



Testimony of Carmelyn P. Malalis
Commissioner and Chair
New York City Commission on Human Rights
Before the Committee on Civil Rights and Committee on Veterans
April 26, 2017

Good morning, Chair Ulrich and Chair Mealy, and members of the Committee on Veterans and the Committee on Civil Rights, and thank you for convening today's hearing on Int. No. 1259. I am Carmelyn P. Malalis, Commissioner and Chair at the New York City Commission on Human Rights. The Commission does not regularly appear before the Committee on Veterans, but we are happy to be here today with our partners at the Department of Veterans' Services, and my colleague Commissioner Loree Sutton, to discuss Int. No. 1259, an important bill that will create anti-discrimination protections on the basis of "uniformed service" status in the City Human Rights Law. We also thank Council Member Williams and Public Advocate Letitia James for their partnership in introducing this legislation.

The Commission on Human Rights enforces the City Human Rights Law, one of the broadest and most protective anti-discrimination laws in the country, with protections against discrimination in housing, employment, and public spaces, in addition to protections against discriminatory harassment and bias-based profiling by law enforcement. In the past two years, since Mayor de Blasio appointed me to lead this agency, we have worked tirelessly to revitalize the Commission as a credible venue for justice for all New Yorkers aggrieved under the City Human Rights Law. Thanks to the support of the Council and this Administration, the Commission is filing more complaints on behalf of New Yorkers, reaching more communities, issuing groundbreaking policy guidance, and proactively investigating pattern and practice and systemic discrimination through the use of our testers and authority to initiate investigations without a complainant. In 2016, we saw an increase of over 60% in inquiries to the Commission and we filed nearly 900 complaints of discrimination, over two hundred more complaints than the Commission filed in 2014, before I was appointed to lead this agency.

While we pride ourselves on the protections the City Human Rights Law affords New Yorkers, the Law does not currently prohibit discrimination on the basis of one's service in the military or status as a veteran. Other jurisdictions have moved ahead of us in this area, including New York State, Massachusetts, and Chicago, and federal statutes, which all have some anti-discrimination protections for current and former service members. It is important that New York City speak on this issue as well, and ensure that New Yorkers who face discrimination based on their uniformed service can access justice by giving them a venue at the Commission or giving them the ability to bring claims in state court, under the City Human Rights Law, which according to its terms must be interpreted broadly.

This bill represents an important first step in guaranteeing that current and former service members can access employment, housing, and public accommodations on equal footing as all other New Yorkers. The legislation before us closes a significant gap in the law and gives

current and former service members an accessible venue to bring claims of discrimination. We look forward to continuing to work with DVS, Council and advocates to address additional issues facing our veterans and service members.

The bill proposes to add “uniformed service” to the existing core categories of protection under the City Human Rights Law, which covers housing, employment, and public accommodations, and also includes protections against discrimination in licensing and lending. The proposed legislation broadly defines “uniformed service,” to include:

Current or prior service in (1) The United States army, navy, air force, marine corps, coast guard, the commissioned corps of the national oceanic and atmospheric administration, the commissioned corps of the United States public health services, army national guard or the air national guard; (2) The organized militia of the state of New York, as described in section 2 of the military law, or the organized militia of any other state, territory or possession of the United States; 3) Any other service designated as part of the ‘uniformed services’ pursuant to subsection (16) of section 4303 of title 38 of the United States code;

b. Membership in any reserve component of the United States army, navy, air force, marine corps, or coast guard; or c. Being listed on the state reserve list or the state retired list as described in section 2 of the military law or comparable status for any other state, territory or possession of the United States.

This bill would make it unlawful to discriminate in housing, employment, public spaces, licensing, and lending on the basis of “uniformed service” status. Including “uniformed service” as a protected category would provide service members and veterans with valuable protection to ensure that they can access employment, housing, and public accommodations without discrimination and harassment based on their service; and would give the Commission the ability to enforce the law to explicitly protect veterans and service members at the local level. The Commission regularly receives inquiries from veterans and service members about discrimination and my staff has to refer those cases to the State Division on Human Rights unless we can identify another area of protection over which we have jurisdiction. We think it is critical that the Commission be able to investigate and prosecute these claims rather than simply refer them to the State Division.

Should this bill become law, the Commission intends to work closely with our partners at DVS to make sure people are aware of their rights and how to access the Commission and other services. We are already coordinating closely to ensure that the New York City student veteran community understands their rights with respect to housing discrimination on the basis of lawful source of income, which includes the use of the GI Bill to cover rent. The Commission welcomes the opportunity to partner with members of the Committee on Veterans and Committee on Civil Rights to explore further collaborations to get the word out about these important new protections.

We thank Council Member Williams and Public Advocate James for introducing this important piece of legislation and Chair Ulrich and Chair Mealy for holding this hearing. We look forward

to working with the Council and our partners in the Administration to further our shared goal of dignity and respect for all.



Testimony of Loree Sutton, MD, Brigadier General, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Commissioner for the New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS)
Joint Hearing on Intro. 1259
New York City Council Committee on Veterans & Committee on Civil Rights
250 Broadway Committee Room, 16th Floor
10 am, April 26th, 2017

Good afternoon, Chair Ulrich, Chair Mealy and members of the Committee on Veterans and the Committee on Civil Rights. My name is Loree Sutton and I am honored to serve as Commissioner for the New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS). I am joined today by my colleague Carmelyn P. Malalis, Commissioner of the New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR). On behalf of our respective agencies, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to meet and hear our testimony on Intro. 1259, which if passed would add actual or perceived uniformed service as a protected status under Title 8 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, also known as the Human Rights Law.

At the outset, I would like to applaud Councilmember Jumaane Williams for introducing this bill and placing additional protections for our City's veterans and active-duty service members as a legislative priority. Intro 1259 represents yet another tremendous stride that the City of New York has made over the past few years to address the significant needs of our veterans community, and an important first step in closing one significant gap in the law for veteran protections.

These past few years have been marked by transformative efforts by our Administration and the City Council to engage with veterans and their families from all generations. For example, the membership of the Veterans Advisory Board (VAB), whom are appointed by Mayor de Blasio and Speaker Mark-Viverito, were strategically selected to sustain a diverse range of service backgrounds, community engagement interests, and professional expertise to help facilitate dialogue with the New York City veterans' community. We are also the first city in the nation to honor the service of our veterans by adding a Veteran Designator to our municipal ID card program (IDNYC), thereby facilitating enhanced access to services and benefits specifically for veteran New Yorkers.

Most dramatically, New York City has transitioned the Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs into a full citywide agency specifically devoted to the well-being and support of veterans and their families, now known as the New York City Department of Veterans' Services. Since the passage of historic legislation by the New York City Council and the subsequent signing of Local Law 113 by Mayor de Blasio over one year ago, the Department of Veterans' Services has grown in vision, scope and capacity as we build the strongest foundation possible for connecting

veterans and their families with high quality services across a variety of needs and strengthening their capacity for and commitment to continued service within our city.

We are pleased to report that DVS has diligently worked to onboard a talented and diverse group of professionals to match resources with veteran needs. Since April 2016, we have grown this Agency to 90% of our projected staffing levels, and are well on our way to our full complement of 35 by Fall 2017. Designing, staffing and leading a 'start-up' agency, the first in over 15 years, within NYC government is an enormous privilege which Team DVS takes seriously to ensure that our efforts deserve the confidence and trust placed in us by so many.

With respect to today's hearing, I would like to highlight how impactful this legislation will be for veterans across our city. Intro. 1259 would add actual or perceived uniformed service as a protected status under the Human Rights Law. The addition of "uniformed service" would include those with current or prior service in the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, as well as their respective Reserve components. In addition, the bill would also include those who have served in the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Commissioned Corps of the United States Public Health Services, the Army and Air National Guard, the organized militia of the state of New York or the organized militia of any other state, territory or possession of the United States.

Newly returning service members - as well as those who have been home for quite some time - can benefit a great deal from the passage of Int. 1259, as it would add an additional bulwark of protection as a right of action against intentional or unintentional prejudice and unfair bias.

Veterans, either established in our city or just returning from service, are civic assets prime for starting the next "mission" in their lives. Whether becoming a civil or public servant, business owner or starting a new chapter in their education, our veterans are our city's leading natural renewable resource and have much to offer our city.

Two major areas where veterans can face considerable barriers due to their actual or perceived uniformed service are in housing and employment.

A landlord accepting the GI Bill as a legitimate proof of income is a major concern among established veterans, and those returning service members coming to New York City for college. Veterans want to use their GI Bill to come to our city and pursue higher education at VA-approved institutions, or at on-the-job training programs, and lead productive and fulfilling post-service lives. DVS staff has identified, through interviews with veterans that many times landlords are oftentimes either misinformed or unwilling to accept the GI Bill housing allowance as a legitimate form of income. This is because 1) the payment of funds to the veteran through the VA may not immediately coincide with landlord's rental agreement commencement date, or 2) generally payments through the GI Bill are valid while veterans are typically in school-- or only 9 months out of the year, which does not align with traditional 12-month lease agreements.

While payments through the GI Bill may not arrive for weeks after a student veteran has begun their education, the GI Bill is universally regarded as a legitimate and lawful source of income which should not automatically preclude a veteran from obtaining housing under the current

Human Rights Law. In addition, private landlords and student veterans are free to structure their lease agreements in ways that are mutually beneficial under the GI Bill payment structure.

It should also be noted that while some landlords do rent to student veterans, there are many more which probably want to rent to veterans. However, New York City is not close to any major military installations and so landlords are not accustomed to rental practices that are standard in other parts of the country where more of the workforce is comprised of active-duty military and veterans. DVS and CCHR are actively working to promote both educating landlords and empowering our student veterans as to their respective rights.

Veterans who want to pursue employment opportunities may also face prejudice based on their history of military service. In some cases, veterans have been denied employment based upon the belief that their service did not qualify as meaningful work experience with substantive transferrable skills, or that military service is indicative of having some sort of mental illness which would make them "unstable."

The following accounts from clients illustrate the stigmas associated with veterans or those who are in the military and the resulting discrimination they face in pursuing employment and housing. As is often the case with discrimination, many of the statements made to our clients are not documented during the course of interviewing. While DVS cannot confirm the accuracy of the client's account, they accurately represent their description of the events. The following accounts occurred in the last 5-7 years. Pseudonyms were used to protect the privacy and identity of clients.

Veteran Fernando Benitez recounted how when he was interviewing for a position with an organization, he was visibly nervous, as is natural during such circumstances. The hiring manager, noticing Mr. Benitez looking anxious and sweating, asked about his deployment to Iraq, which Mr. Benitez had included on his resume. The hiring manager asked Mr. Benitez if he served in combat while serving in the military. Mr. Benitez responded that he did serve in combat and was "just a little nervous because he had not interviewed in a while." The hiring manager appeared sympathetic and asked in a concerned tone if Mr. Benitez suffered from PTSD because of his experiences in Iraq. Mr. Benitez responded that he did not have PTSD. The hiring manager asked, "Are you sure? Because the nature of the work you are applying for includes interacting with disgruntled customers and we want to make sure you don't have any incidences." Although Mr. Benitez did get the job, he felt highly stigmatized and stereotyped, which he believed prevented him from performing well in his job duties. In addition, because he believed he was more heavily scrutinized than other employees, he feels that his opportunity for growth at the organization may have been compromised.

Air Force Staff Sergeant Melissa Rodriguez, was recently stationed in Jersey City, NJ on recruiting duty, however, was looking to rent in the NYC area. As an active duty service member, she would receive a Basic Housing Allowance (BAH) to cover the cost

of the monthly rent. The property management company expressed skepticism about whether she could afford the cost of the rental with the salary identified on her paystubs. Staff Sergeant Rodriguez reiterated that the BAH would cover the cost of the rental and she provided additional documentation separate from her income statement that confirmed a separate rental stream. The management company asked for additional documentation not easily available from her commanding officer that delayed her ability to sign the lease. The management company ultimately found another tenant because she did not obtain the additional documentation in time. Staff Sergeant Rodriguez believes that the management company was engaging in stall tactics in order to avoid renting to someone from the military.

The New York City Human Rights Law currently prohibits discrimination in many vital and valuable spheres of everyday life, and protects some of our City's most vulnerable populations against unwarranted prejudice. These spheres include employment and job training programs, certain places of public accommodation, the sale or rental of housing accommodations, land or commercial space, lending practices, real estate services and related transactions, and the granting of licenses and permits.

Veterans will first report instances of alleged discrimination to The Department of Veterans' Services due to the fact that they are not sure what, if any avenues of recourse are available to them under current law. DVS refers these veterans to the appropriate investigative or enforcement body, such as the United States Department of Labor for employment-related USERRA claims, the New York State Division on Human Rights – which maintains military status as a protected class, or the New York City Commission on Human Rights, so that veterans might pursue legal redress under whatever current rights of action which may apply. The Commission on Human Rights, when properly empowered by the passage of Int. 1259, is poised to pursue remedies for those subject to discrimination specifically because of their military involvement at the local level.

With the passage of this bill, DVS sees a tremendous opportunity to work collaboratively with the Commission on Human Rights. While DVS pursues means to reduce the stigma which perpetuate the kinds of discrimination this bill aims to address, the Commission can investigate and penalize bad actors for unfair bias. Both agencies can then complement the work of the other to help facilitate successful re-integration for our veterans.

We look forward to the passage of this bill and adding yet another bulwark of protection for our military service members who call The City of New York their home. Thank you again for this opportunity to meet with you today. At this time, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS

Eric A. Ulrich, Chair

COMMITTEE ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Darlene Mealy, Chair

Int. 1259-2016

Testimony by Coco Culhane
Director, Veteran Advocacy Project
Urban Justice Center
April 26, 2017

Good morning members of the Committee on Veterans and the Committee on Civil Rights. My name is Coco Culhane and I am the director of the Veteran Advocacy Project at the Urban Justice Center. We provide free legal services to low-income veterans and their families, with a focus on those living with post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, and substance use disorders. I want to congratulate Councilmember Williams and the many people who have supported his law to add military servicemembers as a protected status in New York City.

Hopefully the law will provide a faster way for veterans to take action against prejudice. Too often veterans, or other individuals seeking protection from discrimination, are dissuaded from acting because of the long and cumbersome procedures. Yet even if no one ever files a single claim using this addition to the administrative code, injecting those two words—“uniformed service”—carries a message that will resound beyond New York: Our city values those who serve.

Adding servicemembers as a protected status acknowledges that military service can yield burdens beyond traditional notions of sacrifice. As leaders taking steps to ensure equal treatment under the law for all New Yorkers, I urge councilmembers here today to consider another area where certain veterans are still at a disadvantage: the protections around criminal background checks and employment.

Most civilians don't understand how discharges work yet often presume a vague correlation between types of discharges and courts-martial to levels of convictions, misdemeanor or felony. Any parallel drawn between discharges and convictions is tenuous and the comparison with courts-martial is complicated. Perhaps most important, civilians don't know that something as simple as having an affair or bouncing checks can lead to a bad discharge. As soon as a potential civilian employer sees an “Other than Honorable” discharge, the damage is usually done.

The prejudice that accompanies bad paper can be devastating. The veteran is branded and there is no recourse. Administrative discharges are not a conviction, so there is no argument to be made under New York's current protections. And while there have been great advances in the law for individuals with criminal-justice involvement—most notably the passing of the “ban the box”

legislation that prohibits employers from asking about felony convictions before making a job offer— these rules don't apply to a veteran's discharge.

Indeed discharge status is used by the Department of Defense as an incentive for good discipline, putting benefits and future employment, among other things, on the line. Yet imagine facing discrimination for the rest of your life because you got a tattoo on your forearm in your early twenties. Worse, imagine serving your country in combat and being discharged for misconduct that is a symptom of undiagnosed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Command discretion rules the military world and not all discharges are proper. To those who say, *just don't show your DD214, get a job without saying you're a veteran*: It's not an option when it is the entirety of your training. If you enlisted at 18 and spent six years as a Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic then received a less than honorable discharge, you can't show up to a job interview claiming to be highly skilled with nothing on your resume.

The bias against bad paper is so great that the Department of Labor once created a program to assist Vietnam veterans with Other than Honorable discharges. The Exemplary Rehabilitation Certificate ("ERC") was given to veterans who could establish three years of good conduct. The certificate was supposed to come with job counseling and be something that a veteran could show an employer. A study done in 1972 showed that it didn't work. Only 11 percent of veterans with an ERC tried to use it. A bad discharge is a powerfully stigmatizing label.

Today's hearing focuses on a bill that is an important step to ensure equality for those who have served; they should also have the equal treatment when it comes to the protections around background checks. New York City could set a national example by addressing the discrimination against less than honorable discharges when it comes to employment. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.



NYC Veterans Alliance

www.nycveteransalliance.org

www.ourveterans.nyc

Testimony by

Kristen L. Rouse
Founding Director
NYC Veterans Alliance

**Joint Hearing:
Committee on Veterans and Committee on Civil Rights**

April 26, 2017

My name is Kristen Rouse. I served for more than 20 years of combined service in the United States Army, Army Reserve, and the New York National Guard, which included three tours of duty in Afghanistan. I am here today to testify on behalf of the NYC Veterans Alliance, a member-supported, grassroots policy advocacy and empowerment organization serving veterans, servicemembers, and their families across the New York City metropolitan area.

We appreciate Resolutions 1412 and 1420. It is the role of government to formally recognize the contributions of our military by naming May as Military Appreciation Month, and to celebrate the passage of the G.I. Bill of Rights. But naming an advocacy day in honor of the passage of this historic legislation will be empty—or even insulting—if the Council fails to likewise pass legislation that would have tangible impacts on the lives of military members and veterans, and ensure that they not simply hear “appreciation,” but are also able to effectively access the promises of the G.I. Bill of Rights here in New York City.

Introduction 1259 doesn't just show appreciation, but also institutes needed protection. Right now, landlords are discriminating against student veterans who claim G.I. Bill educational benefits as income. While it is worthy to celebrate the G.I. Bill, **it is a far more urgent matter to protect veterans** in accessing G.I. Bill benefits. Intro. 1259 would further protect veterans who claim VA disability and pension payments as income against landlords who either don't accept the validity of the payments, or worse, who wrongly judge that disabled veterans pose some sort of danger or problem.

Intro. 1259 would also provide critical protection in our city law for reservists and national guard members who are discriminated against by employers. Currently 40% of the U.S. Armed Forces are in reserve status, and America cannot defend itself from national disasters or conduct our military engagements abroad without the full support of civilian employers to ensure that our reservists are able to train, fight, and return home from these deployments of national importance. Yet reserve and guard members—including the thousands who call New York City home—struggle to explain to employers that they are obligated to military duty. It is all too common for reservists to not be hired, or to have persistent problems with employers because of their vital military duties. If reservists are fortunate enough to have a job to come home to after they deploy, they may find themselves left behind, with lost seniority and advancement in their careers.

There are protections at the federal and state levels, just as there are for most of the categories listed in NYC's human rights law. We need to pass Intro. 1259 into law because NYC government must be responsible for ensuring veterans and military members are not just appreciated, but afforded the full protection of the law in NYC's unique employment and housing markets. Boston, Chicago, Miami, and Seattle have already passed measures like this—and it would be shameful if NYC failed to likewise step up and protect the veterans and military members who call NYC home.

But don't just take my word for it. Here are the stories of a few of our members:

Jennie Fisher, who served in Iraq, has been asked by NYC employers in interviews whether she served in combat and how many people has she killed, with the implication that her combat service is a sign of negative character or future performance.

Molly Pearl, whose husband served in Afghanistan, was denied housing nearby her husband's service-connected cancer treatment because the landlord took issue with VA disability payments as income.

Elana Duffy, who served in Iraq, is medically retired, and is a Purple Heart recipient, had to pay double her security deposit to rent her apartment because her landlord did not recognize G.I. Bill educational benefits or VA disability as sufficient income. She has also been denied employment because of her ongoing medical appointments because of the wounds she received in combat.

Ksenia Voropaeva, an Air Force veteran, was unable to find even one landlord or realtor in NYC who would accept G.I. Bill educational benefits as income. She currently lives in New Jersey.

Daniel Gorman, who served in Iraq, was denied employment as a production assistant at a major media outlet in NYC not because he wasn't fully qualified, but because the executive producer told him directly that she "had a real problem" with his continued service in the National Guard.

Today we call on all members of the City Council: If you truly appreciate the service and sacrifice of our veterans and military members—then step up and protect us. Cosponsor and pass Intro. 1259. We cannot afford further delay on this important legislation.

On behalf of the NYC Veterans Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Pending your questions, this concludes my testimony.



**New York City Council Hearing
Wednesday, April 26, 2017, 10:00 a.m.**

**Testimony RE: Proposed Int. No. 1259 - In relation to prohibiting discrimination on the basis of
uniformed service**

Good afternoon. My name is Peter Kempner. I am the Director of the Veterans Justice Project at Brooklyn Legal Services, a part of Legal Services NYC. Legal Services NYC is the largest provider of free civil legal services in the nation with offices in all five boroughs where we serve over 90,000 New Yorkers annually. The Veterans Justice Project represents low-income veterans, active duty service members and their families who are in need of civil legal services in the areas of housing law, public benefit eligibility, family law and other essential needs. We run a city wide legal hotline for veterans and staff multiple legal clinics at the Department of Veterans Affairs and other facilities throughout the city. We provide free legal services to well over a thousand of New York City's veterans, active duty service members and their families every year.

We thank the New York City Council's Veterans and Civil Rights Committees for inviting us to testify regarding Proposed Int. 1259 which would amend the New York City Human Rights Law to add "uniformed service" as a protected class under the statute.

I would like to start by sharing a few anecdotes about why we believe this amendment to the New York City Human Rights Law will benefit New York City's veteran and active duty service member population. Recently one of our attorneys gave a presentation for the veterans' student group at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. The focus of the presentation was tenants' rights. Repeatedly the veteran students complained that landlords refuse to rent to them if they receive post-9/11 G.I. Bill benefits. At weekly clinics conducted at one of our community partner's Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) program, the case managers there also complain frequently that landlords do not want to rent to veterans. Lastly, attorneys from the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) office at Ft. Hamilton in Brooklyn have reported that landlords in the area surrounding the base have inserted provisions into leases that effectively override the protections of the Service Members Civil Relief Act (SCRA)ⁱ that discourage service members from renting apartments. These anecdotes all have one thing in common, some veterans and active duty service members in New York City are being discriminated against because of their "uniformed service."

As with most issues impacting active duty service members and veterans, we look to the federal government to ensure that those who served are adequately protected. Unfortunately, federal law is limited in providing protections to active duty service members and veterans. The SCRA, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)ⁱⁱ, the Americans with Disabilities Act

Legal Services NYC
40 Worth Street, Suite 606, New York, NY 10013
Phone: 646-442-3600 Fax: 646-442-3601 www.LegalServicesNYC.org
Raun J. Rasmussen, Executive Director
Michael D. Young, Board Chair

(ADA)ⁱⁱⁱ and the Fair Housing Act (FHA)^{iv} all provide some protections to active duty service members, but these statutes are limited in scope.

The SCRA allows for service members to terminate leases early in the event they are deployed or reassigned to a new base. The act also will stay an eviction proceeding while a service member is on active duty and unable to appear for court. However, these protections provided under federal law may in fact be the basis for a landlord's refusal to rent to an active duty service member, a military reservist or a member of the New York National Guard because the law does not forbid a landlord from refusing to rent to an active duty service member. For example, a landlord may not rent to a service member fearing that the service member will only live in the apartment for a short period of time and break the lease when deployed. Or a landlord may be concerned that if a Housing Court proceeding is initiated against him by an active duty service member, the court proceeding will be prolonged because the service member is overseas. The protections for active duty military members outlined in the SCRA are specifically needed to ensure that the rights of service members are not abrogated should they be deployed. Unfortunately, these protections may in fact have the unintended consequence of encouraging discrimination based on uniformed service. In addition, the protections outlined in the SCRA can be waived if a landlord follows the proper procedures.

The ADA and the FHA have been used with success to protect veterans with disabilities. Both the ADA and FHA prohibit discrimination if a veteran has a disability or is perceived as having a disability as defined by the statutes. If a veteran is not disabled, these federal laws provide no protections. In 2012, a bill^v was introduced in Congress to amend the FHA to include uniformed service and veteran status to the protected classes under the Act. The bill, however, was never voted on and was not renewed when Congress reconvened in 2013. In 2015, the Veterans and Service Members Employment Rights and Housing Act of 2015^{vi} was introduced in Congress. This piece of legislation again sought to add veteran and service member status as a protected class under the FHA. Like the earlier attempt, this bill also failed to pass. Consequently, under current federal law a landlord can refuse to rent to a veteran without facing any consequences.

New York State is one of only a handful of states that does protect service members and veterans under its Human Rights Law.^{vii} While New York City has one of the most expansive and comprehensive human rights laws in the country, a glaring omission in the law is the lack of protection afforded to current and past members of the military service. Amending the City's Human Rights Law to include uniformed service members will remedy this omission and protect those who are serving and those that have served.

Thank you again for giving us the opportunity to testify. Legal Services NYC looks forward to working with you and the administration to ensure that New York City is able to best support our veterans in need.

Peter Kempner
Veterans Justice Project Director

ⁱ 50 U.S.C. App. §501 et. seq.

ⁱⁱ 38 U.S.C. § 4301 et. seq.

ⁱⁱⁱ 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et. seq.

^{iv} 42 U.S.C. § 3601 et. seq.

^v Ending Housing Discrimination Against Servicemembers and Veterans Act of 2012, 112 S. 3283

^{vi} Veterans and Servicemembers Employment Rights and Housing Act of 2015, 114 H. 501

^{vii} New York State Executive Law, Article 15

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 1259

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/26/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Robert Cain

Address: 7240 Yellowstone Blvd Forest Hills, NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1259 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/26/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LOREE SUTTON, MD

Address: _____

I represent: Department of Veterans services

Address: 1 Centre St, #2208, NY, NY 10007

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1259 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 04-26-17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ERICA FUMKE

Address: 34-32 43 STREET #22, Long Island City
NY, 11101

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1259 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/26/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: COCO CULHANE

Address: 40 DOCTOR ST.

I represent: Veteran Advocacy

Address: 40 DOCTOR

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1255 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PETER SHAY

Address: 510 E 80 ST

I represent: NYC Vet Alliance

Address: _____

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1259 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/26/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ERIC HENRY

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Department of Veterans Service

Address: 1 Centre St, A2208 NY NY 10007

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**THE COUNCIL
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Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1259 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/26/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Peter Kemper

Address: 1360 FULTON ST. BROOKLYN NY

I represent: Veterans Justice Project - Legal Services NYC

Address: 40 Worth St. New York, NY

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Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1259 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kristen Rouse

Address: PO Box 532 NY NY 10159

I represent: NYC Veterans Alliance

Address: _____

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 12589 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Commissioner Carmelynn P. Malalis

Address: 22 Reade St.

I represent: NYC Commission on Human Rights

Address: _____

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dana Sussman Deputy Commissioner

Address: Commission on Human Rights

I represent: 22 Reade St.

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms