 And when I say our folks, I mean the folks who are
9 hard workers and they're the ones who we actually
10 need. All these cuts that are happening are
11 devastating. Recently we were able to fortunately
12 have our Council Member Inna Vernikov also
13 participate in providing food for during Passover
14 which was great. Yesterday, we did it with our City
15 Council Member Farah Louis, which was great but for
16 the Muslim community, for other community members,
17 there's so much need and it's a never ending story.
18 Everyone thinks it's over. It's not over. We urge
19 you to actually even if the OMB is going to think or
20 the Administration is thinking a way to put the
21 funding or put the money, please put it into at least
22 these programs which are essential. You know which
23 is the survival for these community members because
24 these folks have nothing else. All they are here, on
25 those lines is just trying to get some food for their

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kids and we do help them to enroll for SNAP which
also is being cut, which is unfortunate. So, this is
where our you know request is, just to make sure
these essential services they are being cut. Please
focus on that and please keep that continuous for us.
Thank you.

ALICE MO: Good morning Chair Brannan, Chair
Restler and members of the Committees. My name is
Alice Mo and I am the Policy and Advocacy Coordinator
at Homecrest Community Services. Thank you for the
opportunity to testify today.

Shifts in federal fronting threaten the programs
that safeguard New York City's most vulnerable
residence, especially lower income older adults and
immigrant communities. Including the Asian American
population we serve daily across our four centers in
Brooklyn.

At Homecrest, we see the lifechanging impact of
federal programs every day. In calendar year 2024,
we enrolled 400 individuals in Medicaid and 1,100 in
SNAP benefits. Recently, we have seen an increase in
clients due to SNAP theft with many coming into us
seeking guidance on how to protect their EBT cards
from being stolen and pursue reimbursement for stolen

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benefits. Underscoring just how vital these programs
are to daily survival.

We are equally concerned about how federal
funding cuts would affect older adult services.
Homecrest operates two older adult centers funded in
part by NYC Aging. In 2024, we served over 110,000
services. We delivered over 110,000 services to over
1,600 older adults. Our centers offer more than just
daily nutritious meals. They offer a trusted and
culturally responsive space that for many adults is
the only place they like to go outside their homes.
Here they can receive assistance with healthcare and
affordable housing applications, access case
management, all in their preferred language. This is
especially critical as 72 percent of older Asian New
Yorkers have limited English proficiency.

For fiscal year 2025 federal funding makes up 16
percent of NYC Aging's total budget with the majority
allocated to older adult centers. Combined with the
proposed \$100 million in cuts in the Mayor's
Preliminary Budget to an agency that has historically
received less than one percent of the city's budget
even as older adults now represent 20 percent of the

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population. This put centers like ours at serious
risk of closure.

In light of these challenges, we respectfully
urge the City Council to protect the city's social
safety net by first prioritizing sustained
investments in AAPI community based organizations
that serve New York City's older adult and immigrant
populations. Thereby shielding life sustaining
programs from federal instability.

Second, strengthening partnerships with trusted
providers who have the cultural competence to meet
local needs. And third, advocating decisively in
response to federal shift to protect and uphold the
city's priorities.

Thank you for your leadership and for the
opportunity to testify today.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much.

JEEHAE FISCHER: Good morning Chair Brannan,
Chair Restler and members of the Committee. My name
is Jeehae Fischer and I serve as the Executive
Director of the Korean American Family Service
Center. A leading nonprofit organization that has
supported immigrant survivors of gender based
violence across New York City for over 35 years. I'm

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here today to share our growing concern about the
devastating impact of federal funding cuts, specially
the projected loss of our grants from the US
Department of Justices Office and Violence Against
Women, also known as OVW.

These funds have been critical in supporting
KAFSC's core services including our 24 hour hotline,
trauma informed counseling, legal advocacy, legal
services, economic empowerment, and transitional
housing program and these programs are very specific
to the immigrant survivors of gender based violence,
not just all survivors but immigrant survivors of
gender based violence.

By the end of September 2026, KAFSC is expected
to lose up to \$2 million in federal funding. The
represents nearly 44 percent of our operating budget
and has already forced us to freeze key hires and
reevaluate essential programming. We're deeply
concerned about how we will continue to meet the
needs of the 3,000 survivors and families we serve
annually. This moment is defined not only by
financial restraint - financial strain but by fear
and instability.

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As we navigate this uncertainty, the need of our services only continue to grow. In 2024 alone, KAFSC responded to nearly 5,000 hotline calls related to domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. Calls that often represent a survivors first and only attempt to seek help. These cuts impact immigrant survivors who rely on organizations like KAFSC for culturally and linguistically specific services. We urge the City Council to recognize this moment for what it is, a crisis for our communities. We respectfully call on you to increase investment in community based culturally specific organizations that serve immigrant survivors of gender based violence. Without this support, organizations like KAFSC will be forced to scale back and we've already have been scaled back at a time when our communities need us the most.

So, we're committed to doing everything we can but we cannot do this alone. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much. A very compelling panel. Council Member Williams I know had a question.

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COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah, what were the reasons that they cited that you'll lose the \$2 million? Do you know how, where, why?

JEEHAE FISCHER: So, they're not saying that they're cutting the funding, they're saying that they're reevaluating so we're on hold. Like, we're not -

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: And like what was the allocation from? Was it like for domestic violence?

JEEHAE FISCHER: It's the federal - yeah, so direct federal funding through the OVW that are supporting the culturally specific organizations work for the immigrant survivors of gender based violence.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: And Council Member Schulman.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Hi, thank you all for testifying and I know many of you. So, I have a question which is, do you find given the immigration issues that are going on that people are coming less for the services? And if so, how are you reaching out to them? And the reason I'm asking is because obviously the numbers are going to show that we need to give you money and if they fall off, then

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somebody's going to say oh, well, they don't have
enough people. You know what I'm saying?

JEEHAE FISCHER: Yeah, so actually at KAFSC we
hear this from other organizations but because our
location is confidential, due to the work, we have a
24 hour hotline, we're actually getting more calls.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Hmm, hmm yeah, how
about the rest?

MOHAMMAD RAZVI: Yeah, so our food pantry line
actually 20 percent we lost. However, but the
friends who are coming, they say, "my friend is not
going to come, can I take the bag?" So, the food is
still needed for them but they're not showing up on a
line and what we have implemented, which was
something I wish all organizations do this. All of
our storefront says you know members only or by
appointment only, so no one can enter from public
into the facility.

And then lastly, what we are doing is we're
actually delivering the food to the people's home,
especially our seniors.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Just make sure you keep
track of it yeah.

MOHAMMAD RAZVI: Yeah, that's what we're doing.

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1
2 ALICE MO: At Homecrest, at our Sunset Park
3 Center which has a high immigrant population, we have
4 recently seen just more people coming in trying to
5 get naturalization forms because of the fears.

6 ANDREW STRA. ANA: What we hear from our room and
7 partners is of course that they have to adapt, so
8 maybe trainings or education things that they've done
9 in person, they've been taking place online. And
10 then I think what we've heard from members and
11 partners is it ebbs and flows right depending on
12 what's happening in the news, there might be more or
13 less demand or fear. So, I think you know that
14 trifecta of increased ICE or immigration activity to
15 other things of food insecurity, I think folks are
16 modulating based on what's happening in the news.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: No and please make sure
18 to reach out to us if we could be helpful at all,
19 even to help you our federal partners and all of
20 that. So, which is really important, so thank you.

21 ANDREW STRA. ANA: Just real quick, so right now
22 it's difficult to get a rule of a passport. People
23 are calling me literally, they cannot renew them,
24 they are going online, there's no appointments, no
25 nothing and sadly our attorney's are telling us they

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are receiving emails. You know, if your client is
not legal, tell them to leave. You know those exact
emails that everyone's getting.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: That's disgusting.

ANDREW STRA. ANA: Yeah, so there's no - what are
you going to do? How are you going to represent
anyone? But that is happening.

MOHAMMAD RAZVI: I was going to say of course, I
know this was mentioned at the last panel as well but
the need for immigrant legal services, because what's
happening is, because of the misinformation, folks
just don't have that basic language accessible legal
services, so they can ask those basic questions about
you know those fears around public benefits. Those
fears around public charge. Those fears around
naturalization or showing up to interviews. So, that
effects their choices and I think many folks are
deciding to not seek food or not seek shelter or not
you know get protection from domestic and sexual
violence as a result.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Thank you very much. I
really appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I am very grateful for this
panel and for your you know truly great work serving

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immigrant New Yorkers, serving all New Yorkers every day. You know it's - you know we're seeing the federal government kind of deteriorate before our eyes, whether it's passports or Social Security, but it's also for many of the great established community based organizations like the ones on this panel that rely on you know federal discretionary grants and funding, that's the you know first - I think those are the items that are most readily on the chopping block and it destabilizes our organizations, it destabilizes our communities and you know we have to fight back and push back and so I think we've got to do more collaborative federal advocacy. If the mayor won't work with us then we should be working together directly and with our members of congress to fight back and push in every way that we can and I'm grateful for you all taking the time to share your experience and your expert testimony today.

PANEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you. Okay next up as I mentioned Miranda from La Colmena, Aaron Sanders from Grand Street Settlement, Bryan Ellicott-Cook from Sage, Kevin Kiprovski from LiveOn New York and the following panel will be Jade Vasquez from WIN,

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Gina Cappuccitti, sorry, from New Destiny Housing
Corp, Reverend Terry Troia from Project Hospitality,
and Victoria Leahy from Homeless Services United.

And you all can testify in which ever order you
are so moved.

MIRANDA: Good morning Chairs and Council
Members. My name is Miranda and I am the Organizing
Associate at La Colmena. An immigrant right
organization proudly rooted in Staten Island.

Today, I am here with my sister organization who
will be testifying as well at La Colmena. Our
mission is empower immigrant workers through
education, culture, organizing and economic
development. In Staten Island, La Colmena has been
unapologetically applicating for our immigrant
community. In the face of backlash, La Colmena we
hold regular community sessions to hear directly from
our neighbors listening to their fears and questions.
With the support of our consultant, attorney, we also
provide consultation to provide a cure, reliable
information. Too often, our community comes to us
after encountering misinformation, especially online
or through word of mouth. In some cases, community

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members have paid over \$3,000 and have been misled
by individuals claiming to be attorney's.

Claiming that they can offer a citizenship
process, going as far as creating fake US CIS
documents and impersonating. More recently, we have
seen people arriving at our doors with a deportation
notice or unsure how to navigate the new immigrant
register requirement. And this is why I'm here to
highlight the critical work. We have been doing and
to urge this Council to continue protecting and
handing city funding for immigrants. Serving
organization especially in Staten Island. We are
grateful for the support La Colmena has received in
the past from this Council. But the work is far from
over. Now is the time to stand with us again because
immigrant communities are currently under attack.

If there [INAUDIBLE 01:37:11] we cannot be
supported, we know we can count on you. Please don't
forget about La Colmena. Please don't forget Staten
Island. Please don't forget about my sister
organizations. Thank you for your time and for your
continued community.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much.

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AARON SANDERS: Thank you Chair Restler, Chair
Brannan and Committee Members present today for
convening this necessary hearing and for the
opportunity to provide testimony regarding recent
changes in federal funding.

Grand Street Settlement is a 109 year old multi-
service settlement house. We serve over 18,000 New
Yorkers through vital early childhood, youth and
older adult programs on the Lower East Side Manhattan
and the Bronx. Today, we are testifying about the
importance of federal funding sources on Grand Street
programs and how a funding reduction will negatively
impact the communities we serve. We also urge city
leaders to work in partnership with the current
federal administration on behalf of community based
organizations to sustain the federal fundings our
neighbors rely on.

Nearly half of our operating budget is comprised
of direct federal Head Start funding. Currently,
Grand Street operates eight programs that either
receive direct or indirect federal Head Start
funding. The funding allocated the Grand Street
supports the academic and social emotional
development of children.

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Really quickly, I want to highlight the benefits of Head Start. Head Start is a federally funded childcare program supporting low income families. Children from birth through kindergarten receive free subsidized high quality education, health screenings, nutritional support alongside professional and personal support for parents and much more.

Statistics show that Head Start is one of the most successful programs that have come out of the great society era in the 60's. A study published in December 2022 in the Journal of Political Economy concluded that the Head Start program or children who have attended the Head Start program have higher levels of educational attainment, lower teen pregnancy rates, and less criminal engagement on average.

As a recipient of federal direct and indirect Head Start funding from the Office of Head Start, the New York City Department of Education, we're deeply concerned about the potential cuts to the program. Cuts to our federal Head Start grant will have a dire generational impact on families who depend on Grand Street for high quality early childhood education services.

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Grand Street and other childcare providers throughout this country are now faced with funding cuts despite our record of providing robust childcare services. For several years, Grand Street was allotted by parents, educational experts and elected officials for our successful Head Start model.

This January, Governor Kathy Hochul visited Grand Street and committed us on our early childhood education program and its life changing impact on families. However, adequate federal funding is critical to continuing this work.

With appropriate funding for the Office of Head Start, we can continue to disrupt systemic barriers that hinder children from excelling and becoming successful contributing members of society. Other programs are at risk. For example, programs like Single Stop USA will be impacted by proposed funding cuts. Single Stop is a nationally renown benefits assisted program that supports eligible individuals and families in accessing federal subsidized benefits such as SNAP and Medicaid.

Our community relies on these programs like Single Stop to gain access to lifesaving services. Funding for these resources equips Grand Street Case

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Managers with the resources needed to support our
community.

And closing, we encourage the City of New York to
continue working with our federal administration to
ensure that community based organization and families
have the funding that they need to support our
communities. Thank you for the opportunity to
testify.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you for your
testimony. This Council is certainly committed to
working with you on that.

BRYA ELLICOTT-COOK: Good afternoon Chairs
Brannan and Restler and members of the Committee. My
name is Bryan Ellicott-Cook. I'm the Director of
Government Relations at SAGE and I'm here today to
deliver a clear message. The alarm bells are
ringing. LGBTQ+ elders and elders living with HIV
are under attack from a hostile federal government
issuing executive orders to dismantle so-called WOK
programs to local budget proposals that threaten the
very infrastructure of elder care. These are not
hypotheticals. They are real, targeted and already
causing harm.

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Since January of 2025, the federal administration has cultivated increasingly aggressive stance toward LGBTQ+ Americans. These attacks are not abstract. They are targeted, calculated, and already impacting the lives of LGBTQ+ elders. These funds supporting several of our core programs, our SAGE centers for older adults and specialized initiatives like for our LGBT veterans, program such as SAGE Positive, SAGE Vets and SAGE Trans, all designed to meet the unique needs of LGBTQ+ older adults are now being targeted over the guides of eliminating so-called DEI initiatives or WOK programs. These efforts are further fueled by recent executive actions, including the effective orders that would seek to roll back protections under the pretense of combatting gender ideology.

We are deeply concerned as there is no clear sense of how these federal shifts may effect state and city funded streams or how they are being used to justify the cuts and programs that serve some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Most recently we have also seen the proposals to eliminate the federal Administration for Community Living, ACL and it has raised alarms. Without ACL programs that

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combat elder isolation, provide affirming care can
vanish overnight.

LGBTQ+ elders already experience disproportionate
rates of poverty, discrimination and isolation.

Trans and nonbinary elders including veterans are
especially vulnerable to housing insecurity, medical
neglect, and violence. Especially now among an on
slot of anti-trans rhetoric and legislation, I want
to read a quote from one of my staff members. He
runs our long-term HIV survivors group and he says
many participants remember when the government turned
a blind eye to our community. We are once again in a
moment where history threatens to repeat itself. And
just then, we have communities who take care of each
other who rely on the support of our allies and loved
ones and we will continue to build towards a future
where all LGBTQ+ elders are valued, supported and can
thrive.

Taking together both federal and local attacks
threaten to unravel decades of progress, including a
proposed \$1.2 million cut to the New York City
Department for Aging which could shutter up to 60
older adult centers, which are lifelines for our
community. Four of those centers are run by SAGE.

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1
2 SAGE is one of the few organizations nationwide
3 focused solely on the unique needs of queer elders.
4 That's our mission and these mounting threats, fiscal
5 and ideological jeopardize our ability to do our
6 work. Thanks.

7 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you.

8 KEVIN KIPROVSKI: Good morning Chairs Brannan and
9 Chair Restler. It is really important to hold this
10 hearing and I'm really grateful that you have sort of
11 brought us in to testify about this. My name is
12 Kevin Kiproviski and I am the Director of Public
13 Policy for LiveON New York. We are an organization
14 that represents over 100 aging service providers
15 throughout the city. Our members do everything from
16 run older adult centers, home delivered meals
17 programs, case management programs, basically things
18 that allow people to live healthy and live in their
19 homes.

20 Right now, the federal government has already
21 dissolved ACL. To echo Bryan's sentiments about
22 that, ACL and the Administration for Community Living
23 disburses funds for the older American Act programs
24 which are a lot of the programs in the city. So,
25 we've already seen huge cuts that we don't know what

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the impacts are going to be but we're bracing for them and we're trying to figure out what the best way to move forward is in that uncertainty.

The other cuts that are being proposed by the federal government to Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, Housing Programs like Section 8 and SNAP will disproportionately effect older New Yorkers. Older New Yorkers are 20 percent of our population. And just for some numbers, Medicaid alone brings in \$40 billion to the New York City area through coverage of people of all ages. Over 400,000 households in our city with an older adult rely on SNAP to meet their basic nutritional requirements. Over 1 million New Yorkers over the age of 65 receive Social Security benefits. Cuts to these programs seem almost specifically targeted to hurt older people and hurt older people in our city.

We will see people who were born and raised in the city put out onto the street if these cuts go through. We will see people who have lived here for decades lose access to stable nutrition and lose access to their medical care. When it comes to older adult services, however, there is something that the city can do. Because the funding for a lot of DFTA's

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programming amounts to only half a percent of the budget, any cuts to that will only amount to small amounts. So, if the federal government were to cut all of the funding to DFTA, it's about 25 percent of DFTA's portfolio. The other 75 percent is city tax levy. It would only be about \$120 million to keep services running as they are. And that's key because DFTA's portfolio is one of the only things that can mitigate the harms if the federal government decides to cut all of these programs.

DFTA's portfolio allows meals to be delivered directly to peoples homes and to be gotten in congregate settings. So, we can give people some security on the food level. DFTA's programming connects people to services they may not know about both federally and otherwise, so we can ensure that if federal lines get cut, folks have access to private lines to different charity lines and ensuring that that works out the way it does. The first thing that I'm going to say is we can't cut the budget. The Mayor has put \$102 million budget cut just for this year that will close up to 90 centers now we've estimated. It was 60, that's new. 90 centers now that we've estimated and if they go through it, you

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know we're going to lose almost one-third of the
senior centers in the city. That just can't happen.

Second, we've put together our Age Strong New
York campaign that goes through housing, nutrition
and community services. It shows that with a \$2.3
billion investment; we can prepare our city for
aging. We are an aging city. We must recognize
that. It's not a dirty thing. It's not a bad word.
With proper investment, we can be a great city with a
lot of older New Yorkers who can live here, stay here
and thrive.

And lastly, we need to make sure older New
Yorkers are part of every single story we tell. A
recent poll showed that 70 percent of all
demographics think aging in place should be a top
priority of whoever wants to be the next mayor and 30
percent of those people across all demographics think
it should be the top priority. Second only to
affordable housing. So, we need to make sure that we
are lifting the voices of the older New Yorkers in
our city, not just for you know people who are older
now but for us because if we are in the city and we
are aging in the city, we need to create a place
where we can be too.

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That's all I have to say. If you have any questions, please let me know and again, thank you so much for this incredibly important opportunity to testify.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you all. You know I just will say there are times when each of us Chair hearings and we reach out to lots of organizations and advocates from across the city to beg them to come in to share their experience. I know you all have a lot going on. That was not what happened today. We sent out an email you know just letting people know that this hearing was happening and we're received this incredibly strong response because senior service organizations, settlement houses, immigrant serving organizations, everything in between, are already experiencing shockwaves from federal grants that are disappearing and we all can see that it's getting worse.

So, I'm deeply grateful that you all have taken the time among your very busy lives with all the critical work that you do to share with us the specifics because it makes Council Member Schulman and Williams and Chair Brannan and myself and Council

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Member Brewer in spirit, stronger advocates. I know
and better champions for each of your needs.

With that, I'll pass it to Council Member
Schulman, who I know has a question.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Yes and before I get to
my question, I want to thank Chair's Restler and
Brannan for holding this very important hearing
today. I want to thank you. I am an older adult, so
FYI everybody. Yay.

So, Bryan, I wanted to ask you specifically, I
keep hearing from LGBTQ+ organizations that they're
getting cut, like directly from the federal
government. Are you aware of who they are and where
they are?

BRYAN ELLICOTT-COOK: We're one of the
organizations that was federally cut. We had an
international program. We partnered up with uh
older, you know LGBT adults across the world to share
their stories because unlike the United States of
America, those stories are also not told. We've lost
two staffers. We got one of those nasty federal
letters that said, you know your funding is being
terminated and it's because you're an LGBTQ+
organization, and we know others have as well. We

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1 also - they tried to pause some of our older adult,
2 our OAA money. We were able to file a lawsuit with
3 democracy forward and pause that for some of the
4 foreseeable future. But yes, we are seeing that
5 directly at SAGE and from others as well.
6

7 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Because particularly as
8 an older adult who is a member of the LGBTQ+
9 community, you know that's super important and I also
10 - I think maybe if you guys can or get together with
11 the other organizations and pull together a list of
12 what's being cut directly versus some other things, I
13 think that would be helpful to us as Council Members.

14 BRYAN ELLICOTT-COOK: I think the coalition that
15 - one of the coalitions we - I think Katz here
16 somewhere.

17 KATZ: Hi.

18 BRYAN ELLICOTT-COOK: We collect some of that
19 information already.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Like I've heard
21 separate from this, I've heard from the Door, I've
22 heard from GMHC, I've heard from a number of others
23 that there's like very deep cuts.

24 BRYAN ELLICOTT-COOK: And I would also say with
25 the cuts and I don't think I need to tell anybody

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1 this that the people who do this work are usually
2 also LGBTQ+ identified, so we are stressed. We are
3 scared. We are sometimes multitasking and that's
4 something that the city should also try to assist
5 with.
6

7 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Okay, no, so you know
8 we're hear for you. Thank you very much for your
9 compelling testimony and really appreciate it and
10 we'll see what we can figure out. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you very much Council
12 Member Schulman. We're going to move to the next
13 panel. Thank you once again. Thank you Council
14 Member Williams for joining us and for your
15 thoughtful questions.

16 Jade Vasquez from Women In Need, Gina Cappuccitti
17 from New Destiny Housing Court, Reverend Terry Troia
18 from Project Hospitality and Victoria Leahy from
19 Homeless Services United.

20 Next up, we'll do a Staten Island panel Adrienne
21 Abbate from Staten Island Partnership for Community
22 Wellbeing, Janet - oh no, I'm sorry Ann Nort is the
23 Reverend Troia, Janet Magnuson, NPSI Richmond Home
24 Need Services INC., Tatiana Arguello, Nonprofit SI,
25

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and Celestine Cox from Nonprofit SI, you will be up
next. And with that, however, you'd like to proceed.

JADE VASQUEZ: Good afternoon. Good afternoon
Chair Brannan, Chair Restler, and members of the
Committees. My name is Jade Vasquez and I am the
Director of Policy and Research at WIN, the largest
provider of shelter and supportive housing for
families with children in New York City and the
nation. Each night, nearly 7,000 New Yorkers,
including 3,600 children call WIN home. As federal
funding for housing, social services, and education
faces unprecedented threats, our city must be
prepared to fill these gaps to protect our most
vulnerable residents.

In January, WIN released Project Hope, which
outlined steps, city and state lawmakers can take to
shield low income, immigrant and homeless New Yorkers
from the extreme federal rollbacks proposed in
project 2025.

In anticipation of massive federal cuts to the US
Department of Housing and Urban Development
Workforce, the slashing of individual federal
benefits like Section 8 and SNAP, the Trump
Administrations mass deportation efforts that are

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1 already underway and is planned to eliminate the
2 Department of Education, we urge the city to allocate
3 an additional \$263 million to City FHEPS to serve
4 approximately 10,000 households at risk of losing
5 their Section 8 voucher.
6

7 Two, allocate funding in the FY26 budget to
8 supplement the SNAP program. Invest \$10 million in
9 direct cash transfer programs serving high risk
10 populations, including families with children, youth
11 and single adults experiencing housing instability or
12 homelessness, like it did last year with the \$1.5
13 million investment to the bridge project.

14 Increase the city's share of funding for
15 immigration legal services to \$80 million and direct
16 these funds to experienced nonprofit immigration
17 legal services providers. Allocate an additional \$17
18 million in funding for the NYC DOE Office of Students
19 in Temporary Housing to increase the number of
20 shelter based community coordinators. Improve and
21 invest additional resources in school transportation
22 for students in temporary housing.

23 And lastly, to renew \$200 million in funding for
24 early childhood education including 3K, preschool
25 education and Promise NYC set to expire in June 2025

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and commit to covering the cost of any Head Start
loss due to the Trump Administration cuts.

Federal cuts are already hitting us. FEMA food
losses have impacted our families in our shelters.
The threats to HUD, SNAP, Education and Legal
Protections is real and growing and New York City has
the resources. It also has the responsibility and we
urge the city to step up now and invest in the
supports low income families need to survive and
succeed. Thank you for your time and leadership.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much.

GINA CAPPUCCHITTI: Good afternoon Chair Brannan,
Chair Restler and Council Central Staff. Thank you
for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to
testify on behalf of New Destiny Housing. My name is
Gina Cappuccitti and I'm the Senior Director of
Housing Access and Stability Services at New Destiny.
New Destiny is the only organization in New York City
that's 100 percent focused on permanent housing for
survivors of domestic violence. We do this work
because domestic violence is the number one cause of
family homelessness in our city and for survivors
housing is a matter of life and death, yet the

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federal government is threatening vital housing
programs for survivors.

In 2019, New Destiny implemented the first
federally funded rapid rehousing program for
survivors in New York City Housing link. In 2022,
New Destiny added a second rapid rehousing program
dedicated to survivors with housing vouchers. At any
given time, we are serving over 300 households
experiencing domestic violence across these two
contracts. These programs are funded by HUD via the
New York City Continuum of Care or COC providing
survivors with housing navigation services temporary
rental assistance and supportive services to promote
long term housing stability.

Like other COC programs, New Destiny's Rapid
Rehousing programs are only fighting for survivors.
So, we are concerned about the future of these
contracts and HUDs ability to manage these contracts
if the proposed cuts are effectuated.

New Destiny is also deeply concerned with the
ending of the Emergency Housing Vouchers or EHV. The
federal government notified agencies in March. That
funding for the program is ending this year. Nearly
1,000 households in New York depend on this vital

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housing resources, including nearly 1,700 domestic violence survivors. New Destiny House nearly half of the survivors and since then we've maintained contact through our aftercare services and we know these survivors and many others who are vulnerable will return to homelessness or to abusive partners if they are to lose their voucher too soon.

While we are pushing for congress to allocate federal funding to sustain the HB program into 2026 and years later, HPD and NYCHA must plan for contingencies to ensure these New Yorkers remain stability housed. Thank you and I'm happy to answer your questions.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you. Reverend Troia.

REVEREND TERRY TROIA: Hi, I'm Terry Troia and I work with hungry and homeless people in Staten Island. I'm also representing today the Staten Island Hunger Task Force and the Supportive Housing Network of New York.

The cuts to Medicaid and SNAP are the most devastating federal actions that our city faces and that will result in massive hunger and lack of access to healthcare for people who depend on Medicaid, especially our disabled population and will increase

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1 illness, untreated illness and unnecessary death for
2 many, many New Yorkers. As well, the cuts to Section
3 8 and other HUD vouchers will lead to massive
4 homelessness in our city. Let's talk hunger first.
5 The federal government has frozen the Emergency Food
6 and Shelter Program EFSP, which provides funds to
7 purchase emergency food and TFAP the Emergency Food
8 Assistance Program from the federal Farm Bill
9 legislation which provides buying power of basic food
10 stuffs for food pantries in New York City. Buying
11 power of food stuff like beans, pasta, rice, canned
12 vegetables. Nothing fancy like meat and milk.
13

14 These cuts are now devastating the city's emergency
15 food pantry networks including Project Hospitality,
16 which provides \$4 million or 50 percent of the 8
17 million emergency meals provided by pantries on
18 Staten Island.

19 Now let's talk about homelessness. FEMA funds
20 stabilization beds for homeless people in the City of
21 New York, including on Staten Island. FEMA funds
22 homeless street outreach for all of the city's five
23 boroughs including Staten Island where we have two
24 people 24 hours a day that respond to 311 calls
25 across Staten Island including our South Shore in

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order to address the needs of homeless people living
in encampments on our streets.

SAMSA(SP?) cuts will affect us on Staten Island
by eliminating a mental health one psychiatrist and
one social worker program that we've had since 1992
that does mental health screening of all homeless
people that come to our drop in center or through our
outreach programs on Staten Island before they're
placed in church based shelters. We are still the
only borough in the City of New York that has respite
beds in churches because we don't have - we don't
really have homeless beds for Staten Islanders.

HUD cuts in the continuum of care domain will
threaten the closure of 115 supportive apartments for
homeless Staten Islanders. We were already ordered
to close on March 14th, three apartments by March 31st
and we did it and we moved people, but where are we
going to put the other 112 people who are disabled
and formally homeless Staten Islanders in our borough
in the next months when we're told to close the rest
of the units?

What neighborhoods will they settle in where will
they set up their encampments? Nobody asked these
questions.

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1 We are also dealing with federal cuts by creating
2 and decimating hunger in our safety net. We are
3 creating federal cuts now that in a time when we have
4 the highest rent in New York City housing history,
5 and at the time where we have the highest number of
6 homeless people on the streets of New York including
7 in the borough of Staten Island.
8

9 This is not humane. It is not helpful. It is
10 not right and we are putting the lives of the most
11 vulnerable people in our city at risk for death. The
12 elimination of these federal dollars will result in
13 profound human suffering and we need to stop it.

14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you Reverend Troia.

16 VICTORIA LEAHY: Good afternoon. My name is
17 Victoria Leahy. I am the Director of Policy and
18 Planning at Homeless Services United. I'd like to
19 thank Chair Brannan and Chair Restler and the rest of
20 the Committee for the opportunity to testify today.

21 As we heard, there is vital housing programs
22 that's going to be at risk with these federal funding
23 cuts. We're projecting cuts to Section 8, the
24 complete ending of the Emergency Housing Program, and
25 cuts to TANF, all which are central to funding the

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homeless shelter system and homeless services here in
New York City.

It's also crucial to remember that not just
federal passthrough dollars are at risk. As we've
heard today, many providers contract directly with
the federal government. Our members base off of a
survey up to 22 percent of their operating budgets
come from direct federal contracts.

The reported funding cuts and staff cuts, not
just to HUD but other agencies will only cause
further interruptions in their ability to provide
services. Providers have mentioned how federal
funding cuts are already impacting their programming.
We've seen cuts to the Emergency Food and Shelter
Program, which have caused providers to either limit
their rental assistance programs that keep families
in their home or cut their food service programs.

And it's not just specific to HUD and FEMA. We
see this through the Department of Labor, through
Medicaid, through the VA, and other agencies. And
so, all of this together, members are having a really
extremely difficult time amending their fiscal plans
and trying to figure out which programming to keep
and what to cut back.

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1 What is also troubling is the programmatic
2
3 implications that come now with contracting with the
4 federal government. As providers have seen with
5 their continuum of care contracts and their ability
6 to renew them, the federal government is adding
7 programmatic implications into those contract
8 renewals. And so, providers are now at a very
9 troubling time where they're deciding to accept these
10 federal restrictions on their ability to provide
11 services or to cut that federal funding and decide
12 whether or not they need to reduce their staff size,
13 reduce their programming, or risk their ability to
14 stay open all together.

15 As HSU has mentioned before, providers are in a
16 cash flow crisis due to chronic late payments.
17 There's a total lack of normalcy when it comes to
18 city payments on their contracts for services
19 provided. Federal contracts have always been
20 reportedly amongst our members, the most consistent
21 in paying providers on time. While providers may
22 wait months on end for their city payments, federal
23 funds help cut their doors open.

24 Given the uncertainty of federal resources and
25 these proposed cuts, it's all the more important

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1 right now that the city registers contracts in a
2 timely manner and pays nonprofit homeless service
3 providers for their services on time to not further
4 threaten their insolvency.
5

6 We join the many other nonprofit providers today
7 in making the following recommendations: Expedite
8 all late contract payments to human service
9 providers. It is the most important thing that the
10 city can do to keep these homeless service providers
11 open right now. The city should work on a strategic
12 plan to draw down federal funding that it's used to
13 operate these contracts.

14 And lastly, the city and state must work in a
15 comprehensive counter strategy to the anticipated
16 mass cuts to federal funding, especially in the human
17 service sector. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you very much.
19 Really appreciate you all being here today and for
20 your thoughtful testimony. Thank you so much.

21 And while I'm calling the next panel, a Staten
22 Island panel, I just want to note, we have had Staten
23 Island residents on each of the previous two panels
24 and we will on the following panel as well. So,
25 Staten Island has shown up today. It's not the

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1 forgotten island. So, Adrienne Abbate from Staten
2 Island Partnership for Community Wellbeing, Janet
3 Magnuson from NPSI, Richmond Home Needs Services,
4 Tatiana Arguello from Nonprofit SI, Celestine Cox
5 from Nonprofit SI. Thank you for being with us.
6

7 And following that Justice Wood from Staten
8 Island NYLPI will be with us and Hannah Lupien From
9 Met Council, Naima Dahir from the Arab American
10 Support Center based in the 33rd and Dr. Sophine
11 Charles from COFCCA.

12 Thank you very much and feel free to begin in
13 which ever order you'd like.

14 ADRIENNE ABBATE: Good morning or good afternoon
15 now. My name is Adrienne Abbate and I'm the
16 Executive Director of Partnerships for Community
17 Wellness, a public health nonprofit working to reduce
18 health disparities on Staten Island. I want to thank
19 the members of the Committees for this opportunity to
20 submit testimony.

21 PCW's work is rooted in the understanding that
22 complex public health issues are decades in the
23 making and require the coordinated efforts and
24 resources of multiple sectors.
25

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Our initiatives focus on youth behavioral health, chronic disease prevention, maternal health and child wellness. For over 20 years, we've been working to ensure resources in critical public health programs who are scaled to Staten Island communities most impacted by health disparities.

70 percent of our budget is made up of government contracts including direct federal contracts with the CDC and SAMSA and federal passthrough awards from the state including the staffed block grants. We also hold city contracts.

Shortly after the executive orders were issued in January attacking core tenants of public health and the mission of our agency, we received a stop work order for our CDC award to support LGBTQ and BIPOC youth, and the termination at two of our state passthrough contracts.

Luckily court injunctions have allowed us to continue the work temporarily. These actions by the federal government directly undermine the health and wellbeing of Staten Islanders and threaten to dismantle the vital public health infrastructure that our organization and other community groups have worked tirelessly to build. Nonprofit organizations

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1 often provide public goods and services to address
2 gaps when government falls short and nonprofits on
3 Staten Island have had to shoulder that burden more
4 than any of the other New York City boroughs.
5 Despite Staten Island often leading the city in
6 overdose rates, maternal mortality rates, incidents
7 of cardiovascular disease, cancer burden and the
8 lowest childhood vaccinations, we have neither an H+H
9 public hospital nor a Department of Health and Mental
10 Hygiene Health Action Center despite decades of
11 advocacy.
12

13 This chronic under investment in Staten Island's
14 public health infrastructure makes the current threat
15 of federal funding cuts all the more devastating. I
16 urge the City Council to strategically allocate funds
17 to offset these anticipated federal shortfalls.
18 Furthermore, I urge the City Council to ensure that
19 nonprofits serving marginalized groups are addressing
20 issues not aligned with current federal policies are
21 protected from any punitive measures or experiencing
22 a situation where our admissions have become
23 criminalized.

24 Our organizations must continue to receive the
25 support they need to serve our communities

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effectively and the City Council has a critical role
in protecting the health of the New York City
residents and we stand ready to partner with you in
this effort. Thank you for your time and support in
this critical matter.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you very much Ms.
Abbate.

JANET MAGNUSON: Good morning all. Thank you to
the Chairs and the members of the Committee. My name
is Janet Magnuson; I am currently CEO of Richmond
Home Need Services. We're a nonprofit licensed
homecare service agency on Staten Island. We service
Staten Island and all the other boroughs.

Today I stand with my sister organizations to
address the pressing issue of underfunding and cuts
on Staten Island as a whole with particularly
attention to the older adult population in our
borough.

The population of adults age 65 and older in New
York City has grown significantly over the past two
decades, and on Staten Island, 12 percent of seniors
live below the poverty line which matches the rate
across New York City as a whole.

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There also exists a significant gap effecting seniors who do not qualify for Medicaid and yet lack the financial means to afford basic necessities. As a result, many are forced to go without adequate nutrition and essential medical and homecare. Despite this, Staten Island continues to face significant underfunding in real time cuts which has created barriers that prevent us from meeting their essential needs.

These challenges include limited access to healthcare as Staten Island lacks a public hospital and is limited to just one city funded clinic. The absence of public geriatric specialty services further compounds the problem.

Inadequate support for daily living as essential services such as meal delivery, transportation and homecare are grossly underfunded. Staten Island's funding for these critical supports falls behind other boroughs leaving vulnerable seniors without the assistance they need.

Increased social isolation, with only four city funded older adult center out of approximately 300 citywide, Staten Island seniors face a lack of opportunities for community engagement. Funding cuts

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for these vital supports effect mental and physical health, along with chronic disease management leading to worsening health conditions and more frequent hospitalization costing more in the long run.

Under the current New York City aging funding framework, our agency is limited to supporting only 100 older adults restricted to a maximum of 20 hours per client each week, forcing new clients to be wait listed far too often and this existing funding is wholly inadequate to address the growing needs of Staten Island.

Increases should go hand and hand with Medicaid and currently they do not, leaving New York City Aging and community agencies to fight year after year for funding. Now I spoke a bit about city funding and the fact that Staten Island is currently underfunded because of the fear that the trickle down from the federal will go down to the city and state and Staten Island cannot afford more cuts.

However, with regard to the discussion at hand, we also provide services to those in need of all ages through Medicaid funding. After January 1st State Mandated wage increase, home health aides now make \$19.10 and they deserve it and they deserve more.

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We did get our expected reimbursement rates from managed long term care and Medicaid. However, in the beginning of January, we started to receive letters from managed long term care companies that we will now face cuts, none negotiable cuts. Some close to five percent, without due process, without reasoning behind the cuts. So, clearly this haphazardness of all of it is trickling down without rhyme or reason and we know it is only the start.

We also have a culturally diverse workforce with many working on legal Visa's but I hear and I feel the fear, with some too scared to come to work. Now that not only effects their income, it effects our services that the clients desperately need.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thanks so much. I just ask if you could wrap up.

JANET MAGNUSON: I'm almost done. I was just going to say, our agencies operations will be severely affected and more important those will be and I can clearly see that the Committee recognizes these pressing challenges and remind all the investments, whether in culture, arts, immigration, older adults or those with special needs, they're

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vital for communities growth and sustainability.

Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much.

TATIANA ARGUELLO: Good morning Chair Brannan and
Chair Restler and members of the Committees. Thank
you for hosting this timely hearing. My name is
Tatiana Arguello and I am the Executive Director of
nonprofit Staten Island. We are the hub for
community based organizations serving one of the most
underfunded boroughs of Staten Island serving
organizations working on the frontline of care,
equity and crisis response in Staten Island.

Today, I'm not speaking just for myself but for a
growing network of more than 150 Staten Island
nonprofits and for the thousands of residents they
serve every single day, children, older adults,
immigrants and families working hard to survive.

We submitted our full written testimony with all
the data points because I don't want to bore you but
the bottom line is that we are underfunded and we
need some more services for our children and families
for immigration services, for our senior care and for
our healthcare services on Staten Island. And that

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1 is why I am here today supporting our members that
2 are testifying.

3
4 We're not asking for special treatment but for
5 support. We make up six percent of the city's
6 population but last year, we received only two
7 percent of the city a speakers fund on Staten Island.
8 Our organization being the one of those organizations
9 that were cut last year. We lost ten percent of our
10 budget in Fiscal Year 2025. As a borough, we were
11 left off of multiple citywide initiatives and major
12 funding portfolios. Despite deep need in a rapid
13 changing population, we are bracing for another hit.
14 We are hearing warnings about federal cuts and we are
15 already seeing them at play. Programs are scaling
16 back. Services are shrinking, frontline providers
17 are stretched to the brick. We're operating with
18 less, serving more and holding the line for the
19 city's most vulnerable.

20 We are not only serving Staten Island residents
21 but also many Brooklyn, Bronx, Manhattan, and Queens
22 residents as well who come to Staten Island and pay
23 the toll in other ways for our services. This moment
24 is not theoretical for us. It's real and if city
25 dollars are distributed inequitably now, we are

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terrified of what federal reductions will mean for
our borough that is already left behind. We know
that there is need citywide and we stand with our
colleagues citywide but want to remind you that we
are here and that we are doing incredible work on
Staten Island and that there is a gap between the
need and investment that is growing. We cannot
afford to fall further. We are here to be seen,
heard and invested in. As Staten Island's nonprofit
ambassador, I'm asking the Council to work with us to
fix what's broken, to ensure that Staten Island is
not forgotten. Thank you.

CELESTINE COX: Good afternoon. My name is
Celestine Cox and I am the Director of Membership
with nonprofit Staten Island. I would like to defer
my time to one of our member organizations who did
sign up to testify. That is Staten Island Museum who
will be represented by Janice Monger.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Sure, thanks so much.

JANICE MONGER: Thank you. Greetings Chair
Brannan, Chair Restler, Committee Members. Thank you
for yielding. I'm here today to express serious
concern over the state of federal arts and cultural
funding impacting New York City culture

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1 organizations. I'm here in solidarity with my Staten
2 Island nonprofit organizations.

3
4 As the CEO of the Staten Island Museum, I want to
5 share our story to demonstrate the impact of these
6 devastating cuts and changes to federal arts agencies
7 including the Institute of Museum and Library
8 Services, the National Endowment for the Humanities
9 and the National Endowment for the Arts.

10 Arts organizations like the Staten Island Museum
11 depend on federal funds to fulfill our mission, serve
12 New Yorkers and preserve and care for US cultural
13 heritage. On a good day, federal funding is
14 difficult to secure and highly competitive. The
15 federal process requires advanced planning, rigorous
16 applications and several months wait period before
17 award notification. When successful, federal funding
18 enables the museum to undertake collections,
19 processing and digitizing project, provide school
20 programs for free and brings scholarly into our
21 exhibitions.

22 In late 2024, the Staten Island Museum was
23 awarded a three year grant totaling more than
24 \$300,000 through the Save Americas Treasures program.
25 As of April 9th, 10:29 p.m. we received an email from

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1 Kay Sonderling, the Acting Director at IMLS that the
2 grant has been terminated. There is approximately
3 \$250,000 remaining on this grant. These are
4 congressionally appropriated funds and this was part
5 of a round of several hundreds of such notifications.
6 Staten Island Museum's operating budget is about \$2.5
7 million. So, this represents significant grant
8 funding to carry out our mission.
9

10 Federal funding freezing and agency staff layoffs
11 that have been referenced earlier where you know all
12 these agency staff have been placed on administrative
13 leave have created uncertainty around another
14 allocated grant of \$250,000 through IMLS to
15 facilitate stewardship of Date of American artifacts.
16 Additionally, SIM has bending requests to NEH and NEA
17 totaling about \$500,000 and some of those
18 notifications were to come as early as this month.
19 80 percent of NEH staff have been laid off the entire
20 IMLS staff has been put on 90 day Administrative
21 leave.

22 Federal cultural funding is essential to the
23 success of the Staten Island Museum and so many
24 cultural institutions. So I know that there are a
25 host of major issues on the table but you need to

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1 understand this is happening in the cultural sector,
2 much the same way as other sectors and I hope that
3 New York City Council Members are aware of the
4 tremendous strain that these federal cuts put on the
5 city's cultural organizations.
6

7 So, thank you to your attention on this matter
8 and so many others and for New York City's investment
9 in the cultural institutions that make New York City
10 great. We're counting on you. Thank you very much.

11 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I really appreciate the
12 thoughtful testimony, the collective Staten Island
13 advocacy and I would say that your voices are more
14 important and influential than anybody else in New
15 York City right now because you all and my friend
16 Council Member Brannan have the unique status of
17 being represented by a republican in Congress. And
18 so, you influence with your Congress member in a
19 scenario where there's a three vote majority in the
20 house, has such - has the potential to protect not
21 just the great work you're doing on Staten Island but
22 the great work that's happening across the City of
23 New York. So, anything that we can do to help
24 support that advocacy, partner with you together to
25 ensure that we're breaking through with Congress

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1 Woman Malliotakis as effectively as possible. You
2 know you can count on the Council as partners. I
3 just will ask, are there any conversations you can
4 share to date? I know you've been doing thoughtful
5 advocacy on your issues for many years and I admire
6 your work. Really pleased to learn more about the
7 nonprofit coalition that you're all building in
8 Staten Island. Great cultural institutions. It's
9 great that you're all - you know you're all well-
10 established but is there any insight you can share on
11 the advocacy of conversations to date with Congress
12 Member Malliotakis or ways in which the Council can
13 be helpful or supportive in those efforts?

14 Sure so one of the Coalitions that my
15 organization supports is TISA, which is a [INAUDIBLE
16 02:20:48] coalition and Congressman Malliotakis has
17 been involved in some of the work of the coalition.
18 So, we had requested a meeting. We haven't met with
19 her in person. So, we met with her legislative
20 director to talk about some of the issues and we did
21 an exhaustive survey of how federal cuts are
22 impacting the behavioral health sector, how many
23 people are being reached, pride center, like we're
24 talking about all the different marginalized groups.
25

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They are taking it into account but we have yet
to have an in person meeting.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I think she's been one of
the dozen or so republican members in congress that
has spoken up most about the risk of and the impacts
of the Medicaid cuts and I think your direct advocacy
as leaders in your communities is going to really
matter in the months to come and so, I just want to
thank you for being here today. Thank you for your
ongoing efforts and please like very sincerely, let
us know how we can help and I think Council Member
Schulman has a question.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Yeah I also want to
make a suggestion that maybe you try to set up a
meeting with the minority leader Joann Ariola because
she has access to Malliotakis as well and she might
be able to be helpful and I've talked to her about
some of the cuts as well and so, she has listened and
she's on the Health Committee and all of that but I
want to make that suggestion.

PANEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much. Thank
you for being with us today. Hope it's an easy Ferry
ride home. Next up, Justin Wood from NYLPI, Hannah

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Lupien from Met Council, Naima Dahir from Arab
American Family Support Center in the 33rd and Dr.
Sophine Charles from COFCCA.

The following panel will be, just so everybody is
ready and excited, Sabrina Hargrave from
Brooklyn.Org, Hailey Nolasco from the Center for
Justice Innovation, Philip Duncan from NMIC, Northern
Manhattan Improvement Corporation and Rosalind Black
from Legal Services of New York City.

Feel free to testify in whatever order you all
are so moved.

JUSTIN WOOD: Hello, thank you so much Chair
Brannan, Chair Restler, Council Member Schulman and
members of the Council Staff for the opportunity to
testify. My name is Justin Wood; I am the Director
of Policy at New York Lawyers for the Public
Interest. I am also a Staten Islander. It's great
to see so many neighbors here but I am testifying
about citywide issues today.

We are an almost 50 year old civil rights legal
organization with active programs in disability
justice, health justice, environmental justice and we
operate a pro bono clearing house that directly
connects impacted community clients and grassroots

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1 organizations with pro bono legal services from the
2 private bar.

3
4 I'll shorten my testimony. We've heard so much
5 about the devastating impact that's actually
6 happening. The threats are having an effect but the
7 actual cuts and atmosphere of fear is having a
8 devastating effect on New York City communities that
9 can least afford this type of austerity and fear. We
10 and the nonprofit sector we work with are responding
11 and we're deeply grateful for the partnership to date
12 with the City Council. It's disappointing the
13 Administration didn't show up today to talk about
14 this. We're deeply thankful for the investments the
15 Council has made to date in initiatives that are from
16 your discretion, at your body's discretionary
17 funding. Like the Immigrant Health Initiative, uhm,
18 we are respectfully asking for an enhancement this
19 year. The immigration and medical cases that we take
20 through our health justice program and our medical
21 providers network, are increasing in number,
22 increasing in urgency, increasing in complexity
23 because of all the fear and direct cuts and fear of
24 accessing basic services and need for immigration
25 services we've heard so much about today.

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1 So, we respectfully put that before the Committee
2
3 and on the record. Secondly, we formed a rapid
4 nonprofit defense network since President Trumps
5 inauguration and sad to say that is more needed than
6 ever. We've heard from so many nonprofits today
7 about what's actually happening. These things are
8 real. Organizations really are receiving threats
9 from agencies like FEMA and others because they've
10 provided food to immigrant communities or just to all
11 New Yorkers regardless of background. So, that's
12 actually happening.

13 I wanted in the final 30 seconds just to mention
14 another topic, which is we want to continue working
15 with the Council on legislative and implementation
16 campaigns that can help assure New York State and
17 city's independence financially from the federal
18 government as much as possible in this atmosphere.

19 So, just to name a few of the wins. Congestion
20 pricing has been a win-win. That has secured
21 billions of dollars in capital funding for the MTA.
22 We've worked on the accessibility components of that
23 with you and that's something that hopefully we can
24 do independent of the federal government. There are
25 other things at the state level like the overdue cap

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1 and invest program that should be generating \$3
2 billion to \$6 billion minimum in investment funds at
3 the state level while bringing down greenhouse gas
4 and local air pollution that the governor hasn't
5 released. We would love to partner with the Council
6 in raising one unified voice in demanding that those
7 solutions be advanced this year.
8

9 So, we're excited to do that. We're really
10 excited about initiatives the Council has announced,
11 like the Local Law 97 compliance initiative. Again,
12 these are things that maximize our economic job
13 creation in New York City and do necessary
14 environmental justice and climate work, and we think
15 are very effective in terms of revenue. So, I'll
16 leave it there. We'll submit a longer statement.
17 Thank you so much.

18 HANNAH LUPIEN: Thank you. Good afternoon Chair
19 Restler, Chair Brannan and Council Member Schulman
20 and all the other Council Members who were here
21 earlier. Thank you so much for holding this hearing
22 today. My name is Hannah Lupien and I am the
23 Managing Director of Food Programs at the Met Council
24 on Jewish Poverty.
25

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Met Council operates the largest Kosher and Halal food pantry network in the country and provides a wide array of support to over 320,000 New Yorkers annually. In the face of recent funding cuts at the federal level and with more on the horizon, we and our partners at Catholic Charities, who you heard from earlier today, as well as Hispanic Federation, urgently request that City Council allocate \$20 million in emergency funding for food pantries. Similar to what was allocated at the onset of the COVID pandemic.

This funding will allow us to deploy needed resources to areas with limited pantry and social service infrastructure, as well as to communities with religiously informed or culturally nuance diets that are not part of the traditional emergency food system and to programs that facilitate increased access to emergency food. Additionally, we want to express our support for the Council's decision to call on the Administration to baseline fund Community Food Connection, CFC at \$100 million a year.

New Yorkers observing religiously informed diets will go without food if the emergency food system does not provide appropriate products and the Council

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works hard to meet the food needs of all New Yorkers
by providing both Kosher and Halal observant food
assistance to anyone who comes to our pantries.

The Council's ability to provide Kosher and Halal
food to hungry New Yorkers is directly tied to
funding from the federal government. And I'd like to
speak to two programs that have not yet been
mentioned today. The Local Food Purchase Assistance
Program and the Emergency Food Assistance Program
provide incredibly important support both in cash
that we can use to purchase Kosher and Halal foods
not otherwise available through public streams and
the second, the Emergency Food Assistance Program in
Kind Food administered by OGS at the state level to
provide basics like rice, dried beans and limited
fresh produce to New Yorkers of all stripes. And
finally, the Emergency Food and Shelter Program
through FEMA, all three of these programs enable Met
Council to distribute millions of pounds of food
every year.

All three of the programs have already faced cuts
or freezes in funding just in the recent weeks.
These cuts directly impact our ability to serve New
Yorkers the foods that meet their needs. It is now

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more vital than ever that City Council steps in to
help fill the gap left by these federal cuts and to
support the programs that serve hungry New Yorkers.

The decisions made by this Committee will impact
the lives of millions of our neighbors by allocating
the \$20 million of funding for emergency food
pantries and funding CFC at a baseline of \$100
million, this Committee will support emergency food
providers during a time of immense uncertainty and
benefit all food insecure New Yorkers including those
with religiously informed dietary restrictions. We
thank you for your time today and we hope to continue
to work with this Committee and City Council to fight
food insecurity.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much and I
just want to acknowledge we are joined online by the
great Pierina Sanchez from the Bronx.

DR. SOPHINE CHARLES: Good afternoon. I'm Dr.
Sophine Charles. I'm representing the Council of
Family and child caring agencies. We serve as the
principal representative of all nonprofit agencies
that provide foster care, adoption services, family
preservation and juvenile justice services in the
State of New York. We have over 100 members across

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the state varying in sizes from small to very large
multi-services organizations.

In New York City we have more than 50 of our
members who are providing services through the
administration of Children Services delivering child
welfare services. Thank you for the opportunity to
testify and I want to begin by just saying that the
federal government has historically serviced as a
critical fiscal partner to our New York City
nonprofits, both through direct and federal contracts
and by city passthrough funding streams. In many
cases, nonprofits were able to promptly access
payments and those payments have been instrumental in
helping to sustain our program operations on the
child welfare side. The late payments as you know is
creating a hardship for our agencies making it very
difficult for them to keep their doors open, operate
programs, and meet payroll obligations.

We have, according to the Human Services
Coalition, 90 percent of nonprofits report delays and
approximately in payments \$365 million making it
nearly impossible to sustain our programs. And I
want to make sure that you really understand that the
silence coming from our government partners is

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1 deafening. Deafening in the sense that there's an
2 absence of collaborative preparation for our
3 nonprofits and we really need to have those
4 collaborative conversations to help us begin to plan
5 for the federal cuts that are here and those that are
6 coming. And the impact of federal budget cuts on
7 nonprofits. The challenges extend beyond the
8 financial difficulties. It's important to understand
9 that many of our agencies are now spending time
10 creating checklists, tracking their federal cuts,
11 looking at - working with their Board of Directors,
12 trying to figure out what are the worst case
13 scenarios. So, a lot of time and resources spent
14 into looking at that. We found out recently that the
15 closing of the administration for children and
16 families regional offices have been closed in New
17 York, so that means that our agencies that have
18 federal contracts no longer get the technical
19 assistance and cannot receive information that will
20 allow them to continue their operations successfully
21 and being compliant.

22
23 And another one is the diversity, equity and
24 inclusion executive orders. Many of our agencies are
25 spending time scrubbing websites and trying to make

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1 sure their material is absent of anything that will
2 hamper funding coming into their agencies. And
3 wrapping it up, I'd just like to say that the impact
4 on the workforce, remember our nonprofits are
5 employers and so, many of the staff we're looking at
6 something like 75 percent staff of color, 70 percent
7 staff of women, so those cuts are going to decimate
8 our workforce on the nonprofit side. So, we want to
9 make sure that there's collaboration with our city
10 government partners to strategize around how we're
11 going to plan to absorb the cuts that are coming and
12 lastly, is our agencies are providing services to
13 immigrant families and these families are gone
14 underground. They're gone into hiding and our case
15 workers are now scrambling, trying to come up with
16 plans for those immigrant families that are facing
17 deportation and that means that the city is going to
18 have to absorb funding to take care of those migrant
19 children if their parents are deported.
20

21 And so, we're submitting written testimony in
22 full with full details. Thank you for the
23 opportunity to testify.
24
25

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CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you. It's an
exceptionally insightful testimony. Thank you so
much Dr. Charles.

NAIMA DAHIR: Good afternoon Council Members. My
name is Naima Dahir and I am here on behalf of the
Arab American Family Support Center. The Arab
American Family Support Center provides trauma
informed, culturally competent services to over
20,000 individuals annually from Arab, Middle
Eastern, Muslim, South Asian and other immigrant
communities across New York City.

Today, I am here with an urgent request.
Community based organizations like AAFSC need your
immediate support to continue serving some of our
most vulnerable New Yorkers. Due to anticipated
federal funding cuts, including reduction to the
Office of Violence Against Women, we are facing a
potential shortfall of \$1.1 million. This directly
threatens our domestic violence case management and
our mental health services, programs that are
lifesaving.

As this funding disappears, we may have to fore
low 14 staff members and reduce support for over

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4,000 survivors of domestic and gender based
violence.

At the same time, need is rising dramatically.
Since inauguration date, we've seen an 80 percent
increase in mental health referrals and a 20 percent
increase in legal service requests. Our clients are
terrified. Our students are afraid to leave
shelters. Families are opting out of benefits like
Food Stamps due to a fear of enforcement. Recent
federal actions revoking temporary protection status,
fast tracking deportations and mandating surveillance
of undocumented individuals are deliberately
targeting our communities.

In response, we've expanded our services,
strengthened safety protocol and trained our staff
for potential ICE encounters but we are operating
without a financial safety net. This work is urgent
and underfunded.

As members of New York City City Council you are
uniquely positioned to protect community based
organizations like the Arab American Family Support
Center and the communities we serve. We urgently
need the city's support to sustain our critical
programming, especially our high risk services such

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as our domestic violence, case management and our
mental health support which are essential to meet the
growing need of our immigrant communities and our
communities of color.

In addition to our full slate of FY2026 funding
requests, we want to underscore the urgent need to
increase funding for programs that are at risk due to
anticipated federal funding cuts, which like I
mentioned are our Antiviolence program and our Staff
Enrollment program.

To this end, we respectfully request an increase
to \$400,000 for our Antiviolence program through Dove
funding. An increase to \$150,000 for our SNAP
enrollment program to offset any anticipated federal
funding cuts and reductions we may see and a renewal
of \$150 for our mental health initiative, and our
first time investment of \$85,000 for our Immigrant
Support initiative. Now is the time for bold action,
our community members are scared, our resources are
spread thin and the challenges ahead are immense.
Thank you so much for your partnership and allowing
me to testify today. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you. Thank you that
was a great panel, really appreciate your testimony
and your thoughtfulness and your time.

Okay we have two more in person panels and then
we're going to shift to a hybrid one. Next up,
Sabrina Hargrave from Brooklyn.Org, Hailey Nolasco
from the Center for Justice Innovation, Philip Duncan
from NMIC and Rosalind Black from Legal Services NYC.

Following that distinguished panel, we will hear
from Kayt Tiskas, from the Collective Public Affairs,
Jonee Billy from PowerPlay NYC, Yesenia Mata from La
Colmena, and I struggled there, and Emma Bessire from
City Meals on Wheels. Thank you and feel free to
begin.

SABRINA HARGRAVE: Good morning Chairs Brannan
and Restler. Now I can, hi. Hi, good morning or
afternoon. We're in the afternoon. Good afternoon
Chairs Brannan and Restler and members of the
Committees of Finance and Governmental Operations.
My name is Sabrina Hargrave and I'm Vice President of
Programs at Brooklyn Org, no dot. A partner and
platform for a local philanthropy, supporting
Brooklyn's nonprofits by giving everyone a part to

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1 play in creating change from the ground up. Thank
2 you for the opportunity to testify.

3
4 Brooklyn's rich diversity makes it a true
5 microcosm of New York City, and thus a powerful lens
6 through which to understand the impacts already being
7 felt in our communities by an arbitrary halt of
8 federal funding to the city's nonprofits. From legal
9 aid providers safeguarding constitutional due process
10 rights to community organizers supporting our most
11 vulnerable neighbors, Brooklyn's nonprofit sector has
12 increasingly shouldered responsibilities that
13 fundamentally belong to government, while being
14 forced to do more with ever-dwindling resources.

15 As you've heard today, we're witnessing alarming
16 consequences of the current political climate,
17 surging demands for mental health services,
18 vulnerable community members too fearful to collect
19 weekly groceries from food pantries, residents
20 missing critical medical appointments, and children
21 withdrawing from supportive youth programs that
22 provide essential stability.

23 As federal funding faces unprecedented
24 volatility, our city must recognize that when we
25 outsource essential public services to nonprofits, we

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1 inherit an obligation to ensure their financial
2 stability. When City Hall delegates its fundamental
3 duties to community organizations, it must follow
4 through with sustainable funding, not as charity, but
5 as fulfillment of its core responsibility to the
6 residents of Brooklyn and beyond.
7

8 Today, nonprofits need reassurance that they will
9 have the resources to operate. Our role at Brooklyn
10 Org is to stand firm, provide stability, and mobilize
11 greater support in this moment of crisis. We are
12 committed to working relentlessly to serve as a
13 counterweight to the chaos. We will work to
14 galvanize donors and stakeholders to increase their
15 giving and fund nonprofits at higher levels to close
16 the gaps that the federal government creates.

17 However, this cannot be our burden alone. The
18 City must embrace its role as a true partner,
19 matching our commitment with meaningful fiscal
20 support and policy action that recognizes nonprofits
21 not as vendors, but as essential collaborators in
22 meeting our shared obligation to our communities.
23 Again, I thank Committee Chairs and members for the
24 opportunity to stand here before you today.
25

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CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much Sabrina.
It's good to see you Hailey.

HAILEY NOLASCO: It's good to see you too. Good
afternoon Chairs Brannan and Restler, Council Member
Schulman and esteemed members of the Committees on
Finance and Governmental Operations State and Federal
Legislation. My name is Hailey Nolasco, Senior
Director of Government Relations at the Center for
Justice Innovation. Again, thank you for the
opportunity to testify.

It is critical that we develop a strategic plan
to protect essential programs that meet basic human
needs. Each year thousands of New Yorkers struggling
with substance abuse, mental illness, and housing
insecurity cycle through our legal system,
traditional responses like over policing and
incarceration often ignore the root causes of crime,
trapping individuals in a revolving door. Community
based alternatives both in the community and within
systems enhance public safety and transform lives,
yet many of our programs are not at risk.

Project Reset for example, diverse individuals
charged with low level offenses into counseling,
housing support and job training, often before they

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1 set foot in a court room. For those with more
2 complex needs, our mental health courts in Brooklyn
3 and Manhattan offer structural support instead of
4 jail. The impact is clear. In 2024, 82 percent of
5 felony ATI participants completed their programs, 95
6 percent of participants in Manhattan fell in the ATI
7 program avoided a felony conviction. Brooklyn mental
8 health core participants saw a 17 percent reduction
9 in the likelihood of reconviction. Last year,
10 Project Reset diverted 5,500 cases from court with a
11 96 percent attendance rate. These life changing
12 outcomes rest on federal grants and allocations that
13 are now at risk. Should cuts to federal funding take
14 effect, we'll be forced to scale back critical
15 services, reducing slots in treatment programs,
16 eliminating outreach staff and curtailing supervision
17 capacity.
18

19 Fewer treatment referrals mean more people
20 cycling back into the system. Fewer case managers
21 mean less accountability and higher likelihood of
22 rearrests. In short, cuts to our programs will not
23 only harm vulnerable individuals but also undermine
24 public safety across our city.
25

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As we move towards the closure of Rikers, we must not turn to costly ineffective incarceration, so we urge you to invest improving community based solutions to help close any gaps created by the federal funding losses. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you.

ROSALIND BLACK: Hi, I'm Rosalind Black, the Citywide Housing Director at Legal Services NYC and I'm joined by Philip Duncan, the Assistant Director of Housing at NMIC Legal Services. Thank you for holding this hearing and allowing us to testify on behalf of a group of legal services providers. That also includes Brooklyn Legal Services Corp A, Housing Conservation and Coordinators, Mobilization for Justice, Neighborhood Defender Service, New York Legal Assistance Group and Legal Aid Society.

We're here to discuss the important free legal services that we provide to low income New Yorkers under the Right To Council, RTC and Anti-Harassment and Tenant Protection programs, that's known as AHTP. Programs are administered by the Department of Social Services and rely in large part on federal funding to protect vulnerable New York City residents.

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Although precise details of the federal funds used by these programs can be hard to decipher. The City Comptrollers Office reported in December of 2024 that \$47 million of the \$112 million, which is 42 percent that the city uses for access to council is paid for with the TANF, Temporary Assistance for Needy Funds Block Grant funds from the federal government.

In addition, the Office of Civil Justice, Federal FY25 budget shows that of the \$158 million for the Right to Counsel program, 30 percent of that comes from the federal government and for the AHTP program 4 percent comes from the federal government. The State Comptroller also noted that \$16 million of the money used for Right to Counsel this year is subject to an unspecified federal funding fiscal cliff, meaning that it relies on federal money that is not recurring.

While there have been no specific threats to abolish the TANF Block Grant yet, during the prior Trump Administration they were called to reduce it by 10 percent and it's been flat since 1996. Resulting in an effective reduction at 50 percent spending power. In addition recent chips in federal policy

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1 and DOGA activity have raised concerns about the
2 sustainability of financial support for legal
3 services overall. We're aware of the cuts to legal
4 services for unaccompanied immigrant children. We've
5 also made it heard, DOGA as of this week has reached
6 out to the Vera Institute and indicated intents to
7 investigate all nonprofit providers receiving federal
8 funds. In addition, it was reported that the Legal
9 Services Corporation, which administers and provides
10 federal legal services nationally, which makes up 15
11 percent of our agencies budget. They were in a
12 meeting with DOGE just this week and as other people
13 have talked about those federal funds or the stable
14 funds that allow us to keep our agencies afloat and
15 meet payroll in light of the city's inability to
16 reimburse us on the monies we spend on the city
17 grants.
18

19 A little bit about Right to Counsel and how
20 important that is to preserve. Over the last eight
21 years, Right to Counsel has been well established in
22 New York City Housing Court and studies show how
23 effective it is in keeping people in their homes and
24 also reducing the number of eviction filings in the
25 city.

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The program has become more effective over time.
This last year, it was reported that 89 percent of
tenants who have lawyers remain in their home. And
I'll just quickly, it will also save the city money
by I think we're aware you know reducing the number
of people that end up in shelter programs.

I'll turn it over to my college.

PHILIP DUNCAN: Thank you Rose. Good afternoon.
I'm Philip Duncan, I'm the Assistant Director for
Housing at Northern Manhattan Improvement
Corporation. NMIC is a Right to Counsel provider.
We also provide services through the Anti-Harassment
Tenant Protection program or AHTP, which I'm here to
talk about today.

AHTP plays a vital role in preserving affordable
housing and ensuring housing justice for New York
City tenants. While the Right to Counsel program
offers legal representation for tenants facing
eviction, AHTP compliments RTC by funding
preventative and affirmative legal services.
Together these programs form a comprehensive safety
net but AHTP is the only program that empowers
lawyers and advocates to go and be offensive
proactively fighting with and for tenants to stop

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harassment before it escalates into eviction. AHTP enables tenants to assert their rights in the face of landlord harassment and systemic housing neglect. It funds tenant initiated litigation, allowing residents to hold landlords accountable for creating or allowing unsafe environments and for violating rent regulations.

Additionally, AHTP provides vital support for tenant organizing. It protects groups of tenants who band together to form associations and take collective action against predatory landlords. It also equips them with the legal tools to challenge unlawful rent hikes, illegal deregulation of rent stabilized apartments, and other forms of financial exploitation.

Without this infrastructure of legal and community based support, tenants particularly low income and immigrant communities will be left to navigate these complex and often intimidating challenges alone.

The program also plays a critical role in addressing systemic discrimination. It gives tenants the means to file complaints about housing discrimination based on race, disability, family

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status and more, whether through administrative agencies like the city or state Commission on Human Rights or in State and Federal Courts. Furthermore AHTP helps divert matters from Housing Court all together through prelitigation strategies and out of court negotiations.

While this program relies on a smaller portion of federal funds than RTC, HRA has made earlier decisions to cut this much smaller pool of AT funds to divert money to RTC. Right before the start of this fiscal year, HRA took funding from this critical program and reallocated it to RTC. A cut that this Council fought hard to restore and did as part of the City of Yes. Preserving and expanding support for AHTP is not just a matter of tenant rights, it's a necessary investment in the health, stability and equity of New York City's housing system.

So, for the ways to protect funding for these programs are suggestions you coordinate with federal elected officials to gather information and advocate for continued funding, coordinate with state elected funding officials to explore other funding streams, elevate the importance of this funding through public discussions and media and create a contingency plan

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for other resources and funding streams to bridge the
funding gap.

So, thank you for this opportunity to discuss
this incredible value provided by these programs for
New York City tenants. We look forward to your
continued support in protecting and enhancing our
services.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I really appreciate the
thoughtful testimony and your time today. Oh
question from Council Member Schulman.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: I have a question.
Uhm, does the private sector do any investment in
anything that you guys do? I'm just curious because
now is the time to like figure out where we can get
resources from.

SABRINA HARGRAVE: In terms of investing, do you
mean contributions and fund raising?

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Anything yeah anything
in terms of partnering or anything like that or
anything maybe that the Council can look into and
that vein. So, just asking. Just putting it out
there.

HAILEY NOLASO: I would say for the Center, we do
have a mix of funding. We are looking into that a

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1 little bit more because we do have a majority of
2 government grants, so it's something that we are
3 exploring and any support that we could get from the
4 Council would be very much welcomed.
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Okay great, great.

7 ROSALIND BLACK: Yeah and we do engage in fund
8 raising, however, the volume of that is just not
9 sufficient.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: No, no absolutely.

11 ROSALIND BLACK: If you budgeted the federal
12 funding, it's crucial to like making payroll.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: No, totally understand.
14 I'm not saying in place of them, I'm saying if
15 there's anything that we could do to supplement and
16 compliment what you do.

17 ROSALIND BLACK: I appreciate that. Thank you.

18 PHILIP DUNCAN: So, other projects I think there
19 is more of a mix of public and private funding. For
20 our housing project, you're almost entirely
21 government funded and I will say we administer a
22 grant that is a private grant for rent assistance, so
23 we are able to provide some help through that. We
24 you know we also administered an EFSP grant that
25 those funds were paused and that was really, I mean I

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1 think that grant, I mean we were able to - you know
2 it's a month or two of rent that can be the vital
3 thing at the end of like a long eviction process to
4 prevent an eviction.
5

6 So, those sorts of things - you know that was
7 paused and that actually has been a real draw back
8 that we're trying to supplement that with you know
9 the small amount of funds -

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Sure, understood.
11 Okay, no thank you. I appreciate that.

12 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much. Our
13 next panel will be Kayt Tiskas from Collective Public
14 Affairs, Jonee Billy from PowerPLay NYC, Yesenia Mata
15 from La Colmena and Emma Bessire from City Meals on
16 Wheels.

17 Following that panel, we'll have a hybrid panel
18 including Christopher Leon Johnson in person and
19 Janice Holt, Sierra Kraft, My Chang and Andy Bowen
20 all online.

21 Thanks, feel free to testify in whichever order
22 you are all so moved.

23 YESENIA MATA: Good afternoon Chairs and Council
24 Members. My name is Yesenia Mata, the Executive
25 Director of La Colmena. An immigrant rights

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organization on Staten Island. Our mission is to
empower the immigrant worker through education,
culture, organizing and economic development. And
today, I am here with our nonprofit sisters from
Staten Island.

Earlier you heard from Miranda, La Colmena's
Organizing Coordinator who at once was a volunteer to
now being the leading organizer at La Colmena.
Empowering immigrant workers to advocate for
themselves and who through the support of La Colmena,
won her asylum case and is now a US citizen. So, I'm
proud to see Miranda here today testifying.

This is just an example of the important role
that La Colmena plays in the lives of immigrant
workers on Staten Island. As Miranda mentioned, we
hold regular community sessions to hear directly from
our community and with the support of our trusted
consultant attorney's we hold consultations to
provide accurate reliable information.

Too often, our community comes to us after
encountering misinformation, specially online or
through word of mouth. In some cases, community
members have been mislead by individuals claiming to
be attorney's, claiming that they can offer a speedy

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1 citizenship process, going as far as creating fake US
2 CIS documents and impersonating judges, which is
3 completely insane and we are afraid that it may
4 increase.
5

6 More recently, we've seen people arriving at our
7 doors with deportation notices or unsure how to
8 navigate the new immigrant registrant requirements.
9 And this is why I'm here to highlight the critical
10 work we've been doing. We thank you for your support
11 in the past but we urge you to please continue
12 protecting and expanding city funding for immigrant
13 serving organizations, especially in Staten Island.
14 And to the point mentioned earlier about our Congress
15 Member Malliotakis, there's no support that immigrant
16 groups like La Colmena will receive from her. On the
17 contrary, she keep pushing her far right and racist
18 agenda. So, this is why if at a federal level we
19 cannot be supported, then we know we can count on
20 you. Please don't forget about La Colmena. Please
21 don't forget about Staten Island. Thank you for your
22 time and for your continued commitment to justice.

23 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much.

24 JONEE BILLY: Hi, good afternoon Chair Brannan,
25 Chair Restler and esteemed Committee Members. My

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1 name is Jonee Billy; I'm honored to serve as the
2 Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships and
3 External Affairs at PowerPlay NYC. On behalf of our
4 Executive team, I want to express our sincere
5 gratitude for your leadership and continued support
6 of youth serving organizations across the city.
7

8 For 27 years, PowerPlay NYC has remained
9 steadfast in its mission to empower girls, primarily
10 BIPOC youth from under resourced communities through
11 sports based youth development. Each year we serve
12 over 1,000 youth across all five boroughs of New York
13 City, helping them grow stronger, physically,
14 emotionally and academically.

15 Our free programs offered in partnership with
16 Title I schools and community based organizations
17 serve as lifelines for many young people who would
18 otherwise have no access to safe spaces for physical
19 activity, mentorship or leadership development.

20 Play equity is at the heart of our theory of
21 change. Research confirms that what we see every day
22 when girls, particularly Black and Brown girls have
23 access to high quality, trauma informed, culturally
24 relevant sport programs, they are more likely to
25 thrive in school, graduate, pursue college, leading

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confidence and serve as change makers in their
communities. Yet, when girls are not engaged by the
age of 14, the door often closes for good.

This moment is make or break improperly stands in
that gap. Unfortunately a growing wave of anti- DEI
rhetoric and policy at the federal level is
threatening our ability and the ability of countless
PR organizations to continue this critical work.

Nearly half of PowerPlay's budget is supported by a
federal grant but the chilling effect of these
directives is not limited to public dollars. Private
funders are also following suit. In the past year
alone, we've seen a foundation specifically
supporting Black girls into \$25,000 pledge grant.
Siting is sudden and widespread pullback from their
own funders. Corporate donors have halted DEI driven
giving, foundations have quietly dismantled their
equity commitments, and all of this has happened with
no road map, no transparency, and no warning.

We are navigating an increasingly volatile
philanthropic landscape, not because our work is less
effective or less needed but because it's explicitly
routed in equity.

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1 Let me be clear, this is not just a funding
2
3 crisis. It's a moral crisis. Efforts to defund or
4 delegitimize DEI initiatives jeopardizes decades of
5 progress made on behalf of marginalized communities.
6 They send a dangerous message to our young people
7 that their identities, experiences and futures are
8 political liabilities. Now more than ever we need
9 the City Council's partnership to sustain this work.
10 Restoring and expanding local investment is not only
11 vital to PowerPlay's operations, it is unequivocal
12 statement that New York City will not waiver in its
13 commitment to equity, justice and the wellbeing of
14 its young people.

15 We cannot afford to lose momentum. We cannot
16 afford to lose another girl to the margins. Thank
17 you for the opportunity to testify today and for your
18 ongoing commitment to youth in New York City.

19 EMMA BESSIRE: Hi, thank you Chairs Restler,
20 Brannan and members of the Committee for the
21 opportunity to testify today and for giving this
22 crisis and federal funding the attention it deserves.
23 My name is Emma Bessire, I am the Senior Policy
24 Associate at City Meals on Wheels and I'd like to
25 focus my comments today on the crisis in food

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1
2 insecurity among older adults and why the city must
3 act to protect these programs to make sure that older
4 homebound adults have access to food now more than
5 ever.

6 Federal threats to SNAP, Medicaid, the Emergency
7 Food and Shelter Program as many of our partners have
8 sited today, as well as other programs have a sector
9 and those who depend on it and to uncertainty about
10 what programs will remain open in the future of
11 nutrition assistance. We've already heard directly
12 from male recipients that they are afraid their
13 regular home delivered meals will not continue or
14 their SNAP benefits will be reduced or lost entirely.

15 We know that without that one meal a day, hunger
16 will increase dramatically, which would worsen an
17 already severe crisis of food insecurity among older
18 New Yorkers.

19 As the city braces for federal cuts, we must
20 prioritize those in most need for the resources we do
21 have. Given the rapidly rising number of older New
22 Yorkers, and the years of disinvestment in aging
23 programs, any further cuts to programs would be
24 absolutely devastating to older New Yorkers. Home
25 delivered meals for example is a hugely impactful

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1
2 program. Our recent research showed that 87 percent
3 of participants said that HDM allows them to remain
4 in their homes. 85 percent that says - sorry. 85
5 percent said that it helps them to eat more healthy.
6 81 percent said that they help them manage one or
7 more of their health conditions. Investing in this
8 program is a smart and effective way to support older
9 New Yorkers who will deeply feel the impact of
10 federal cuts. We urge the City Council to ensure
11 that services in the city are maintained.

12 The preliminary budget currently shows a \$100
13 million cut in the NYC Aging's budget. This would be
14 absolutely unconscionable in the current federal
15 climate. Moreover, funding for CFC must be baselined
16 at \$100 million because food insecurity has already
17 been rising and will only continue to deepen without
18 this line of defense.

19 Now is the time to strengthen our safety net for
20 older adults, not weaken it. As the Council and the
21 Administration work to negotiate their priorities in
22 response to this challenge to our safety net, we
23 cannot lose site of the needs of homebound older New
24 Yorkers who experience hunger out of site and behind
25 closed doors. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you.

KATE TISKAS: Hi, my name is Kayt Tiskas. I'm with Collective Public Affairs. Thank you Chairs Brannan and Restler for the opportunity to talk about these really important issues. I'd actually like to begin by talking about an anecdote that some of my colleagues at La Colmena who are with me with the Domestic Workers Empowerment Initiative will know all about. We had a kickoff event on the stairs of City Hall where we brought a bunch of domestic workers to come meet counselors. It ended up being a terrifying event for almost everybody involved because they're migrants who were afraid that ICE would come to prevent their public participation from being fully safe for them. So, we had to send ICE Marshals before the event to scout out and make sure that there wasn't anybody in or near the steps and then also to sort of walk folks out to make sure that they felt safe to involve themselves in public discourse.

So, like I found that to be really kind of a stunner in New York City and I wanted to share that out but in terms of federal funding and some of the issues that we're facing today, I also work with the Trans Equity Coalition and I wanted to be really

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1 clear about the gun that got aimed directly at the
2 face of healthcare providers in the first days of the
3 federal administration.
4

5 Many name brand providers who are institutions in
6 the city, we're talking our Callen Lorde's have
7 already lost funding and the Executive Order that
8 came down literally day one taking aim at healthcare
9 and gender affirming care for anyone under the age of
10 19 has already resulted in large losses. The
11 Administration has made no secret that it intends to
12 extend those cuts to gender affirming healthcare by
13 which they're kind of defining any healthcare for
14 somebody who is gender nonconforming trans or
15 nonbinary and also they're taking aim at Medicaid.
16 And so, lots of the clinics including Health and
17 Hospitals and Callen Lorde that we're talking about
18 get up to 80 percent of their patient revenue and
19 reimbursement for Medicaid. So, without backing from
20 City Council, they'd be facing closure within days of
21 - at days or weeks when those cuts come down.

22 So, I wanted to back the City Council's
23 courageous executive budget response, which already
24 includes \$15 million is a hoped for fund for backing
25 up gender affirming care for people under the age of

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19. It also has \$6 million in the Executive Budget response for 100 new beds for runaway and homeless LGBT youth because as you can imagine, with things this bad in New York City, they're even worse elsewhere and so, we're already experiencing as my colleagues who are service providers are telling me, we're already experiencing an influx of people who are running here hoping to find some kind of shelter.

So, the fear that there will just like be a lack of access to basic healthcare is real and Health + Hospitals in specific has been sort of the city leader. So, we really appreciate their courage and your courage in backing them up.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much and thank you to this great panel. We really appreciate your - oh sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Thank you, sorry. So, I just wanted to echo what you said. I'm Chair of the Health Committee and we've done not only in terms of funding but legislation to make sure that records are not accessed, all of that. So, we have that. We actually have a number of trans bills coming up in June for a hearing, so just so you're aware that I'm on. I'm working closely with Tiffany Cabàn.

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1 The other is that we did talk to the private
2 hospitals and some of them are doing it just quietly
3 so that they don't get the federal government to come
4 down on them and stuff but there is one hospital, I'm
5 not going to name it here that was an issue and so
6 I've pulled my funding from there and as has Council
7 Member Caban. So, I just want you to know that we
8 are doing stuff not just financially but
9 legislatively as well, so.

11 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much Council
12 Member Schulman and with that, we're going to call up
13 our next panel. We really appreciate you all being
14 with us today. We have Christopher Leon Johnson in
15 person and on Zoom, we have Ms. Janice Holt from the
16 Central Harlem Senior Citizen Center, Sierra Kraft
17 from the ICARE Coalition, My Chang from AAFE, from
18 Asian Americans for Equity and Andy Bowen, who I
19 don't know if she still works for the Adams
20 Administration but they have signed up to testify.

21 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Can you hear me?

22 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Yeah go ahead.

23 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Hello Chair Brannan
24 and Chair Restler and Chair Schulman. My name is
25 Christopher Leon Johnson. I'm here to testify to all

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1 these nonprofits here in the City of New York. I'm
2 here to say this right now that look, these
3 nonprofits need to keep their funding but the - I
4 think that you're the Chair of Finance Mr. Brannan,
5 you really control how that money gets distributed
6 through the city and through the Mayor's Office. You
7 should have subpoenaed - you should have introduced
8 some bills to subpoena these members of the Mayor's
9 Office to testify here.
10

11 I don't know why they didn't show up but
12 everybody know why they didn't show up is because
13 that Eric Adams is out the door. He's out. He don't
14 care. He know he is done. You know the next Mayor
15 is going to be Andrew Cuomo. I know I'm being
16 political and there's nothing that nobody could do
17 about it.

18 I'm calling on the City Council to sit down with
19 the incoming Cuomo Administration to fix this stuff.
20 You know what I'm saying, Cuomo is going to get a lot
21 of things done and it is what it is. I believe that
22 none of these nonprofits are going to be cut with
23 their funding. None of the social programs are going
24 to be cut with the funding. What needs to start
25 happening is the City Council need to stop having

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1 these parties, these little pointless parties when
2 they give out awards to - in the City Hall Chambers.
3 They need to stop having this stuff. Not only do
4 they need to stop having that, they need to stop
5 sponsoring these pointless parties where all they do
6 is they honor the people that get into City Council
7 into the State Assembly and State Senate. You stop
8 the parties; you stop the nonsense. I think that's
9 really nonsense is having parties all day and maybe
10 this stuff will stop. You need to stop the back
11 flips. I understand that these people get you into
12 City Council but you're going to give them an award
13 just like that at their event. Why do you have to
14 pay, spend \$100,000 for every like for Israel knight,
15 a Palestine knight, a Bolivian knight, what is it
16 Catholic knight. Every night you got to honor. You
17 got to honor every culture. You spend \$100,000 up to
18 \$1 million on these events. Stop spending money that
19 way and maybe this stuff will stop.
20

21 And another thing is, like I said, we need to
22 preserve the funding of all these nonprofits. I
23 believe none of these nonprofits should be cut. You
24 know Eric is done, like I said, Eric don't give a
25 crap no more what's going on in the city. He know

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1 he's done. He's just doing it because he's trying to
2 weaponize his Mayor position like these nonprofits,
3 the one that spoke here like La Colmena to support
4 him for Mayor. If you don't support the Mayor,
5 you're not getting what you want out of our budget.
6

7 But Eric know what's going on that's why he runs
8 as an independent. But going forward, Mr. Brannan,
9 you should have - you're one of the most powerful
10 people in City Council. You should have made your
11 pull like you always do with your other members here
12 and subpoenaed the Mayor - had the Mayor bring his
13 people here and if they did it, they would cut your
14 funding off. But like I said, you're running for
15 Comptroller and everybody know you are but if you
16 really care about these people here, you could easily
17 done that because you got a lot - you use a lot of
18 the members to do what you want them to do but you
19 couldn't get the Mayor to do what you want him to do?
20 Come on man like that's not right. You're running
21 for Comptroller bro. Alright, thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you very much for
23 your testimony. And with that, we will shift to
24 folks who are online. I can just call people out to
25

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1 keep it moving. Why don't we start with Ms. Holt and
2 we'll follow that with Ms. Kraft.

3
4 JANICE HOLT: Good afternoon members of the
5 Committee. Can you hear me?

6 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: We can hear you.

7 JANICE HOLT: Okay, thank you for the opportunity
8 to testify today about the important issues of
9 federal funding changes and their impact on New York
10 City.

11 My name is Janice Holt and I'm on the Central
12 Harlem Senior Citizen Board of Directors as well as
13 the a senior at one of its centers. I appreciate the
14 chance to speak to you before today and commend your
15 leadership on issues that significantly effect human
16 service organizations in New York City.

17 Central Harlem Senior Citizen Center is a
18 nonprofit organization with a \$2.5 million budget
19 dedicated to enhancing the healthy living of over
20 4,500 seniors in Harlem. We achieve this through
21 education, socialization, and advocacy while also
22 working to uphold and affirm their dignity, self-
23 worth and pride in New York City. Federal funding
24 plays a critical role in the operation of our city's
25 essential services. Recent developments at the

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1 federal level suggests that we may face significant
2 changes in the availability of these funds. The
3 constantly shifting financial landscape raises
4 concerns about city contracts that involve federal
5 funding, particularly those effecting Central Harlem
6 Senior Citizen Center and the Department for the
7 Aging.
8

9 Such changes could have serious consequences for
10 the essential service and overall wellbeing of our
11 seniors. It is important to recognize that federal
12 funding supports our city in various areas, including
13 human services, education, healthcare housing and
14 transportation. Any restructure or reduction of
15 these funds would jeopardize the programs and
16 services that many adults rely on.

17 In recent years, fluctuations in federal support
18 have strained our city's budget and impacted crucial
19 service. Currently, the economic landscape in New
20 York City is fragile, particularly as we recover from
21 recent challenges.

22 Any reduction of federal funding would impede our
23 progress and threaten the stability of our essential
24 programs. It is vital to examine the areas most at
25 risk, such as community resources including health

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1 service, meal support, transportation options, social
2 activities, technology assistance, housing
3 alternatives, financial support, and caregiver
4 resources.
5

6 These are crucial for helping senior age in place
7 safely and independently. We must also consider how
8 these changes will disproportionately effect our
9 vulnerable population, especially our older adults in
10 our city.

11 I believe that New York State has explored
12 various sources of revenue such as increase in taxes
13 or expanding economic activities, however, the
14 challenges lies in the timeline and implementation of
15 these alternatives. The immediate reduction of
16 federal aide has led to significant shortfalls in
17 these services, which cannot be as easily compensated
18 for in the short term by alternative -

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

20 JANICE HOLT: That's it?

21 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: If you want to wrap up your
22 sentence or if there's one more you know -

23 JANICE HOLT: Okay, cuts to the federal aid can
24 result in inefficient allocations of the state
25

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resources for seniors and negatively impact critical
services.

I is essential to evaluate both short term and
long term impacts on seniors, especially those who
depend heavily on these services. Thank you again
for the opportunity to testify about the important
issues of federal funding and the impact on the New
York City seniors.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much Ms. Holt
and for your advocacy for Harlem seniors. Next up
Ms. Kraft followed by My Chang.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

SIERRA KRAFT: Hi. Good afternoon Chair Restler
and Chair Brannan. Thank you for this oversight
hearing and the opportunity to provide testimony. My
name is Sierra Kraft, and I'm the Executive Director
of the ICARE Coalition. We are a citywide
collaborative of legal service providers working to
ensuring that unaccompanied immigrant children in New
York have access to free legal representation.

I'm here to speak about the devastating fallout
from the near-total termination of the federal
Unaccompanied Children Program. Almost all the
federal support for legal screenings, representation,

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and court support for unaccompanied children in ORR custody was eliminated, and the consequences here in New York are immediate, severe, and still unfolding.

In New York City alone, that's more than 1,100 children with open immigration cases that lost legal access services overnight. These are young people who already are living in our communities, attending school, rebuilding their lives, and trying to recover from the trauma they've experienced. Most are living in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. And now they're being forced through complex deportation proceedings, without a lawyer, often without understanding what's being asked of them. So, statewide the cut amounts to nearly \$18 million lost in funding, and in New York specifically, that is about \$14 million to legal service providers. The funding supported more than 26,000 children nationally, and nearly 8,000 here in New York City. And many of these organizations have spent decades doing the work, building trust and expertise and some of the providers have already begun staff layoffs.

Others are still struggling to decide whether they can keep the programs running at all. And even with no funding, many providers are still

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1 representing children because ethically, they can't
2 just walk away from these children. Staff are
3 working around the clock and supporting cases pro
4 bono but it's definitely not sustainable. The legal
5 ecosystem that's been established is going to be
6 dismantled if we don't act. And all of this is
7 happening as the climate for immigrant youth is
8 continuing to grow more hostile.

9
10 Children are telling us they no longer feel safe.
11 They've become enforcement priorities under the new
12 federal guidance and ICE is conducting home visits,
13 in what they call "wellness checks," at sponsor homes
14 across the city.

15 We can't normalize this and we can't keep
16 expecting frontline providers to shoulder this burden
17 with no funding, no relief, and no plan.

18 These kids are being sent back to danger, not
19 because they don't qualify for protection but we fail
20 to give them access to the legal support that could
21 save their lives. Without an attorney, their chance
22 of remaining safely in the US is over 90 percent and
23 without one, that drops below 15 percent.

24 These are our kids. They're living in our
25 neighborhoods and they're New York's responsibility

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and we're failing them if we don't act. We can't wait for someone else to fix this, so we are urging Council to provide emergency funding now and to increase support for ICARE providers through the unaccompanied minors and families initiatives.

Our request is \$6.297 million and this funding is essential to stabilize the city's legal services and to ensure immigrant children don't fall through the cracks.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

SIERRA KRAFT: This isn't just about legal access, it's about dignity, safety, and stability. Thank you for your time and leadership.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much Ms. Kraft and for your critical advocacy for immigrants and immigrant youth and immigrants in need of legal services.

With that, My Chang from AAFE.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

MY CHANG: Thank you. Good afternoon Chair Brannan and Chair Restler and members of the Committee. I'm My Chang, I'm the Chief of Staff of Asian Americans for Equality. I'd like to thank the Council for your support of so many of AAFE's

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programs that range from access to health benefits,
to affordable housing and small business services
that serve over 35,000 people a year.

As you know the folks who use our programs face
growing hardship as the resources they rely on are
cut. As providers, we're also concerned about the
sustainability of our programs and I'll highlight a
few of the impacts that we're seeing.

AAFE operates three food pantries and in Fiscal
Year '24, 5,280 households participated in our food
pantries where we distributed 79,000 pounds of food.
The need has always been greater than what we've been
able to provide but recently we've been asked by one
of our funders to halt spending due to the
uncertainty of reimbursement. We had also planned
for a new pantry that was to begin distribution this
month but it was cancelled when our partner informed
us that there's no longer funding for it. In our
small business work, where the last fiscal year, we
cancelled over 1,200 clients, made 144 loans and
disbursed \$9.6 million.

We rely on grants from SBA and US Treasuries CDFI
fund. We've seen the Administration slash employment
at SBA and eliminate the CDFI fund. As you know,

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1 small businesses have suffered a mysteries of
2 hardships from the COVID pandemic and hybrid remote
3 work and now they face potential impacts of tariffs.
4 More than ever, we need the resources to support
5 small businesses who are unable to access capital
6 from traditional financial institutions and we'd like
7 to thank the Speaker for her support through the
8 creation of the city's CDFI fund. We're committed to
9 fighting to continue these services for small
10 businesses.
11

12 In our 1,000 unit portfolio of affordable housing
13 that ranges from Chinatown and the lower east side of
14 Flushing, Bay Ridge, Chelsea and Harlem, proposed
15 federal cuts to Section 8 and SNAP benefits are going
16 to have detrimental effects to families having to
17 choose between buying food and paying rent. Effected
18 families are going to face hardship and reduce
19 recollection also means financial hardship for the
20 buildings that then will not have the resources to be
21 maintained.

22 And finally, we're going to face challenges in
23 building new affordable housing projects and we have
24 some in the pipeline in Crown Heights and the Far
25 Rockaways as well and it will be challenging to move

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1 those forward when we're looking at potentially major
2 cuts to Section 8 and whether there is uncertainty in
3 federal passthrough funding for other resources as
4 well.
5

6 And then we're looking at uncertainty in the cost
7 of material. Nonprofit developers pay for these
8 risks in the form of higher borrowing costs and we
9 guarantee all of the costs for projects. So, a
10 single bad project can bankrupt almost any nonprofit,
11 and that's the risk that all nonprofit developers are
12 facing right now. Thank you so much for your support
13 of organizations like ours and the opportunity to
14 provide testimony during such a crucial time for New
15 Yorkers.

16 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much and we
17 very truly appreciate the amazing work that AAFE does
18 day in and day out, year in and year out, so thank
19 you for being with us and for your hard work and for
20 your insightful testimony.

21 And last up for today's hearing is Andy Bowen.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

23 ANDY BOWEN: Hi, Andy Bowen here. I've worked
24 for the Adams Administration for five whole days now
25 and I'm reporting for duty to my comrades. Thanks

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1 for taking me late. Thank you to Council Chairs
2 Restler and Brannan, Council Member Schulman for this
3 hearing and fire budget response, acknowledging the
4 unprecedented nightmare of these cuts.
5

6 Just for a little bit of background, I'm three
7 days into my new thing which is starting a new
8 organization called the Popular Front Project, which
9 is a trans led organization dedicated to fighting
10 these vacuous destruction of social, medical and
11 other material resources that our vulnerable
12 communities need to survive and thrive.

13 And so the lack of urgency from blue government
14 bodies like nationwide also like state government,
15 uhm, yourselves excluded, is morally appalling for
16 anyone whose like the shoe must - we need to wait for
17 the shoe to drop, which I've heard from some areas.
18 The shoe dropped. Like, the weekend of January 31st,
19 flyers were given to our nonprofit providers saying
20 like, your federal funding streams will be cut. So,
21 like I don't know why anyone waits.

22 So, again thank you for getting the moral moment
23 and again, it doesn't appear that any body in Albany
24 is prioritizing. And so, you know I appreciate you
25 all for taking this on because like, even if there is

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no you know there's probably no way for city and
state government to fully cover the gap that's going
to exist but like Council and City Hall need to get
caught trying. Something is better than nothing.

We need to have precedence for other city and
states to follow and I'm going to say like, Council
Members, I would love to know and this is maybe an
offline conversation like, how you can use your power
to aggressively advocate beyond what I'm sure you've
done with your powers in the governors office and
state legislature. Because like the idea that a
contingency fund for queer orgs and others would be a
dead letter right now in the budget is again, morally
appalling.

A couple last things. Uhm, it's not a loss on
anyone that while like NYU Langone and Mount Sinai
cancel their gender affirming care appointments like
last month. H+H never did, so what I'm saying is
like people showing bravery really matters. We're
seeing that now with Harvard. Like Harvard said no
and suddenly like a bunch - like universities who
were like to Trump were like what?

Uhm, on that point like getting to like other
institutions being brave, uhm, I want to give a shout

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1 out to Council Member Schulman and so far as the
2 comment about like, we got to reach out to rich
3 people. And again, this is like a call to Council
4 Members, happy to talk offline. Like you have to
5 organize the rich. Uhm between tax increases,
6 massive private giving, like it's that plus
7 government funds plus changing the nature of our
8 government to actually be high tax and high services,
9 like the way out.
10

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you for your testimony.
12 Time has expired.

13 ANDY BOWEN: Okay. One last thing. We're kind
14 of reliant come the hyper wealthy to backstop civil
15 society, so we just like need to rethink the public
16 sector and get these folks on board who actually have
17 the money.

18 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much for the
19 testimony today and for being with us. Congrats on
20 your new endeavor. With that, we will adjourn the
21 hearing. I want to thank everyone for their
22 testimony and for their time and look forward to
23 working together to fight back against the chaos and
24 cuts that are coming out of Washington. [GAVEL]
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date May 13, 2025