

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

JOINTLY WITH THE

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

----- X

NOVEMBER 29, 2021  
Start: 10:39 A.M.  
Recess: 2:23 P.M.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING VIRTUAL ROOM 3

B E F O R E: CHAIR DARMA DIAZ AND CHAIR STEPHEN  
LEVIN

COUNCIL MEMBERS: DARMA DIAZ  
STEPHEN LEVIN  
BEN KALLOS  
SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS  
HELEN ROSENTHAL  
CARLINA RIVERA  
ANTONIO REYNOSO  
FARAH LOUIS  
LAURIE CUMBO  
VANESSA GIBSON  
JAMES GENNARO  
BRAD LANDER

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

NATASHA GODBY  
ERIN DRINKWATER  
ELIZABETH DANK

GABRIELA SANDOVAL REQUENA  
MALKA HIMELHOCH  
JULIANA CZERNYK  
DEBRA BERKMAN  
CLARE PLUNKETT  
JESSICA SELL CHAMBERS  
NATALIE RUBIO TORIO  
JEAN SON  
DIANNA PRASHAD  
EMILY MAY  
ADINA S.  
SUSAN CRUMILLER  
JULIE JOHANNA  
TANISHA JOHNSON  
DAN SCHEFFEY  
ERIC AGARIJO  
SHARI DEUTSCH  
CAT RAJNAUTH  
INGRID H.  
ANONYMOUS WITNESS  
MARISSA HOECHSTETTER



1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

4

2

3 SGT. SADOWSKY: PC recording is started.

4 SGT. HOPE: Cloud recording rolling.

5 SGT. PEREZ: Backup is rolling.

6 SGT. HOPE: Good morning and welcome to

7 today's New York City Council remote hearing on the

8 Committee on Women and Gender Equity, jointly with

9 Committee on General Welfare. At this time, will all

10 panelist please turn on your videos? Thank you. To

11 minimize disruption, please place all electronics to

12 vibrate or silent mode. If you wish to submit

13 testimony, you may do so at

14 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). I repeat

15 [council@testimony.nyc.gov](mailto:council@testimony.nyc.gov) (SIC). Chair Diaz, we are

16 ready to begin.

17 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Good morning and

18 welcome to today's oversight hearing on Human

19 Resource Administration System of Domestic Violence

20 Shelters. I am Council Member Darma Vanessa Diaz.

21 My pronouns are she, her, and hers, and I chair the

22 Committee on Women and Gender Equity. We are also

23 joined by Committee on General Welfare which is

24 chaired by my colleague and also Brooklyn Council

25 Member Steve Levin. In addition to the oversight

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

5

2 topic, we will also hear Proposed Introduction 2424-A  
3 sponsored by Council Member Helen Rosenthal in  
4 relation to establishing a street harassment advisory  
5 board, and Proposed Introduction of 2372, a sponsored  
6 Bill by Council Member Carlina Rivera in relation to  
7 creating a two-year look back window to gender-  
8 motivated violence act and extending the statute of  
9 limitations. During the pandemic, the rate of  
10 domestic violence increased by about 8.1 percent  
11 while movement restrictions were in effect. DV  
12 experts cautioned the figures (inaudible) 8.1  
13 percent. In New York City, stay-at-home orders  
14 forced many survivors to shelter in place with an  
15 abusive partner or family member, further isolating  
16 them from supportive systems and seeking services.  
17 After initial decrease in the number of requests for  
18 DV services, the city's DV providers shifted to  
19 record remotely the number of survivors reaching out  
20 for assistance increased largely. Compared to 2019,  
21 city's DV call online increased by 17 percent. The  
22 number of survivors accessing services for the first  
23 time at the NYC Family Justice Centers or FJCs  
24 increase by 35.8 percent. Visits to New York City  
25 Hope Website increased by 267 percent. Through DV

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 homicides decreased from 2019 to 2020, there was also  
3 an increase of intimate partner relations homicides  
4 from 2019 to 2020. The number increased from the  
5 previous five-year average of annual IPV homicides.  
6 From 2010 to 2020, there were 721 DV homicides, of  
7 which the majority of victims, identified as female.  
8 While the majority of IPV homicide victims identified  
9 as female, I want to take special note, there is a  
10 reference to Bill, Introduction 2379 which is laid  
11 over in Committee and required the Department of  
12 Social Services to create a DV designated (inaudible)  
13 identified individuals that the majority, 57.3  
14 percent of other family homicide victims identify as  
15 male. (Inaudible) race ethnic groups, a high portion  
16 of homicide victims are black. According to 49  
17 percent of victims, homicide, Hispanic individuals  
18 account for 28.8 percent of homicides. Black females  
19 sadly affect IPV homicides 29.6 percent while making  
20 up 13 percent of the city's population. Hispanic  
21 females account for 26.6 percent of IPV homicides  
22 while making up 14.6 percent of the city' population.  
23 Additionally, one of every five DV homicides, two out  
24 of every five other family homicide involve a child  
25 under the age of 10. The Committee last met on a

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

7

2 hearing, city's DV shelters in September of 2019. At  
3 that hearing, Committee shared survivor testimony  
4 about the importance of supportive supports including  
5 for children at DV shelters and those staying in  
6 therapy and finding permanent housing upon leaving DV  
7 shelter. At the same time, at the hearing, HR  
8 testified that they had single units for transgender  
9 and gender nonconforming, nonbinary individuals while  
10 unable to commit whether the needs of the LGBTQI Plus  
11 community as outlined in 2015 (inaudible). At this  
12 hearing, I'm interested in hearing about how the city  
13 is handling the needs of DV survivors. Being one,  
14 I'm mostly interested in knowing the assistance is  
15 needed greatly. This includes access to shelter and  
16 appropriate services to programming to help survivors  
17 and families get back on their feet, as well as  
18 assistance in searching for permanent housing.  
19 Before we turn to our testimony, I'd like to also  
20 acknowledge that this is transgender awareness week  
21 and tomorrow is transgender day of remembrance, a day  
22 to honor the memory of the transgender people whose  
23 lives have been lost in acts of anti-gender violence.  
24 At the time of writing these remarks, at least 375  
25 transgender people were murdered. This is horrible.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2

3 Incredible. Making 2021 the deadliest year of the  
4 violence against gender diverse people in records  
5 since records began. However, we know that hate  
6 crimes are underreported and that the actual number  
7 is likely to be much higher. Most of the victims are  
8 black and (inaudible). In the light of this hearing,  
9 one in four were killed in their home. Aye Dios mio.  
10 This is unacceptable. Your home is supposed to be  
11 your haven. Every single person deserves to be  
12 treated with dignity and our world is more beautiful  
13 with transgender lives, the transgender individuals  
14 in our lives, and they deserve to thrive, not just  
15 survive. So today, I'm looking forward to hearing  
16 how the city's working to best serve trans and gender  
17 nonconforming, nonbinary New Yorkers who are  
18 experiencing DV. Again, DV is domestic violence, and  
19 gender-based violence. Now, I'd like to thank Terry  
20 Fox (SP?) and my Communications Legislator Director,  
21 the Sergeant-of-Arms who are working very hard to run  
22 this hearing and committee staff for their work in  
23 preparing these hearing including Chloe Heredera  
24 (SP?) the Committee City Analysis and Aisha Wright  
25 (SP?) the (inaudible). I'm now turning it over to my  
colleague, Chair Levin.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2           <sup>a</sup>

2           CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Thank you very  
3 much, Chair Diaz. Good morning and welcome to this  
4 joint hearing on the City Council's Committee on  
5 General Welfare and Women and Gender Equity. I want  
6 to thank my co-Chair, Darma Diaz for organizing this  
7 hearing today and I want to thank as well, other  
8 members of the committee, committee staff, and our  
9 Sergeant-at-Arms. The committee will conduct a  
10 hearing on the domestic violence system and hear any  
11 recent updates regarding resources, program  
12 developments, and the effect of the pandemic on this  
13 population's need for city services. We will also  
14 hear Intro 2372, sponsored by Council Member Carlina  
15 Rivera in relation to creating a two-year look back  
16 window to the gender-motivated violence act and  
17 extending its statute of limitations. Domestic  
18 violence is frequently cited as one of the most  
19 common reasons for those entering the shelter system  
20 in the New York City, and while we know that HRA's DV  
21 shelter systems services thousands of families every  
22 year through its emergency and tier two shelters,  
23 with new capacity coming online in recent years;  
24 however, the need may be far greater than what we are  
25 currently offering. Shortly after the stay-at-home

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

10

2 order was put into place, domestic violence support  
3 lines and reports by local police departments  
4 responding to domestic violence incidents  
5 dramatically increased across the United States and  
6 here in New York City. It is important for this  
7 committee to hear of whether there is sufficient  
8 capacity to meet the needs and explore what happens  
9 when survivors must enter the general homeless  
10 shelter system. We need to understand what can be  
11 done to be enhance domestic violence services,  
12 especially in accommodating new or shifting needs for  
13 families during the pandemic. The committee would  
14 like to know of how we may be able to better support  
15 those in the existing system and how they are fairing  
16 at securing safe permanent and stable housing without  
17 having to enter the general DHS system. I want to  
18 thank the advocates and members of the public for  
19 joining us today. I want to thank representative from  
20 the Administration for joining us, and I look forward  
21 to hearing from all of you on these critical issues,  
22 and I'd also like to acknowledge members of the  
23 General Welfare Committee who are here and other  
24 Council Members as well. We're joined by Council  
25 Member Ben Kallos, Council Member Selvena Brooks-

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

11

2 Powers, Council Member Carlina Rivera, Council Member  
3 Antonio Reynoso, Council Member Helen Rosenthal, and  
4 Council Member Farah Louis, and we expect to be  
5 joined by additional Council Members throughout the  
6 course of the hearing today. I'd like to thank my  
7 staff, Jonathan Bouche (SP?), my Chief of Staff, and  
8 my co-Legislative Directors, Elizabeth Adams (SP?)  
9 and Nicole Hunt (SP?). I'd also like to thank the  
10 Women and Gender Equity Committee staff as well as  
11 the General Welfare Committee staff. The General  
12 Welfare Committee staff are Amena Kilowan (SP?),  
13 Senior Counsel, Chrystal Pond (SP?), Senior Policy  
14 Analysis, Natalie OMarie (SP?), Policy Analyst, and  
15 Julia Herman (SP?), Financial Analysis, and with  
16 that, I will turn it back over to my co-Chair, Darma  
17 Diaz. Thank you.

18 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Thank you for your  
19 deliverance. I'm turning it over to Council Member  
20 Rosenthal for a statement on her Bill.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HELEN ROSENTHAL: Thank  
22 you very much Council Member Diaz. Good morning.  
23 I'm Council Member Helen Rosenthal, and my pronouns  
24 are she, her. I want to begin by thanking Chairs  
25 Diaz and Levin for holding this joint hearing and

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

12

2 including my Bill, Intro 2424 which will mandate the  
3 creation of a street harassment advisory board.

4 Street harassment is an ongoing widespread and highly  
5 destructive aspect of life in New York City, cat  
6 calling, verbal intimidation. The threat of physical  
7 violence, you name it. Street harassment can be based  
8 on perceived race or ethnicity, sexual or gender  
9 expression, disability and more, and until now, local  
10 government has been reluctant to tackle this issue.

11 My Bill, Intro 2424 will mandate the creation of an  
12 advisory board which will begin to examine the  
13 question of street harassment and how government can  
14 and should respond. The Board will collaborate with  
15 the Commission on Gender Equity to design and conduct  
16 a public survey regarding street harassment in New  
17 York City. Based on the survey results and other  
18 research and public engagement, the Board will  
19 prepared an annual report with recommendations for  
20 legislation and policy changes in response to street  
21 harassment. My Bill also requires that the  
22 Commission on Gender Equity develop and post a  
23 resource guide for victims of street harassment and  
24 that CTE update this resource regularly. Our long  
25 term intent is to support survivors, provide public

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

12

2 education, and identify other evidence and community-  
3 based models of combatting street harassment and  
4 violence. We're interested in alternatives to the  
5 traditional tools of more (inaudible), civil  
6 penalties and interactions with the criminal justice  
7 system. We have been fortunate to work with and hear  
8 from many dedicated advocates, organizations, and  
9 peers like Public Advocate Williams. I want to  
10 emphasize that this not the final draft of the  
11 legislation. It's a first draft. We're already  
12 planning changes related to representation on the  
13 advisory board along with more focus on anti-  
14 criminalization. That is why it is so critical we  
15 hear from the public today, especially those  
16 organizations that understand both the frightening  
17 reality of street harassment and the dangers of over-  
18 policing. I welcome your feedback. We encourage  
19 anyone unable to submit testimony or appear today to  
20 please send written testimony to  
21 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov) and to my office,  
22 [HRosenthal@council.nyc.gov](mailto:HRosenthal@council.nyc.gov). Thank you so, so much  
23 for giving me an opportunity to speak this morning,  
24 and I'll pass it back to you, Chair Diaz.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

1 ^

2 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Thank you, my fellow  
3 Rosenthal. I say thank you for what you continue to  
4 do and moving Bills forward that make sense and I  
5 look forward to hearing community feedback on this  
6 Bill and I'm glad that you did share with us. It was  
7 still developing within this conversation. I'd like  
8 to now turn it over to Council Member Rivera to make  
9 some comments on her Bill.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CARLINA RIVERA: Thank you  
11 so much for the opportunity today. Good morning  
12 everyone. I really appreciate this brief time to  
13 speak on behalf of my Bill with Council Member  
14 Selvena Brooks-Powers, Intro 2372. We introduce this  
15 legislation in order to create a two-year look back  
16 window for survivors of gender-motivated violence to  
17 file civil actions against their assailants under the  
18 gender-motivated violence protection act of 2000 even  
19 if the statute of limitations in the case has already  
20 expired. The statute of limitation for filing civil  
21 actions under the GMVA in New York City is typically  
22 seven years, but many survivors have come forward to  
23 tell their stories and seek justice for assaults that  
24 unfortunately occurred too far in the past to pursue  
25 action under the GMVA in its current form. This

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

15

2 legislation offers a path to healing for those who  
3 have been failed by the very institutions tasked to  
4 protect them. I want to thank the survivors and  
5 advocates who approached me with this proposal last  
6 year, and I'm so proud to be championing this  
7 legislation along side such an important ally and  
8 leader in this policy space, Councilwoman Selvena  
9 Brooks-Powers. I urge you, the committee, and my  
10 colleagues in the council to not just listen to, but  
11 the hear the survivors and advocates who have come  
12 forward to testify this morning, and to join us in  
13 proud and unwavering support of this legislation.  
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Thank you, Council  
16 Member Rivera. Council Member Power? Remarks?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS:  
18 Good morning, everyone. It is good to be here, to be  
19 apart of today's hearing. Thank you to both Chair  
20 Diaz and Levin for the opportunity to speak in favor  
21 of Intro 2372 which I have introduced with Council  
22 Member Rivera. Our Bill will create a two-year look  
23 back window for gender-motivated violence act so that  
24 cases where the statute of limitations has expired  
25 can be reopened. Victims of gender-based violence

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

16

2 face enormous pressure to stay silent in the wake of  
3 their abuse. They trivialize and dismiss, they risk  
4 professional setbacks, or even further threats of  
5 violence for speaking out against their abusers.  
6 Without support from others, they can feel totally  
7 alone. While it is heartbreaking, it is not at all  
8 surprising that many survivors stay silent. The  
9 reality is it can take months or years before a  
10 survivor feels safe enough to share their story. Our  
11 legal system must recognize this reality. All  
12 survivors deserve to have their voice heard on their  
13 terms, but far too often, they are stonewalled by an  
14 expired statute of limitations. With this new two-  
15 year look back window, countless others will finally  
16 be able to come forward. Justice delayed is justice  
17 denied and when we pass this Bill, justice will be  
18 delivered. I'm looking forward to hearing input from  
19 our colleagues and advocates on our Bill. I urge my  
20 colleagues to join us in delivering justice to all  
21 New Yorkers and working to finally bring an end to  
22 gender-based violence, and once again, thank you so  
23 much to my colleague, Council Member Rivera for  
24 partnering up on this critical piece of legislation,  
25 and to my colleagues in government, we have work to

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

17

2 be done and this Bill is a step in the right  
3 direction. Thanks so much.

4 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Thank you, Council  
5 Member Brooks-Powers. I'm not sure if Council Member  
6 Kallos is on. If he's on and would like to bring  
7 commentary on this Bill? No, okay. Again, thank you  
8 for representation of this Bill. A DV victim can  
9 definitely relate to having an opportunity to think  
10 back and work through issues, you know. As a victim,  
11 you often you need the time to accept, internalize,  
12 and step forward. So, again, thank you for  
13 introducing this conversation and I look in greater  
14 support for this Bill. I'm now going to turn it over  
15 to the moderator, Ms. CHLOE Rivera.

16 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you Chairs  
17 Diaz and Levin. My name is CHLOE Rivera and I serve  
18 as a Senior Policy Analyst for the Committee on Women  
19 and Gender Equity at the New York City Council. I  
20 will be moderating today's hearing and calling on  
21 panelists to testify. Just as an aside, I'd like  
22 acknowledge that Council Member Kallos was in  
23 attendance. So, before we begin, please remember  
24 that everyone will be on mute until I call on you.  
25 After you are called on, you will be unmuted by a

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

1 2

2 member of our staff. Note that there will be a few  
3 seconds delay before you are unmuted and we can hear  
4 you. For public testimony, I will call up  
5 individuals in panels. Please listen for your name.  
6 I will periodically announce the next few panelist.  
7 Once I call your name, a member of our staff will  
8 unmute you, the Sergeant-at-Arm will set a clock to  
9 give you the go ahead and you can begin your  
10 testimony. For today's hearing, the first panel will  
11 include representatives from the New York City Human  
12 Resources Administration, the Department of Social  
13 Services, and the Mayoral Office and Domestic and  
14 Gender-based Violence or MGVD, followed by council  
15 member questions, then public testimony. For the  
16 Administration, we will have Natasha Godby, Deputy  
17 Commissioner HRA, Erin Drinkwater, Deputy  
18 Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Legislative  
19 Affairs of the Department of Social Services, and  
20 Elizabeth Dank from MGVD. I will now administer the  
21 oath to the Administration. Please raise your right  
22 hand. When you hear your name, respond once a member  
23 of our staff unmutes you. Do you affirm to tell the  
24 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth

25

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

1 a

2 before these committees and to respond honestly to  
3 council member questions? Deputy Commissioner Godby.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: I do.

5 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you.

6 Deputy Commissioner Drinkwater. Is Deputy  
7 Commissioner Drinkwater logged in today?

8 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: She's here.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER: I  
10 do.

11 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you, and  
12 Deputy Commissioner Dank.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ELIZABETH DANK: I  
14 do.

15 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you.  
16 Deputy Commissioner Godby, you may begin your  
17 testimony.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: Thank  
19 you. Good morning. I want to thank the Committees  
20 on General Welfare and Women and Gender Equity for  
21 holding today's hearing and for the opportunity to  
22 testify. My name is Natasha Godby, and I am the  
23 Deputy Commissioner of Emergency and Intervention  
24 Services, EIS, for the Human Resources  
25 Administration, HRA. I am joined by Elizabeth Dank

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

20

2 from the NYC Mayor's Office to End Domestic and  
3 Gender Based Violence, ENDGVD. Today, we look  
4 forward to updating the Council on our work to  
5 address domestic violence across the city, and our  
6 efforts to bring support and services to the most  
7 vulnerable New Yorkers. In the previous testimony  
8 before the Council in 2019, an update was provided on  
9 this topic, and a few short months later COVID-19  
10 changed our environment and way of delivering  
11 services. While the pandemic brought on many  
12 challenges, we look forward to updating the Council  
13 on the critical work that continued uninterrupted by  
14 our staff and providers to ensure service continuity  
15 and support for survivors of domestic violence. HRA  
16 is the nation's largest social services agency,  
17 assisting over three million New Yorkers annually  
18 through the administration of public assistance  
19 programs including cash assistance, employment  
20 programs, food stamps, public health insurance and  
21 other supports that help New Yorkers remain in the  
22 workforce. HRA also plays a role in the  
23 administration of housing programs such as supportive  
24 housing and services, designed to assist individuals  
25 who are experiencing chronic homelessness,

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

21

2 individuals with HIV/AIDS, individuals with serious  
3 mental illness and/or individuals who are survivors  
4 of domestic violence, amongst others. Much of our  
5 work focuses on advancing one of this  
6 Administration's chief priorities: reducing income  
7 inequality and leveling the playing field for all New  
8 Yorkers. Our staff at HRA's Office of Domestic  
9 Violence work each day to address the life-altering  
10 effects of domestic violence, a significant driver of  
11 poverty and homelessness. This is achieved by  
12 ensuring that survivors and their families have  
13 access to safe living conditions and trauma-informed  
14 services, both within the shelter systems and as they  
15 transition back into their communities. HRA works  
16 with providers across the city to connect survivors  
17 of domestic violence and their children to critical  
18 services and programs. This work follows the New York  
19 State Domestic Violence Prevention Act of 1987, which  
20 requires counties to provide both non-residential  
21 services and residential shelter services to  
22 survivors of domestic violence and establishes  
23 program funding. The New York State Office of  
24 Children and Family Services, OCFS, promulgates and  
25 maintains regulations for licensure and the standards

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 22

3 for the establishment and maintenance of residential  
4 and non-residential domestic violence programs. OCFS  
5 authorizes DSS/HRA's administration of the financial  
6 and contractual requirements of domestic violence  
7 emergency residential shelter programs. Additionally,  
8 the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability  
9 Assistance, OTDA, authorizes DSS/HRA to administer  
10 the financial and contractual requirements of the  
11 domestic violence Tier II residential shelter system.  
12 HRA's domestic violence shelter system is the largest  
13 in the nation. Our programs are designed to stabilize  
14 clients in a safe environment and are developed to  
15 address the trauma of domestic violence while at the  
16 same time increasing a client's self-sufficiency. The  
17 robust suite of services includes but is not limited  
18 to individual counseling, advocacy, psycho-  
19 educational groups and trauma-focused interventions.  
20 All domestic violence shelters are required to  
21 provide childcare services and assist clients with  
22 obtaining permanent housing, benefit entitlement  
23 application assistance, financial development  
24 services and workforce readiness services to enhance  
25 clients' self-sufficiency. Our emergency domestic  
26 violence shelter system consists of 55 confidential

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 22

3 facilities across the city with a total bed capacity  
4 of 2,451 emergency beds. These emergency shelter  
5 providers offer trauma-informed services to survivors  
6 of domestic violence who are in imminent risk and/or  
7 are fleeing a current domestic violence incident.

8 Within the 55 sites, there are 10 DV Tier  
9 II/transitional shelter facilities, they include 447  
10 units that serve domestic violence survivors who have  
11 stabilized over time in the emergency system and  
12 require extended services. In calendar year 2020, HRA  
13 domestic violence shelter system served 9,439 adults  
14 and children of which 2341 were families with  
15 children and 386 were single adults that were  
16 discharged from domestic violence emergency shelters.

17 These figures should be seen within the context of  
18 this Administration's ongoing efforts to increase  
19 support for survivors of domestic violence. Mayor de  
20 Blasio and Commissioner Banks increased shelter  
21 capacity. Under their tenure, 300 additional  
22 emergency beds were added and are operational and 400  
23 Tier II units were awarded, of which 233 are  
24 operational, 62 Tier II units are scheduled to open  
25 at the end of this calendar year, and 105 Tier II  
units are scheduled to open in fiscal year 23. The

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 21

3 last group of Tier II units were originally scheduled  
4 to open in calendar year 2021; however, they are  
5 delayed because of construction and operational-  
6 related delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since  
7 2015, emergency shelters have served approximately  
8 25,000 individuals per year. During that same  
9 timeline, Tier II shelters have served between 7,000  
10 and 10,000 individuals per year. Looking at  
11 occupancy, since 2015, emergency shelter occupancy  
12 increased by over 160% and by over 300% for Tier II  
13 shelters. There are various entry points into the  
14 HRA Domestic Violence Residential shelter system.  
15 First, through the NYC Domestic Violence Hotline  
16 managed by Safe Horizon, where domestic violence  
17 survivors can connect with advocates to receive  
18 services, counseling, and information about available  
19 resources to maintain their and their families'  
20 safety. HRA NoVA, or No Violence Again, operates out  
21 of DHS Intake Centers where trained social workers  
22 conduct intake for domestic violence shelter  
23 placement, offer crisis counseling and referrals for  
24 services. Lastly, community-based referrals are other  
25 shelter entry points for survivors. OCFS regulations  
permit one third of shelter populations to be

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

25

2 referred from the community, such as local police  
3 stations and neighborhood hospitals.

4           Enhanced Domestic Violence Services. NOW,  
5 I would like to take this opportunity to shift and  
6 provide an update on our programs serving survivors  
7 of domestic violence. Our emergency shelter services  
8 are available and designed to assist domestic  
9 violence survivors who are facing imminent dangers to  
10 their safety and in need of safe temporary housing in  
11 accordance with State law. Our programs aim to help  
12 our clients manage the trauma of domestic violence  
13 and enhance their self-sufficiency. Specific services  
14 include one-on-one counseling, client advocacy,  
15 psycho-educational and trauma-informed interventions  
16 to address a client's individual domestic violence  
17 experience. Moreover, our shelter programs include  
18 housing and benefit assistance, financial development  
19 service, economic empowerment programs, mental health  
20 and substance use counseling and may include  
21 childcare services, provided on-site or via  
22 partnerships. Our efforts to improve our services  
23 for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault  
24 continue with the implementation of this year's Local  
25 Law 102, which requires DSS to provide survivor-

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

26

2 centered responses to complaints of sexual assault or  
3 harassment made by a client or staff. We are working  
4 towards implementing the requirements of this local  
5 law and are coordinating the training and outreach  
6 steps to ensure survivors are aware of available  
7 resources. All domestic violence contracted  
8 providers were contacted and notified of their  
9 responsibility for developing and providing to HRA  
10 their policy and procedures to address sexual  
11 harassment, as per Executive Order No. 64 of March  
12 2021. HRA in conjunction with ENDGBV developed a  
13 flyer with information and links to resources to  
14 assist survivors of sexual violence and provided the  
15 flyer to all domestic violence contracted providers  
16 to post and distribute in domestic violence shelters  
17 and non-residential contractor locations. We are  
18 working in conjunction with ENDGBV on the development  
19 of training and linkages and access to resources. We  
20 appreciate the Council's work and suggestions as we  
21 serve our most vulnerable New Yorkers.

22 Gender Equity. We would also like to  
23 update the Committees on our gender equity work. Over  
24 time, programs for domestic violence survivors were  
25 originally created to service ciswomen and their

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

27

2 children. The DSS Diversity and Equity Team's Gender  
3 Equity Initiative engaged HRA's non-residential  
4 domestic violence providers regarding ensuring that  
5 they are inclusive places for people of all genders.  
6 Currently, HRA is working in collaboration with the  
7 Director of Equity and Gender to develop training to  
8 address services for LGBTQI+ individuals. The New  
9 York State Social Services law mandates HRA to  
10 provide emergency shelter and other services for the  
11 survivors of domestic violence. The law does not  
12 make distinctions on the basis of sex or gender  
13 identity, and HRA requires that all services are  
14 provided to all New Yorkers regardless of their sex  
15 or gender identity. A domestic violence survivor is  
16 "any person over the age of sixteen, any married  
17 person or any parent accompanied by his or her minor  
18 child or children in situations in which such person  
19 or such person's child is a victim" who experiences  
20 domestic violence. Placements in domestic violence  
21 shelter are subject to the client's designated safe  
22 area, family composition, availability of a bed or  
23 unit that can accommodate the client's criteria, and  
24 any other special needs that the client may have,  
25 including but not limited to their specific medical

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 28

3 needs, pets, employment and child's school location.

4 In calendar year 2020, the population of clients  
5 served that were over the age of eighteen, including  
6 single and heads of household comprised of 143  
7 clients who reported they identified as male and  
8 2,925 who reported they identified as female. To  
9 date, in CY2021 116 clients reported they identified  
10 as male and 2,744 reported they identified as female.

11 Rental Assistance Access. Our Office of  
12 Domestic Violence, Housing Support Services, works  
13 with domestic violence shelter clients who are  
14 eligible for HRA housing subsidies, helping to issue  
15 housing certifications, reviewing and approving  
16 housing application packages, and conducting lease  
17 signings and renewals. As part of our efforts to  
18 enhance safety measures for our clients, clients have  
19 the ability to self-determine safe areas in  
20 communities where they are seeking permanent housing.  
21 This meticulous process helps ease limitations and  
22 expands housing options for domestic violence  
23 survivors seeking a safe home.

24 After-care and Wrap-around Services. Our  
25 programs and services also support domestic violence  
survivors to transition back into their communities.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 a

2 These services include crisis intervention, case  
3 management and advocacy, counseling, support groups  
4 and economic security advocacy, and are delivered  
5 through the NYC Family Justice Centers, FJC and  
6 community-based services. HRA works with nine  
7 contracted providers to offer state-mandated non-  
8 residential services across the city for survivors.

9 This program offers a range of supportive services to  
10 families who are survivors of domestic violence,  
11 along with after-care services for clients  
12 transitioning out of shelter to ensure they are  
13 stabilized once they relocate to permanent housing.  
14 In fiscal year 2021, the non-residential service  
15 providers enrolled 21,538 clients.

16 Domestic violence legal services. HRA's  
17 Office of Civil Justice, OCJ, which manages and  
18 monitors the City's programs that provide civil legal  
19 assistance to New Yorkers in need, operates critical  
20 legal services programs that specifically address the  
21 legal needs of survivors of domestic and intimate  
22 partner violence. For survivors facing housing legal  
23 issues such as possible eviction, harassment by an  
24 unscrupulous landlord or other threats to the  
25 stability of their homes, OCJ and its non-profit

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

20

2 legal services provider partners have made housing  
3 legal assistance available to survivors in all of the  
4 City's Family Justice Centers. This program has  
5 provided legal assistance to 210 survivors and other  
6 household members, through the referrals made at  
7 FJCs. HRA also prioritizes immigration legal support  
8 services for survivors and their families. In  
9 fiscal year 2021, the City's immigration legal  
10 support services, which include ActionNYC, the  
11 Immigrant Opportunity Initiatives, IOI, and legal  
12 programs supported by federal Community Service Block  
13 Grants, have assisted survivors in 878 immigration  
14 legal matters. OCJ also manages legal service  
15 programs through the Supporting Alternatives to  
16 Violent Encounters, or SAVE, program, which is funded  
17 by the Council. The SAVE program provides free legal  
18 services to domestic violence and intimate partner  
19 violence survivors in areas including family,  
20 matrimonial and consumer law.

21 Exits from DV shelters. In 2018, Local  
22 Law No. 83 was enacted amending section 21-141 of the  
23 administrative code of the City of New York, in  
24 relation to exits from domestic violence emergency  
25 shelters. Local Law 83 requires HRA to submit an

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

21

2 annual report to the speaker of the NYC Council and  
3 upload to the council's website, exits from domestic  
4 violence emergency shelters. In accordance with OCFS  
5 regulations, emergency domestic violence shelters  
6 provide temporary safe housing and supportive  
7 services for up to 90 days and with additional  
8 extensions up to a maximum 180 days for clients in  
9 need of extended emergency services. Providers are  
10 expected to develop a housing plan with domestic  
11 violence shelter clients, while the HRA Office of  
12 Domestic Violence, ODV, works closely with providers  
13 to support staff and clients during each transition.  
14 In calendar year 2020, HRA DV shelters served a total  
15 of 9,439 adults and children - of which 2,341 were  
16 families with children and 386 were single adults  
17 that were discharged from domestic violence emergency  
18 shelters.

19 Streamlining Client Transition. HRA and  
20 DHS have implemented a streamlined process for  
21 clients who have reached the State set 90-day limit  
22 in the domestic violence emergency system with no  
23 available options for permanent housing to seamlessly  
24 transfer into the DHS shelter system. This process  
25 promotes a safer and more efficient path for DV

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 27

3 clients to access DHS resources and eliminates the  
4 disruptions that can occur when families move from  
5 one system to another and simplifies the sharing of  
6 information for admissions purposes. HRA's Office of  
7 Domestic Violence works closely with providers, who  
8 are expected to assist clients in developing a  
9 transition or exit strategy, to support staff and  
10 clients during each individual transition. In 2020,  
11 three single adults and 446 families timing out of DV  
12 shelters under the State rule transitioned over to  
13 DHS shelters.

14 Human Trafficking Liaison. As part of  
15 the responsibilities under the New York State Anti-  
16 Trafficking statute, HRA is mandated to establish a  
17 Human Trafficking Victim Liaison. HRA's HTV Liaison  
18 is responsible for monitoring the application process  
19 of all state-confirmed human trafficking victims  
20 including minor victims who have been referred to HRA  
21 by OTDA contracted providers to apply for Cash  
22 Assistance, Medicaid and SNAP benefits. New York  
23 State assigns a contracted social service provider to  
24 assist the client with services. HRA has seen an  
25 increase in the number of referrals. In 2020, 18  
referrals were received and of that number 13 applied

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 22

3 for and received benefits. In 2021, to date HRA has  
4 received 60 HTV referrals and thus far 17 clients  
5 applied for 6 and received benefits, our office  
6 continues to monitor the application process for the  
7 remaining referred clients. HTV's are able to seek  
8 shelter either from DHS or the DV shelter system if  
9 they are homeless. As an example in 2021, 7 clients  
10 had a prior history of visiting a DHS homeless intake  
11 site and were assessed by the No Violence Again  
12 program. Additionally, four had a prior stay in  
13 domestic violence shelter.

14 HRA's Domestic Violence Programs and  
15 Services. HRA's Office of Domestic Violence (ODV)  
16 provides several programs and services to survivors  
17 of domestic violence and their children, including  
18 temporary housing, emergency shelter and supportive  
19 services and trauma-informed programming. These  
20 programs include:

21 No Violence Again (NoVA). As mentioned  
22 earlier in the testimony, one point of entry into  
23 domestic violence shelter is through the NoVA  
24 program. No Violence Again, or NoVA, assists DV  
25 survivors seeking emergency housing from DHS. When a

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 21

3 family member discloses that they have experienced  
4 domestic violence during the DHS intake process or  
5 DHS staff believes that DV may be an issue for the  
6 family, that family is referred to NoVA for a  
7 domestic violence safety assessment and possible  
8 placement in an HRA DV shelter. In calendar year  
9 2020 5,274 clients were assessed, of which 908 were  
10 determined to be eligible for placement under the  
11 State standard.

12 Domestic Violence Liaison Unit. In  
13 accordance with OTDA public assistance regulations  
14 the Domestic Violence Liaison Unit works to protect  
15 survivors of domestic violence who are at risk of  
16 being endangered through compliance with federal and  
17 state public assistance requirements, particularly  
18 those related to employment and child support.  
19 Clients are served by liaisons at all HRA FIA Job  
20 Centers who help determine eligibility for waivers  
21 from employment, child support, and other  
22 requirements to meet the client's safety and  
23 confidentiality needs. These waivers help survivors  
24 avoid activities that may put their safety at risk,  
25 such as traveling to an employment location where  
their abuser could find them and/or participating in

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

25

2 paternity and child support enforcement court  
3 proceedings. The waivers give clients the  
4 opportunity to safely comply with federal and state  
5 public assistance requirements, so they can continue  
6 to safely seek employment and receive child support.  
7 In calendar 2020, the Domestic Violence Liaison Unit  
8 assessed 6,920 clients for safety and 5,694 waivers  
9 were granted under federal and state rules.

10           Anti-Domestic Violence Eligibility Needs  
11 Team. The Anti-Domestic Violence Eligibility Needs  
12 Team, or ADVENT, conducts routine eligibility  
13 determinations and individualized case management for  
14 domestic violence survivors. The ADVENT teams also  
15 process housing applications and lease documents for  
16 HRA housing programs for clients in domestic violence  
17 shelters. In fiscal year 2020, ADVENT provided  
18 specialized services to an average of 311 clients in  
19 receipt of domestic violence services per month.

20           The Alternative to Shelter, ATS. The  
21 Alternative to Shelter, or ATS, which is  
22 transitioning to ENDGBV, is a program that helps  
23 reduce the need to enter shelter by giving domestic  
24 violence survivors who have orders of protection the  
25 option to remain safely in their homes. ATS assesses

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

26

2 each client's needs and develops a safety plan, with  
3 NYPD's coordination, to ensure that the client and  
4 their family can quickly alert the authorities when  
5 in danger. Clients are provided with a personal  
6 electronic response alarm device that is connected to  
7 a system monitored 24-hours a day that notifies  
8 authorities to dispatch police when the alarm is  
9 activated. In calendar year 2020, ATS received 747  
10 new referrals and had an average active caseload of  
11 192 clients per month.

12 Teen Relationship Abuse Prevention

13 Program, RAPP. The Teen Relationship Abuse  
14 Prevention Program, RAPP, is a nationally recognized  
15 domestic violence primary prevention program.

16 Located in public high schools and middle schools  
17 citywide, the program provides a comprehensive  
18 curriculum in which students learn to recognize and  
19 change destructive patterns of behavior before they  
20 are transferred to adult relationships. On average,  
21 420 students a month receive individual or group  
22 counseling with, on average, 330 completing the 3-  
23 session curriculum.

24 DV Mental Health Services. HRA, in  
25 collaboration with ENDGBV, will now have funding to

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

27

2 establish a Mobile and On-Demand Mental Health  
3 Services program that will provide shelter-wide  
4 mental health support services to domestic violence  
5 clients and their children. The program will  
6 commence in 2022 and further enhance the current  
7 array of domestic violence services provided by  
8 existing contracted providers by incorporating  
9 approximately 30 licensed clinicians, psychiatrists  
10 and social workers that will immediately screen,  
11 assess and provide mental health-focused care to  
12 approximately 9,500 families entering DV residential  
13 services programs throughout the year. The Mobile  
14 and On-Demand Mental Health Services will include: A  
15 multi-tiered approach to provision of mental health  
16 services to domestic violence survivors and their  
17 families residing in DV shelter. Mental health  
18 trauma-informed social work services that are  
19 delivered in a culturally relevant environment and  
20 sensitive to the effects of domestic violence.  
21 Mental health services with a focus on children  
22 dually affected by both vicarious or secondary  
23 domestic violence trauma exposure and the adverse  
24 effects of homelessness on children. A Universal  
25 Mental Health Screening tool which can be used for

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 28

3 the evaluation of all newly admitted shelter  
4 residents. Delivery of secondary tier mental health  
5 non-pharmaceutical intervention via a  
6 Psychologist/Social Worker for domestic violence  
7 survivors with identified mental health needs.  
8 Crisis on-call mental health services that can be  
9 provided either in-person or via telehealth. The  
10 third tier of mental health services will be in the  
11 form of a warm hand off to NYC 8 Health + Hospital  
12 psychiatric services via linkages.

13 Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

14 Now, we would like to highlight some of the essential  
15 work that HRA's Office of Domestic Violence staff  
16 performed during the COVID-19 pandemic as we  
17 continued to engage clients and all survivors to  
18 ensure the continuity of critical services  
19 efficiently, and without any disruption as the City  
20 transitioned to remote work. During the COVID-19  
21 pandemic, the Office of Domestic Violence  
22 continuously provided services to domestic violence  
23 survivors, including social services and shelter, in  
24 addition to new services to meet our different  
25 environment, such as internet connectivity for  
clients. The Office continues to provide these

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2a

2 critical services and has worked to extend our public  
3 reach by breaking down barriers and meeting survivors  
4 where they are. For example, in collaboration with  
5 the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based  
6 Violence (ENDGBV), the Office is assessing additional  
7 means of communication via the Domestic Violence  
8 Hotline for initial assistance, such as text and chat  
9 communication functions, which may open other avenues  
10 for domestic violence survivors to seek help. During  
11 the initial phase of the pandemic, from February to  
12 April 2020, the agency saw a decrease in the number  
13 of domestic violence referrals from the NYC DV  
14 Hotline. Since then, the referrals have increased to  
15 their pre-pandemic levels. To inform the public that  
16 domestic violence services were available during the  
17 pandemic, HRA and ENDGBV ran social media  
18 notifications to expand our outreach to vulnerable  
19 communities. Several steps were taken throughout  
20 domestic violence shelters to maintain safety during  
21 the pandemic. Domestic violence shelters have been  
22 following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
23 (CDC) and NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
24 (DOHMH) guidance and protocols around safety to  
25 protect the health of our clients and their families.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

10

2 Domestic violence shelter providers have also been  
3 provided with free Personal Protective Equipment  
4 (PPE) from City and State agencies, such as hand  
5 sanitizer and masks for clients and staff. To  
6 safeguard the health and safety of our clients and  
7 staff at shelters, clients who tested positive for  
8 COVID-19 were quarantined in their individual shelter  
9 unit or offered DHS Isolation Units. Additionally,  
10 several initiatives were taken by our agencies and  
11 the City to improve our clients' time in shelter. To  
12 improve connectivity and remote learning, the City  
13 installed Wi-Fi in domestic violence shelters  
14 throughout the city beginning in 2020. Additionally,  
15 HRA worked closely with the NYC Department of  
16 Education (DOE) to ensure all school-aged children at  
17 domestic violence shelters received a device to  
18 access the internet. Clients and their families now  
19 have unlimited WiFi access for educational purposes,  
20 as well as to search for housing, employment, and  
21 related services (such as social services benefits  
22 using Access HRA). From its onset and throughout the  
23 COVID-19 pandemic, HRA has advocated for and received  
24 significant temporary waivers from state and federal  
25 requirements to provide clients greater access to

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

11

2 benefits and services. One of these waivers we  
3 obtained extended the 180-day state limit on domestic  
4 violence emergency shelter stays, giving our clients  
5 the flexibility and time to get back on their feet.  
6 As we have reported to the Council previously, DSS,  
7 HRA, and DHS also put in place several COVID-19  
8 reforms and operational changes to better serve our  
9 clients. For example, we waived all in-person  
10 engagements for survivors of domestic violence and  
11 set up call-in numbers for assessment and crisis  
12 counseling. In addition to being protected by the  
13 various eviction moratoria put in place due to the  
14 pandemic, on an as-needed basis, our clients were  
15 connected to pandemic resources such as the New York  
16 State Emergency Rental Assistance Program, ERAP.  
17 Resources such as these can assist our clients and  
18 their families transition from shelter and ultimately  
19 return safely to the community.

20           Legislation. Intro 2732 recognizes the  
21 complexities of gender-based violence that may  
22 contribute to a delayed initiation of a civil legal  
23 remedy. We support the intent of this legislation to  
24 expand and strengthen access to resources and  
25 remedies for survivors, and we look forward to

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

12

2 working with the Council on a final Bill. Thank you  
3 for the opportunity to testify today on our work to  
4 protect survivors of domestic violence. We welcome  
5 any questions you may have. Thank you.

6 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Thank you, thank you,  
7 thank you, thank you. Deputy Godby, a very extensive  
8 report. I'm sure after this hearing, staff and I  
9 will review, review, review cause quite frankly,  
10 after hearing so much is being done on paper, you  
11 know, it is hoped that our numbers would decrease  
12 throughout time as opposed to increase. So, again,  
13 thank you for your extensive report. Thank you. I'd  
14 like to acknowledge my colleagues that have joined,  
15 Majority Leader Cumbo is here, Council Member Gibson,  
16 Council Member Gennaro, Council Member Lander, if I  
17 had not acknowledged him earlier. Thank you.

18 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you, Chair  
19 Diaz. I believe the other members of the  
20 Administration are available for Q and A. So, you  
21 may begin with Chair Levin, with questions. Chair  
22 Diaz, do you have any questions for the  
23 Administration?

24 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: I definitely do. I  
25 just need a couple of seconds to gather. I was

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

12

2 taking note as the Deputy was speaking. We'll get  
3 back on target. Again, thank you, thank you so much  
4 for answering half of my questions in reference to  
5 statistics and impact, and thank you for thinking  
6 outside the box and extending the stay of 180 days to  
7 better serve the families under your wing, if I may  
8 so that. I do remember hearing that there's an  
9 expectation of meeting a greater ability for capacity  
10 by the end of this year, 2021 and perhaps, you're  
11 falling short. Do we have a remedy for that?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: I

13 guess we're working with the providers. They are  
14 working through the process of getting a licensure.  
15 So, for Tier IIs the OTDA state oversight has to  
16 provide the operating certificate, so there are items  
17 that the providers would have to provide to OTDA in  
18 order to get final licensure. So, while the  
19 contracts and everything have been completed, most of  
20 the walk-throughs have been done, so at this point,  
21 it's really at the state level.

22 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Okay, so in the world

23 that we're living in today, I suspect we're not going  
24 to be able to meet the numbers by December 31st. Do  
25 we have a B plan or a C plan to be able to house

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

^^

2 individuals if needed? To that, I'm actually going  
3 toward the conversation about hotels as they have  
4 been used in the recent past times to temporarily  
5 house individuals, but I know the system is trying to  
6 get away using hotels. Are we thinking further  
7 outside in how we're going to be able to transition?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY:

9 Currently, we have 62 units that are coming on before  
10 the end of the year and we also have capacity. So,  
11 we're not seeing a lack of space right now for DV  
12 clients. So, although we have the 105 coming in  
13 2022, currently we do have capacity to accommodate  
14 our families.

15 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Thank you.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: Thank  
17 you.

18 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Council Member Levin,  
19 are you back on? When I worked in the shelter  
20 system, I found it somewhat troublesome with many of  
21 my clients that went from being in a DV shelter into  
22 a Tier II. I found that with more time under DV  
23 setup, it would benefit. While you've been dealing  
24 with the pandemic and you had to extend your stay to

25

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

15

2 180, do you find it is a benefit in assistance and  
3 ensuring permanent housing?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: Yes.

5 Yes, we do believe that the extended stay has offered  
6 people more opportunities to get additional services  
7 and of course, for permanent housing because the  
8 opportunities to find permanent housing do take time.  
9 We work closely with our clients in emergency to  
10 transition them to the available Tier IIs that we  
11 have.

12 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Okay. In reference to  
13 clients coming in that fall under DV status, do we  
14 have a percentage of clients that say yes, I fall  
15 into DV NOVA, I'd rather be in a non-DV shelter  
16 setting. Will I still receive services?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: Yes.

18 If someone is accessed, let's say, by NOVA at the DHS  
19 site and they refuse DV placement for whatever  
20 reason, they are offered the additional non-  
21 residential services that are provided, and the  
22 Office of Domestic Violence does work DHS closely to  
23 provide all the information about the non-RES  
24 providers as well as those services offered through  
25 the FJCs.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

16

2 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Do we know why, or can  
3 you indicate reasons as to why a person would want  
4 one over the other? I'm interested in knowing what  
5 services are provided for a family affected by DV as  
6 opposed to someone not affected DV. What service,  
7 what services are given to one population as opposed  
8 to the other?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: In  
10 the realm of domestic violence, there are social  
11 workers that deal directly with the trauma of  
12 domestic violence, the counsel them. Just because  
13 someone, let's say, decides not to go into DV  
14 placement, they may still need the services, but they  
15 just get them from a community-based provider. The  
16 other opportunity there to is that they can get the  
17 additional support from the DHS social workers as  
18 well, but if they need the additional support for DV,  
19 that is provided through the non-RES providers.

20 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Thank you. I liked  
21 your conversation in reference to shelter cost. I  
22 would say maybe eight months ago, I had a  
23 conversation in reference to shelter cost and it is  
24 more expensive to keep a family in a DV shelter  
25 receiving services as a non-DV shelter. Is that so?

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

17

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: I  
3 would have to defer to the finance team. I don't  
4 really understand like the difference in the cost per  
5 se, because I know the funding streams are different  
6 and the reimbursement is also different depending on  
7 the type of shelter, so I can't really speak to that,  
8 but we can follow up.

9 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Okay, thank you. Do  
10 we know what the average cost is? Maybe this is a  
11 question for Deputy Drinkwater, it is a financial  
12 question, but I'd like to get a comparison of what it  
13 cost to shelter a family in DV as opposed to what it  
14 costs for a family in a non-DV situation.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: Erin,  
16 do you have any additional context?

17 DEPUTY ERIN DRINKWATER: Yes. Sorry, I  
18 was trying to make sure I was unmuted here. In the  
19 mayor's management report for Department of Homeless  
20 Services, we do list the per diem for our shelters  
21 for adults, excuse me, for adult families and single  
22 adults. I'm just trying to pull that number up.

23 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Thank you.

24 DEPUTY ERIN DRINKWATER: So, the cost per  
25 day for single adults in the DHS shelter system is

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

18

2 \$137.74. For families it is \$191.36, and for adult  
3 families it is \$172.99, and that's inclusive of  
4 shelter and all the associated services, and then the  
5 Natasha, if you just want to speak to the state per  
6 diem for the domestic violence system.

7 DEPUTY NATASHA GODBY: Sure, so the, the  
8 state per diem for DV shelter varies. They set the  
9 per diem rate every year. It can go anywhere from  
10 \$140 to \$203 per, you know, per day. The OCFS  
11 regulations required at the per diem rate is set on  
12 an annual basis. OCFS does review budgets from the  
13 providers to determine what the appropriate rate  
14 would be for that particular shelter. The OTDA Tier  
15 II shelters also follow the same per diem rate, but  
16 it varies depending on the size of the shelter, the  
17 number of beds, or the number of units in the OTDA  
18 context. So, there's not one particular number. I  
19 don't have the average for all the shelters. That,  
20 I'd have to go back to finance on.

21 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: That's okay, thank  
22 you. I'd like to go back. You mentioned the program  
23 SAFE or SAVE. My understanding is it targets youth.

24 DEPUTY NATASHA GODBY: That would be,  
25 that would be the team rep?

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

1a

2 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Yes.

3 DEPUTY NATASHA GODBY: Yes.

4 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Can you remind me of  
5 the number your indicated that signed up or referrals  
6 were made?

7 DEPUTY NATASHA GODBY: Okay.

8 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: What I'm trying to, to  
9 me, it's not so much as numbers, but a child is  
10 abused is identified being in a DV situation,  
11 boyfriend, girlfriend; I'd like to know how long do  
12 we follow that child? All right, so, we're, we're in  
13 10th grade, we, we see indicators there, is it  
14 something where the school system is supportive, the  
15 counselors are supportive in knowing that this child  
16 has had a bad, a negative experience? Do we do the  
17 follow up?

18 DEPUTY NATASHA GODBY: I see. Can I  
19 refer it to Elizabeth Dank? Hi Liz. Can you give us  
20 some more context if you know?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ELIZABETH DANK: Hi.

22 Sure, just general overview of VAP and Early VAP.

23 So, the VAP is a program done by HRA that is in high  
24 schools and some middle schools across the city, and  
25 a few years ago, we expanded the VAP to include Early

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

50

2 VAP which was expanding the preventing education  
3 programming and services in some middle schools  
4 across the city as well. So, through those programs  
5 and (inaudible) providers, students are connected to  
6 workshops about healthy relationships and support is  
7 also provided to those students and families who are  
8 experiencing domestic and gender-based violence.  
9 Earlier this year, ENDGBV also launched the ABCs of  
10 Healthy Relationships which is a new curriculum that  
11 we developed through a public/private partnership in  
12 cooperation with the mayor's fund to advance New York  
13 City and (inaudible) to create tool kits for parents,  
14 educators, and caregivers to provide healthy  
15 relationship education to students in grades K-5.  
16 So, it's the first time this city had implemented  
17 curriculum support for students in elementary  
18 schools.

19 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Within the next 15  
20 days, can you please share with me what the tool kit  
21 looks like? I'd also like to make sure that our  
22 counterparts in the Board of Education are paying  
23 attention to the tool kits, especially since we've  
24 had to transition from working from home to in-person  
25 and knowing that each school in the near future is

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

51

2 going to have the additional support of mental health  
3 services staff. I think it's really important that  
4 we're all brought up-to-date on the resources that  
5 are made available. Thank you.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSSIONER ELIZABETH DANK: I  
7 will send and also just noting that the tool kit is  
8 available on ENDGBV's website and it's also available  
9 DOE's parent university and we're working closely  
10 with DOE to continue to identify ways to push out the  
11 took kits to families.

12 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Okay, so I know that I  
13 sent emails out in a massive amount and not every  
14 email was opened or replied to. Do you have a  
15 mechanism in place for checks and balances? Do you  
16 know sent (inaudible) in east New York and the email  
17 was opened. Is there a receipt? How do you know  
18 that anyone that you send the kit to, that you've  
19 tried to engage is actually, at least acknowledging  
20 receiving the information that you're sending over?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSSIONER ELIZABETH DANK: So,  
22 I can get back to you on ways that we're tracking  
23 utilization of the tool kits. I would imagine that  
24 the key metric will be the (inaudible). It's through  
25 the tool kit on our website, but we can get back to

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

52

2 you to talk more about the utilization tracking that  
3 will be done.

4 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Wonderful. If I  
5 learned anything from the Department of Human  
6 Services, is getting a receipt. This way you know  
7 it's actually happening. It may be annoying to staff  
8 who has to sign off for checks and balances, but it's  
9 a way of us actually proving that services are being  
10 provided, or at least we're attempting to be  
11 government. I'm going to stop my questioning. I see  
12 Councilwoman Rivera has her hand up. I'm not sure if  
13 she wants to jump in now.

14 SGT. SADORSKY: Time starts now.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CARLINA RIVERA: Thank you  
16 so much, Councilwoman Diaz, Chair Diaz. I just have  
17 a couple of quick questions for the Administration.  
18 I did hear that the Administration does support Intro  
19 2372. Is that correct?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: Yes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CARLINA RIVERA: Great, so  
22 Intro 2372-A includes changes that shift language  
23 from the individual to party or parties. How does  
24 the Administration anticipate the impact of this  
25 change to the gender-motivated violence act?

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

52

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: I'll  
3 defer to Elizabeth Dank, my colleague. Liz.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ELIZABETH DANK: I'm  
5 sorry. Can you repeat the question.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CARLINA RIVERA: Sure  
7 thing. I'm sorry about the background noise. So, in  
8 the amendment to 2372, it would include changes that  
9 shift language from the individual to party or  
10 parties and do you anticipate the impact of this  
11 change to the GMVA?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ELIZABETH DANK: So,  
13 I think we're eager to speak with you further in  
14 follow up to discuss a final version of this Bill.  
15 We're definitely in support of the intent to expand  
16 the services and remedies for survivors and look  
17 forward to discussing further with you.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CARLINA RIVERA: Okay. I  
19 appreciate that and of course, I'm thankful for your  
20 support and assisting us to get this done before the  
21 end of the term, especially, I think it's urgent.  
22 Does the Administration have data that indicates how  
23 many New Yorker the GMVA in its current form has  
24 impacted since its passing in 2000?

25

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

51

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ELIZABETH DANK: I  
3 don't have access to that data. I think we'd have to,  
4 unless HRA has anything to add, I'd think we'd have  
5 to follow up to see what data we have to provide them  
6 that.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CARLINA RIVERA: Okay.  
8 So, does anyone on the panel have any of this data,  
9 20 years in the making?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: No,  
11 not at this time, not from HRA.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CARLINA RIVERA: Okay, if  
13 you can get back to us with that information, we  
14 would be grateful, and I would just say that I think  
15 it's critical to expand these protections beyond the  
16 individuals, so I'm looking forward to working with  
17 you all to make sure that we can, of course,  
18 strengthen the Bill and have it passed and  
19 implemented as soon as possible. Thank you so much,  
20 Chair Diaz for the time, and to the Administration  
21 for their testimony and their work on this.

22 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: It's my pleasure.  
23 Thank you, Council Member Rivera, for thinking  
24 outside the box. I'm not sure, Chair Levin? Are you  
25 back? I'm sorry for doing your job. I'll step back.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

55

2 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: No, no problem.

3 If any other council members have questions at this  
4 time, please use the raise hand function in Zoom and  
5 I will call on you in the order of hands raised, and  
6 also I'd like to ask the Administration to remain  
7 unmuted when you are in Q and A, thank you.

8 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: And I'd like to share  
9 that for those of us at the other end, those of us  
10 speaking through the masks, sometimes it comes across  
11 muffled to us, so perhaps on our case, I'm not sure  
12 what you can find, but what I am receiving on my side  
13 via text, that it is difficult to hear, which would  
14 also make it difficult for those who are chiming in.  
15 CHLOE, back to you.

16 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Just waiting on  
17 direction. Waiting for any council members with  
18 questions at the moment. If you could just give me a  
19 few more moments. Seeing no other council member  
20 hands raised, at this time, Chair Diaz, would you  
21 like to move to public testimony?

22 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Absolutely.

23 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Great.

24 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: I'm sorry, Chair, I  
25 just had to step aside for a second. I'm back here.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

56

2 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: It's okay. I know  
3 we're juggling many here at the same time. You're  
4 pardoned. Jump right in. Give him more time, let's  
5 go.

6 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Give me one moment,  
7 please. Excuse me. Thank you very much. So, I just  
8 wanted to ask a few questions just about how the  
9 service delivery within the HRA system for domestic  
10 violence shelters is being currently delivered. At  
11 the current moment, there has been an increase in  
12 capacity over the last year, is that correct? There  
13 has been new capacity that has opened up?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: Yes.

15 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: How many new spots  
16 within the system?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: Give  
18 me one moment, please. So, from July of 2021 to  
19 present, for our Tier IIs, we opened 70 additional  
20 units and in May of 2021, we opened 44 additional  
21 units, and we are on track to have 400 in total by  
22 2022, and 300 additional emergency beds have already  
23 been awarded, that are operational.

24 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: And how many, and I  
25 apologize if one of my colleagues had asked this

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

57

2 already, how many clients go from the HRA DV system  
3 into the DH system?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: Of  
5 those that are streamlined?

6 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Well, that actually  
7 end up not being placed into permanent housing  
8 directly from the HRA system, but will actually end  
9 up going into the DHS system?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: I can  
11 look at the exit reports that we have provided.  
12 Under the local law, it does show how many clients  
13 left DV shelter and went into DHS shelter. Looking  
14 at the numbers from 2020, we had 449 households go  
15 from DV shelter into DHS.

16 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Out of how many  
17 exits in total?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: The  
19 total exits for 2020, the number of households was  
20 2727.

21 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: So, about 1 out of  
22 five or so exits are exiting into the DHS system?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: I'm  
24 not that great with math so.

25 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Okay.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

50

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: I'll  
3 take your word for it, but based on our 2020 report,  
4 on page three, that's the local law report we provide  
5 to the council, it showed that 1007 people, meaning  
6 adults and children, which is 449 households went  
7 from DV shelter into DHS.

8 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Obviously that's a  
9 major source of concern and I mean, there should be  
10 no family or individual that has to go to the DHS  
11 system. Can you speak a little bit about the  
12 difference in the service delivery? What is a family  
13 not getting in the DHS system that they are getting  
14 within the HRA DV system?

15 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Good question. I want  
16 to hear it cause I think I know the answer.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: Well,  
18 the DV families continue to get DV support. The DHS  
19 social workers do provide, you know, information  
20 about permanent housing, employment, childcare  
21 services, all those things are still offered in the  
22 DHS system. The only additional overlay for DV  
23 clients is that they still have access to the office  
24 of Domestic Violence if they're PA clients. Our  
25 ADVENT teens and ODV staff still assist them with

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

5a

2 permanent housing options as well. So far as the  
3 trauma-informed social services, the counseling,  
4 they're still getting that. They still have  
5 connections to non-residential DV support. So, the  
6 clients are still supported once they leave DV  
7 shelter.

8 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: I mean, obviously  
9 that's, you know, not every DHS funded and run  
10 shelter has the level of services, rather it's  
11 trauma-informed care or you know, the array of social  
12 services that are available. I mean, it's not  
13 obviously within the contracts that are funded in  
14 terms of staff. I think that it continues to  
15 represent, you know, I think a shortcoming of the  
16 system if any family is being discharged from the HRA  
17 system into the DHS system, regardless of whether,  
18 you know, we're attempting to provide the same level  
19 of service. I don't think that it's necessarily  
20 comparable. In terms of exits through rental  
21 assistance, what's the report show on exits from the  
22 HRA DV system into permanent housing with rental  
23 assistance vouchers?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: Let's  
25 see. I don't have all of the numbers in front of me,

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 but we can share the local law 83 report. It does  
3 show the number of housing subsidies that were used  
4 by DV clients. So, we can recirculate that. I don't  
5 have the numbers off hand.

6 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: We don't have it in  
7 front of us?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: I'm  
9 trying to pull it up now.

10 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Okay.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER:  
12 Natasha, I just pulled it up. Council member, I'm  
13 happy to update on the exits. Can you hear me?

14 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Yes, I can.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER:  
16 Okay, just give me one second to adjust here. Sorry  
17 about that. So, you are particularly interested in ...

18 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Exits with the  
19 rental subsidies.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER:  
21 Exits based on (inaudible). So, we had; sorry, I'm  
22 just making sure we're sending the right information.  
23 So, of those that were exited to housing, we had 14  
24 households who exited to NYCHA. We had 64 households  
25 who exited with a rental subsidy. 91 with no rental

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

61

2 subsidy, 3 with supportive housing, 414 made their  
3 own arrangement, and 762 is unknown.

4 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: So, so less than 70  
5 exited with a rental subsidy?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER:

7 Yes. This is over calendar year 2020. So, those  
8 numbers, I don't have the numbers from 2019 in front  
9 of me, but there were certainly ...

10 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: ... calendar year  
11 2020.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER: ...  
13 implication because of the pandemic.

14 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Sure. Do we know,  
15 I mean, is every client, do we know how many had  
16 access to a, like a city shopping letter? Somebody  
17 spending six months in an HRA shelter, they should  
18 have (crosstalk) ...

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER: ... we  
20 can get back to you.

21 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: I mean, they  
22 obviously, they should, if they're qualifying, if  
23 they meet the qualifications on income requirements,  
24 they should have access to, you know ...

25

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER: We  
3 can get back to you with that number.

4 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Okay.

5 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: All right, we don't  
6 have the numbers, but yes, the clients are issued a  
7 shopping letter on day one actually. As soon as  
8 their information is entered into our database, we  
9 search to see they're known to HRA and we have all  
10 their income information, they get a shopping letter  
11 immediately.

12 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: But they're eight  
13 times as likely to exit into the DHS as they are to  
14 exit into permanent housing with a rental subsidy.  
15 You know, if there's only about 60 or 70 exited with  
16 a rental subsidy, and 400 exited into the DHS system,  
17 I mean, that's not an acceptable outcome.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER: No,  
19 and those numbers, I mean ...

20 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: We can't hear you,  
21 Erin.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER:  
23 Just thinking.

24 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Oh. Erin, were you  
25 saying something?

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

62

2 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: No.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER: All  
4 right, folks, can everybody hear me?

5 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Yes.

6 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Yes.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER:

8 Okay, sorry about that. My microphone disconnected  
9 all of the sudden. I'm not sure where I cut off, but  
10 just to say that, you know, in the course of calendar  
11 2020, there was a period of time where apartment  
12 viewings weren't happening. We needed to shift to  
13 the virtual apartment viewing. So, just using that  
14 as a representative, it was representative of 2020.  
15 I just want to point that out as well.

16 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Sure, sure, so 2020  
17 was not necessarily a representative year, and we  
18 don't have data at all for 2021 yet.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER:  
20 Correct. The next report is due, I believe in April  
21 to the council.

22 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Okay. Okay, I mean  
23 if it is an indication, obviously, it's very  
24 frustrating to hear, you know, just considering the  
25 amount of time that this council, the effort this

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 61

3 council has put into trying to make rental subsidies  
4 a priority and I mean, I can tell you personally I've  
5 worked on the issue of rental subsidies for 12 years  
6 now at the council, and as Chair for almost eight  
7 years now, of trying to prioritize making rental  
8 subsidies a viable option and you know, to see that  
9 somebody really, I mean, at least in the calendar  
10 year of 2020, was eight times more likely to exit the  
11 DV system into the DHS system and to exit the DV  
12 system into a permanent subsidized apartment, at  
13 least through a city voucher; it's very, very  
14 frustrating, and it just indicates to me that there  
15 was, I mean, I'm leaving this job in a month and it  
16 demonstrates to me that, you know, there's been, you  
17 know, a real failure on my part that you know, after  
18 eight years, there is still this lack of stability  
19 for people who are going through this period in their  
20 lives and these trials in their lives, I mean,  
21 obviously, it's not easy. We don't have apartments  
22 lined for people the second they walk in the door,  
23 but it's not an acceptable outcome, an acceptable  
24 situation if that disparity is that great, and I hope  
25 that, you know, that that will change with the  
increase in the voucher amounts, and maybe make them

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

65

2 more functional, but you know, that's an indication;  
3 because when somebody; I mean, when a family goes  
4 into the DHS system, I mean, it is, the average  
5 length of stay within the DHS system is for a family,  
6 you know, it's over 400 some odd days or 500 days and  
7 I just, I don't, I mean, I don't know how, I feel  
8 like if a family is going from the DV into the DHS  
9 system, they start over on day one when they go into  
10 the DHS system, like in terms of their ability to  
11 kind of get into long-term stable housing, like's it  
12 not like a, I don't know how there could be  
13 continuity, you have a new provider, you have a new  
14 case manager, you're going to have a new housing  
15 specialist, you have other people who are further  
16 along, you know, within the process, who have been at  
17 that shelter longer, so you're not like going to be  
18 first in line to get permanent housing, and I just,  
19 it's, I just think that we have to do better as a  
20 city.

21 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Stephen, if I may.  
22 The only way that we're able to get a family that's  
23 been packaged, let's say for NYCHA, cause I'm  
24 thinking of the numbers, 14 families exited.  
25 Typically, when a family exits a DV shelter, you

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

66

2 would think that their application is still alive, is  
3 active, but as your pointed out, once they get into  
4 the next DV setting, if the worker that they're  
5 walking into does not have the follow-up, does not  
6 know that the person was linked to a unit, it never  
7 happened. That's why our numbers are also low. All  
8 right, so, you're in a DV shelter, it's full, you  
9 went into DV, you qualify for a NYCHA unit because if  
10 I'm correct, you have to have two arrests in order to  
11 qualify to go into New York City housing authority  
12 pool. So, the phone lines, you have to report that  
13 you have the arrests, now you go into a shelter  
14 provider that does not have staff that is aware of  
15 how to find out if you've been linked, and that's how  
16 I see often, our families fall through the cracks.  
17 Where A is not communicating with B accurately, and  
18 that's a problem. As Chair Levin stated, eight years  
19 and he's not seen a significant increase in numbers,  
20 that's disheartening, but first hand experience, if  
21 you have staffers at that next process that are not  
22 following, that are not having a few conversations  
23 with the client coming in, they're going to continue  
24 to fall through the cracks. We also, and I can  
25 highly recommend, when a family is in a DV setting

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

67

2 and identified for a unit, that we figure out a way  
3 to become passionate and hold that family there. To  
4 me, it makes no sense. I'm in a DV setting for four  
5 months, I'm in a Tier II now, and I'm advocating and  
6 trying to figure out that the new system today,  
7 continues to advocate and fight to get into a NYCHA  
8 unit or a set-aside. It doesn't make any sense.  
9 What will likely happen is a family become  
10 frustrated. The work that was done for four months  
11 at DV shelter, goes out the window. The person  
12 returns back to a harmful, dysfunctional environment,  
13 and years later, they come back into the system.  
14 That's what I see our disconnect is. The continuance  
15 of service is not as affective as it should be.

16 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Thank you very  
17 much. Go ahead, Commissioner, sorry.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER:  
19 Yes, I was going to say, so, Council Member Diaz, if  
20 there is a family that is connected or in the process  
21 of going through an apartment; let's say they're  
22 about to move or they signed a lease or they're in  
23 that process, all right, we generally will extend the  
24 stay, and sometimes, even if it's beyond the 180 day  
25 maximum, and at that point, the stay that is over

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 62

3 that timeframe would be charged to a city tax levy,  
4 so we wouldn't discharge a family if they're in the  
5 middle of moving into an apartment or in that phase,  
6 because we do understand that we don't want anything  
7 to disrupt the ability for that family to get that  
8 apartment. So, often times, we will extend the stay.

9 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Unfortunately, that  
10 may be the policy, but it is not across the board;  
11 otherwise, I wouldn't be giving testimony reference  
12 to it. What I'm saying to you is through experience.  
13 Thirteen and a half years working the shelter system,  
14 I had a significant amount of families, I then had to  
15 advocate and try to figure out why were you in this  
16 shelter for so long, what's going on? Then I have to  
17 go through DHS to get the application expedited and  
18 try to figure out something cause if the families  
19 were left in place, then we wouldn't be doing this.  
20 So, I appreciate the fact that that's supposed to be  
21 the policy and you would think it's across the board,  
22 no. Not while providers are doing that. (Crosstalk).  
23 It's the reality of what families are going through.  
24 I do have some more questions, but I see my  
25 colleagues, Council Member Louis has a question and  
26 Council Member Rosenthal, so if it's directed to the

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

ca

2 DV conversation, please proceed. Council Member  
3 Louis first and then Rosenthal.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FARAH LOUIS: Thank you so  
5 much, Chair Diaz and Levin for holding this important  
6 hearing, and I also want to commend Council Member  
7 Rivera, Brooks-Powers, and Rosenthal on their Bills,  
8 and I just have a question for the Administration.  
9 Recognizing the number of DV incidents that increased  
10 during the COVID 19 pandemic, and I'm sure that we're  
11 all aware of them and heard these stories in the  
12 press and with two new shelters later to open in the  
13 city, I wanted to know if the Administration is  
14 exploring options for DV shelters to be opened before  
15 the year is over or in early 2022, and if that's the  
16 plan, how is the Administration accessing this plan.  
17 For example, is there an interagency strategy that's  
18 involved that includes DHS, HRA, NYPD, and other  
19 agencies that provide social services needed for  
20 these residents and how is your interagency strategy  
21 involving local community members so that their  
22 involvement is in the process. I think what we witnessed  
23 here in District 45 is that a shelter would be opened  
24 and because there's lack of social services and  
25 support, a lot of these residents fall into

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

70

2 prostitution and into other issues. So, I'm just  
3 trying to figure out likes what's the next step in  
4 the strategy if you're going to be opening more  
5 shelters? Thank you.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NATASHA GODBY: Hi.

7 Thank you. The shelters that are slated for 2022  
8 were already part of the expansion and the emergency  
9 declaration from 2015. So far, as additional shelter  
10 opening before the end of the year, we only have the  
11 one Tier II with the 62 units that was scheduled and  
12 planned and should open by the end of the year. Any  
13 new shelters would require financial review as well  
14 as approval from either OCFS or OTDA, depending on  
15 the type of shelter. I can defer to Erin to speak  
16 more on the interagency collaboration piece and the  
17 city's future goals, but for right now the only  
18 shelters that are slated to open were those that were  
19 approved of the expansion. Erin?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER:

21 Thank you. That's right. So we certainly engage in  
22 conversations with our sister agencies, with the  
23 Mayor's Office to End Gender-Based Violence. Just at  
24 last quarters interagency, IHAC, the interagency  
25 council, we talked about domestic violence as a

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

71

2 driver of homelessness, so had a presentation by  
3 Natasha and her team as well as Liz and ENDGBV. So,  
4 we're regularly engaged in conversations with our  
5 sister agencies and how to adjust issues that aren't  
6 silo to one particular agency. Liz, I don't know if  
7 you want to add anything, just since we had the  
8 presentation at the IHAC.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ELIZABETH DANK: No,  
10 I think covered it, thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FARAH LOUIS: Is there  
12 somebody that was going to speak?

13 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Yeah, I'm not sure.  
14 With the masks, it's difficult.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ELIZABETH DANK: I'm  
16 sorry, can you hear me?

17 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Yes.

18 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Yes.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ELIZABETH DANK:  
20 Okay, sorry, I was saying actually just that Erin had  
21 covered it, so I didn't have anything additional to  
22 add.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FARAH LOUIS: Okay, so I  
24 want to thank all of you for your response, very  
25 broad, not to think that all, where we could fully

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

72

2 understand the strategy and the process that's  
3 utilized, and I've experienced myself that the  
4 communications is very lack luster from your agencies  
5 and our communities, when you're opening shelters,  
6 whether it be a domestic violence, a family shelter,  
7 a women's shelter, the communication is very lack  
8 luster and it's left to us to have the conversation  
9 with the community, and if you guys can create a  
10 better strategy for what this looks like and how we  
11 can be more supportive of these residents, that would  
12 be really helpful, and if you need recommendations  
13 from us on how to do that since we have the buy-in  
14 and relationships with the community, I beg of you;  
15 I'm using the word beg, please use us as a resource  
16 so that we can do a better job in communicating with  
17 residents within these particular institutions, but  
18 most importantly with the community. Thank you all  
19 for your time.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER:

21 Thank you, Council Member. I really appreciate that  
22 feedback. It's very helpful. On community  
23 notification as it relates to our domestic violence  
24 shelters, due to the confidential nature of these  
25 locations, we are not at liberty to disclose the

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

72

2 locations nor do community engagement on those  
3 locations. That stands in contrast to the Department  
4 of Homeless Services Shelters where we do do  
5 notifications and work to participate in building,  
6 you know, community relationships through our  
7 community advisor boards and so forth, but due to the  
8 confidential nature of our domestic violence  
9 shelters, that same approach is not able to be taken  
10 due to the safety and security of the clients being  
11 served at the shelter. So, I appreciate the  
12 feedback. I'm happy to follow up on any specifics.

13 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Moderator? I see no  
14 more.

15 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Yes, I guess we  
16 ...

17 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Sorry, Chair Diaz,  
18 I do want to just ...

19 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: No, go ahead  
20 (crosstalk).

21 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Just one, just a  
22 last remark, and just to reiterate that this cannot  
23 be an acceptable outcome that families that are  
24 leaving DV shelter are eight times more likely to  
25 enter the DHS system than to exit with a rental

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

71

2 voucher that they are qualified for in most cases. I  
3 mean, I don't know if you have the information of  
4 what percentage of clients are leaving the DV with a  
5 city shopping letter, but presumably, it's a high  
6 percentage and we cannot, as a city, see that as an  
7 acceptable outcome that families are exiting one  
8 system and going into another system, and thereby  
9 burdening the other system as well which continues to  
10 have an unacceptably high census within the DHS  
11 shelter system. That has a negative effect on those  
12 families that are in that system on an average of  
13 over 400 days because then the resources in those  
14 shelters are having to divided more ways. It is to  
15 the detriment of everybody in the system that  
16 families would be discharged from one system, the  
17 HRA/DV system into the DHS system. It hurts  
18 everybody. It hurts the families themselves and it  
19 hurts the other families that are in the DHS system  
20 already because their resources then have to be  
21 divided in more ways, and we have to have a better  
22 strategy. This isn't one person's responsibility.  
23 It's not provider's responsibility. It's not one  
24 Deputy Commissioner's responsibility. There has to  
25 be a greater emphasis and a better strategy from City

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

75

2 Hall, from the Deputy Mayor, between the two Deputy  
3 Mayors; Deputy Mayor that is in charge of housing and  
4 the Deputy Mayor that's in charge of social services.  
5 There has to be; and it's extremely frustration after  
6 years and years and years of talking about this that  
7 we still have these outcomes, and it's going to be up  
8 to the next Administration and the next Council, but  
9 I really hope that they put a greater emphasis and  
10 more resources into getting more people into  
11 permanent housing through rental subsidy out of both  
12 the HRA/DV system and the DHS, and if anybody's going  
13 to be here after January 1st, please, please put a  
14 greater emphasis on this because these numbers; the  
15 numbers speak for themselves. I'm willing to grant  
16 that 2020 was a weird year and low numbers but still,  
17 we have to do better. With that, I'll turn it back  
18 over to you, Chair.

19 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Thank you. I'm about  
20 to ask some tough questions as well. As I'm exiting  
21 the Council and fear the status of the city. When it  
22 comes to the city identifying providers that we're  
23 not doing due diligence. Providers that we know now,  
24 there's (inaudible) involved and mismanagement of  
25 funds. My understanding is there are 62 nonprofits,

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

76

2 of the 62, nine are being worked with more  
3 specifically. Can someone share with us what does  
4 that actually mean when an organization has been  
5 flagged?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER: So,  
7 I'll answer that. So, the shelter providers that  
8 you're speaking about are Department of Homeless  
9 Service providers. The larger number are the number  
10 of providers who are providing shelter with contracts  
11 within the Department of Homeless Services and the  
12 number that you mentioned are organizations that are  
13 under corrective action plans that we working with  
14 those providers on any number of policies to  
15 strengthen that organization or those organizations  
16 to ensure that they're providing services to the  
17 standards we expect of them.

18 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: So, just for clarity's  
19 sake. None of these providers operate DV shelters?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ERIN DRINKWATER: I  
21 don't have the list of DHS providers under caps with  
22 me for today's hearing. I'd be happy to cross-  
23 reference that against our domestic violence shelter  
24 providers and get back to the Committee.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

77

2 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Please. The last one  
3 I heard of this weekend was Millennium Care. My  
4 understanding is that they are a DV provider, but  
5 again, I look forward to you getting back to me on  
6 what those numbers look like, especially since you've  
7 indicated that we're not going to meet the goal by  
8 2021 of providing secure housing for DV victims. I  
9 have no more questions. After this, I'll turn it  
10 over to Council Member Rosenthal that has a question,  
11 unless Moderator, anyone else who has their hand  
12 raised on the topic of DV shelters itself.

13 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Council Member  
14 Rosenthal is first and the only other member with  
15 their hand raised at this time.

16 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Thank you.

17 SGT. SADOWSKI: Time starts now.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HELEN ROSENTHAL: Thank  
19 you, and Chair Diaz, Chair Levin, as usual, thank you  
20 for your amazing work trying to address the lack of  
21 DV shelters, lack of communication with clients and  
22 all issues. I very much appreciate that and I  
23 appreciate the opportunity to ask about my Bill which  
24 has to do with the Street Harassment Advisory Board.  
25 So, let's see, I don't know if she's still on.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

78

2 Jackie Ebanks provided some great testimony about  
3 this Bill. If the Committee Counsel can help me. Is  
4 Jackie Ebanks available? No, okay. Let's see. I see  
5 Elizabeth Dank is here from ENDGBV who I'm sure might  
6 have some thoughts about this Bill. Actually, I'm  
7 not sure if you've read it. I know that Jackie  
8 testified and gave what seemed to be very supportive  
9 testimony for the Bill. One thing that was important  
10 to us between the initial version and the A version  
11 was to specify that the suggestions that are made  
12 would not involved the criminal justice system, but  
13 instead be focused on prevention and maybe even some  
14 restorative justice; although that's not specified,  
15 but it's alooted to. I just wanted to check if the  
16 administration had any concerns about the Bill. None  
17 were raised by Director Ebanks. Does anyone want to  
18 make any quick comments or thoughts from the  
19 Administration.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ELIZABETH DANK:

21 Thank you, Council Member. So, yes, the  
22 Administration submitted written testimony in  
23 response to the Bill, so no oral testimony was given.  
24 The written testimony was submitted. We welcome the  
25 opportunity to supplement the city's work around

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

7a

2 street harassment and look forward to further  
3 discussing the Bill with Council.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HELEN ROSENTHAL: Further  
5 discussing because there might be changes that you're  
6 thinking of?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ELIZABETH DANK: So,  
8 the intent of the Bill, we definitely support and we  
9 support extended work around street harassment and  
10 the potential areas that we're interested in  
11 discussing further with Council, the Administration  
12 needs more time to review and work with the Council  
13 on the Bill.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HELEN ROSENTHAL: Okay. I  
15 hope you expedite that. I'm hoping to move this Bill  
16 very quickly, so if there are concerns, I'm eager to  
17 try to address those concerns, you're the experts.  
18 We're also going to hear from (inaudible) today and  
19 I'm excited for them to testify and others, and I  
20 look forward to their testimony to hear about any  
21 tweaks or suggestions you have for the legislation  
22 because as I said, I think you know, given, it's  
23 December. I think it's going to be moving whether  
24 quickly and I'd whether take the time to make sure  
25 that the Bill is best it can be before we pass it

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 into law. So, thank you very much for that. I  
3 apologize, Deputy Commissioner Dank, I didn't mean to  
4 put you on the spot there, but I really am eager for  
5 feedback from city hall about this Bill. Thank you  
6 very much. Thank you again, Chair Diaz. I really  
7 appreciate you.

8 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Thank you. I want to  
9 thank Deputy Dank for acknowledging that you want to  
10 have more conversation about the Bill. This Bill is  
11 going to be really impactful and (inaudible), it's  
12 into the law. I like you were able to show the  
13 public that we are interested in having real  
14 conversations that are going to affect everyday  
15 people. Thank you.

16 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you,  
17 Council Member Rosenthal and Chair Diaz. Seeing no  
18 other Council Member hands raised, we will turn to  
19 public testimony. First, I'd like to remind everyone  
20 that I will call up individuals in panels. Once your  
21 name is called, a member of our staff will unmute you  
22 and you may begin your testimony once the Sergeant-  
23 at-Arms sets the clock and gives you the cue. All  
24 testimony will be limited to three minutes. Remember  
25 that there is a few second delay when you are unmuted

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 21

3 before we can hear you. Please wait for the  
4 Sergeant-at-Arms to announce that you may begin  
5 before starting your testimony. For the first panel  
6 of public testimony, we will have Gabriela Sandoval  
7 Requena from New Destiny Housing, Malka Himelhock  
8 from Met Council on Jewish Poverty, and Juliana  
9 Czernyk speaking on behalf of GMVA. Gabriela Requena  
10 you may begin when the Sergeant gives you the cue.

11 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

12 GABRIELA SANDOVAL REQUENA: Good  
13 afternoon, Council Member Diaz and Council Member  
14 Levin and the members of the Committee on Women and  
15 Gender Equity and General Welfare. Thank you all for  
16 your leadership and for the opportunity to provide  
17 testimony on behalf of New Destiny Housing. My name  
18 is Gabriela Sandoval Requena and I am the Senior  
19 Policy Analyst of the Destiny Housing. Our mission  
20 is to end the cycle of abuse and homelessness for  
21 domestic violence survivors. We do this by  
22 developing supportive housing for homeless DV  
23 survivors, assisting survivors who are fleeing DV to  
24 obtain subsidies and find apartments and by  
25 advocating for more housing resources for survivors.  
First of all, I'd like to express my gratitude to

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 27

3 Council Members Diaz and Levin and members of both  
4 committees for the demonstrated commitment to help  
5 with New York City's most vulnerable. I would like  
6 to use this time to express our support for Intro  
7 2372, introduced by Council Member Rivera. This Bill  
8 would give survivors of gender-motivated acts of  
9 violence more time to pursue civil actions. In the  
10 US, 99 percent of women experiencing DV experience  
11 financial abuse and face limited financial resources  
12 like bad credit and sparse employment history as a  
13 result. According to one survey by Safe Horizon,  
14 occurring economic abuse affects 92 percent of  
15 survivors experiencing homelessness. This Bill  
16 creates a two-year look back window for survivors to  
17 pursue civil action and readdresses the wrong doing  
18 onto them by way of financial help from their  
19 abusers. New Destiny supports Intro 2372. We'd also  
20 like to underscore the need for equitable access to  
21 housing resources for survivors of domestic violence.  
22 As the Deputy Commissioner stated, the report on  
23 exits showed that 449 survived households were  
24 streamed from the HRA system to the DHS system in  
25 2020; however, there are other families that move on  
their bring the total to about 37 percent, so we're

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 2

3 talking about one of every three households that is  
4 in DV shelter ends up going from one shelter system  
5 to another, and we urge the city to take much needed  
6 steps to expand equitable access to housing by just  
7 allowing HRA shelter residents to equal access to HBD  
8 homeless set up by unit which would cause the city no  
9 additional funding. We thank the Council for the  
10 opportunity testify and welcome further  
11 collaboration. I'm happy to answer any questions.

12 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you. We  
13 will now turn to Malka Himelhoch. You may begin when  
14 the Sergeant gives you the cue.

15 MALKA HIMELHOCH: Chair Diaz, Chair  
16 Levin, and members of the committee, good morning.  
17 My name is Malka Himelhoch. I'm a policy fellow at  
18 the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty, and I  
19 would like to thank Chair Diaz and Chair Levin for  
20 holding this very important hearing. I'm here today  
21 on behalf of Met Council, first to ask that the New  
22 York City Council devote additional resources to  
23 expanding the DV shelter system and then to speak  
24 brief in support of number 2372-A. For almost 50  
25 years, Met Council has provided comprehensive social  
services to New Yorkers in need. Since the start of

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 21

3 2021, we have provided services to more than 300,000  
4 people including 1,117 survivors of family violence.

5 As we are all aware, the COVID 19 pandemic has  
6 exacerbated already existing problems in our city.

7 This is especially true in the realm of domestic  
8 violence. Since the start of the pandemic, there has  
9 been a 50 percent increase in the number of clients  
10 reaching out to our family violence program for help.

11 Not only have we seen a rise in the number of clients  
12 contacting us for assistance, we've also seen a  
13 disturbing rise in the severity of their cases. More  
14 clients have reported being threatened by a weapon,  
15 strangled, and raped than ever before in addition to

16 experiencing increasingly egregious incidents of  
17 humiliation and embarrassment. It's evident that our  
18 families in crisis urgently need additional support  
19 and expanded services. As family violence providers,

20 our first priority is using a trauma informed line to  
21 create a safety plan. Often this includes survivors  
22 leaving their home frequently with children. Finding  
23 shelter for survivors without children is especially

24 challenging since HRA/DV shelters prioritize families  
25 over single adults. In September 2021, HRA sheltered  
26 over 1000 families, but only 95 single adults. As a

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 25

3 result, our social workers are often only able to  
4 find these people beds in DHS shelters, and as we've  
5 discussed, those resources are very limited as  
6 compared to the DV shelters. While getting survivors  
7 to safety is always a top priority, it's both  
8 disruptive and additionally traumatic for someone who  
9 has already had to leave their home, to be forced to  
10 leave their community and city to be safe.

11 Additionally, the committee should be aware that in  
12 several cases, our clients who live in NYCHA housing  
13 have had to leave between six months and a year after  
14 being granted an emergency transfer order to move  
15 into a new safe apartment. This egregious delay puts  
16 a greater burden on an already overstretched shelter  
17 system that will likely become even more overburdened  
18 as the eviction moratorium ends on January 15th,  
19 2022. We're calling on the City Council to dedicate  
20 additional funding in order to increase the number of  
21 HRA/DV shelter beds. Prior to the pandemic, there  
22 are at least 12,000 DV survivors being housed in DHS  
23 shelters and as we've heard, that number has not been  
24 significantly decreased. We would ask that HRA try  
25 to increase the number of beds to accommodate the  
growing demand for shelter. Thank you.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 26

3 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
4 your testimony. We will now turn to Juliana Cyernyk.

5 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

6 JULIANA CYERNYK: Hello and good  
7 afternoon to Council Member Rivera, Council Member  
8 Brooks-Powers, members of the committee, and everyone  
9 in the meeting room today. My name is Juliana  
10 Cyernyk and I'm a rape survivor. In the fall of 2020  
11 during my senior year at Fordham University, I  
12 attended a college party, and while incapacitated and  
13 unconscious due to alcohol and recreational  
14 substances, I was sexually assaulted by a peer.  
15 College rape is a huge problem and leaves victims in  
16 limbo. It took me a few months to process and  
17 realize what had happened to me which means I didn't  
18 have the concrete evidence that cases typically need  
19 to move forward in criminal court, but how was I  
20 supposed to know and grasp all of that in the hours  
21 after recovering from the assault? Once I had  
22 finally processed my trauma enough to come forward, I  
23 chose to report the incident to my university and  
24 NYPD six months after. Neither pursuit provided a  
25 successful outcome. The biggest issue came when I  
sought to press criminal charges and an ADA told me

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 27

3 that they wouldn't pursue my case unless they were  
4 certain they would win because the burden of proof is  
5 different in the civil contacts, I have been able to  
6 pursue my case civilly. The same is not true for  
7 survivors who take even longer to process their  
8 sexual assaults than I did. We need to amend this  
9 legislation so that victims have the ability to  
10 pursue justice through civil litigation because as my  
11 case shows other avenues often fail to bring abusers  
12 to justice. I beg of you committee members to vote  
13 yes and to help not just me, but countless people in  
14 similar situations to receive the recompense they  
15 deserve. Thank you very much.

16 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Thank you for your  
17 testimony and willing to speak truth into power.  
18 This sounds to me that if you had not taken the  
19 matters into your hands, you wouldn't be where you  
20 are today, so thank you for your willingness to fight  
21 the fight and the courage which at times, many  
22 individuals don't have. Thank you. It's a big deal  
23 to be amongst so many of us today telling your story,  
24 which honestly opens the door for someone else who  
25 may be in your situation and needs the strength, so  
thank you.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 ☪

2 JULIANA CZERNYK: I appreciate that.

3 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: No, you're welcome. I  
4 mean, I thank you. I receive text messages often  
5 from survivors after hearings like this that are  
6 grateful in seeing an image of themselves stepping  
7 forward, so thank, thank you.

8 JULIANA CZERNYK: Thank you.

9 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: You're welcome.

10 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
11 your testimony. I'd like to ask if Chair Levin has  
12 any questions before we turn to other council member  
13 questions for this panel?

14 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: I don't. Thank you  
15 very much, moderator, and thank you very much to this  
16 panel for your very important testimony, thank you.

17 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you, we  
18 will now call on Council Member Rosenthal for her  
19 question.

20 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HELEN ROSENTHAL: Thank  
22 you. Thank you. It's not really a question. I also  
23 want to really thank this survivor for coming  
24 forward. Change doesn't happen without your sharing  
25 your truth as Chair Diaz just said, but you are going

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 a a

3 to make a difference today and make a different not  
4 just on this Bill, but on a variety of issues. The  
5 DAs and NYPD, their sex crimes unit have a long way  
6 to go and by your stepping forward, it helps to  
7 validate that issue, so we really need you and again,  
8 thank you very much for you time.

9 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you,  
10 Council Member Rosenthal. Chair Diaz?

11 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: I have a question for  
12 Met Council, are they still on? Did they turn off?  
13 Are they still on, Chloe?

14 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: I'm looking.

15 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Okay.

16 MODERATOR GLORIA RIVERA: Malka? I  
17 believe, she had something to do, so she logged off.

18 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Okay, so then we'll  
19 just email. For public knowledge my question to ask  
20 is I'd like to know was in the intake process, can  
21 they share with us how many are male head of  
22 household and how many males have they engaged with  
23 and had conversation with (inaudible) to establish  
24 that men are also victims of domestic violence and  
25 all data that I can gather, I want to gather. I'm on

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY  
an  
2 a mission to make sure we have equity across the  
3 board, so thank you.

4 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you.  
5 Seeing no other council member hands raised, we will  
6 turn to the next public panel, and first we will have  
7 Debra Berkman from the New York Legal Assistance  
8 Group, Clare Pluckett from Sanctuary for Families,  
9 and Jessica Sell Chambers. Debra Berkman, you may  
10 begin once the Sergeant gives you the cue.

11 SGT SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

12 DEBRA BERKMAN: Thank you. Chairs Diaz,  
13 Levin, council members and staff, good afternoon and  
14 thank you for this opportunity to speak to the  
15 Committees on Women and Gender Equality and General  
16 Welfare on the DV shelter system. My name is Debra  
17 Berkman and I am the coordinating attorney of the  
18 Shelter Advocacy Initiative at NYLAG or the New York  
19 Legal Assistance Group. Based on my experience  
20 working with survivors of domestic violence  
21 experiencing homelessness, I appreciate this  
22 opportunity to offer these comments, and the most  
23 important thing that I have to say is that the city  
24 must increase access to DV shelter. There are simply  
25 not enough beds in the DV shelter system. At NYLAG,

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

a1

2 we counsel numerous survivors of domestic violence  
3 who reach out to us for safety planning. We see them  
4 firsthand navigate the difficult decisions of whether  
5 to leave their home, often many of their belongings,  
6 their community, and the financial stability they  
7 have to leave abusive situations. Once they make  
8 this courageous leap to be told that the DV shelter  
9 system can't accommodate them has an inevitable  
10 chilling effect as well as long-term tangible  
11 consequences to their ability to achieve stability  
12 and security. When the DV shelter system can't  
13 accommodate survivors, they must choose between  
14 entering the DHS shelter system or staying in an  
15 abusive situation. DHS shelter staff is not trauma  
16 informed and does not appear to be trained to meet  
17 the needs of those fleeing DV. Moreover, DHS  
18 shelters are not in confidential locations, and they  
19 don't provide services tailored to protecting the  
20 safety of survivors of domestic violence. Many  
21 survivors will decide not to leave an abusive  
22 relationship to enter the DHS system because they  
23 fear their going from one unsafe location to another,  
24 especially since they are at their most vulnerable  
25 for lethal intimate partner violence at the time of

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

2 a2

3 separation, and as Council Member Diaz pointed out,  
4 there are very few beds in the DV shelter system for  
5 anyone other than cis-gender female survivors with  
6 young children. Similarly, survivors who have  
7 religious and dietary restrictions are most often not  
8 able to be accommodated by the DV shelter system.

9 Our DV shelter system has to be expanded to increase  
10 capacity overall, but specifically must be expanded  
11 to include capacity disturbed survivors from all  
12 backgrounds and from all experiences. Additionally,  
13 DV shelter stays should not have time limit, and in  
14 no circumstance should that time limit be 180 days.

15 In the midst of the COVID pandemic, New York has  
16 removed mandatory time limits for shelter stays and  
17 this must be made permanent. It's almost impossible  
18 for our clients to find permanent within 180 days of  
19 entering DV shelter, and as we spoke of earlier, the  
20 most common housing voucher is a city housing voucher  
21 which the survivors are not eligible for until  
22 they've resided in the shelter for at least 90 days,  
23 thus, for most of my clients, for the first half of  
24 their stays in shelter, they're functionally  
25 ineligible to search for housing, and even after the  
clients become eligible for a rental voucher, it can

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

a2

2 take many months to secure an apartment. Difficulty  
3 obtaining permanent housing can be exacerbated for  
4 our clients who are survivors of domestic violence  
5 because many are involved in family (crosstalk) ...

6 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time expired.

7 DEBRA BERKMAN: ... and the court may place  
8 geographic limitation where a parent may reside.

9 Thank you very much.

10 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: I'm sorry, Ms.

11 Berkman, do you have further testimony?

12 DEBRA BERKMAN: I do have a client story  
13 that I'd like to tell you about ...

14 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: ... and I want to hear  
15 it.

16 DEBRA BERKMAN: Thank you very much. So,  
17 one of our clients at NYLAG, her name is Jenna, and  
18 she has a special needs child who needs, among other  
19 therapies, regular homecare and a number of therapies  
20 that come to the house. She fled an abusive  
21 relationship to enter a DV shelter and when Jenna's  
22 180 days were nearing an end, her child's father  
23 filed an emergency petition seeking custody, noting  
24 how the child may have his necessary services  
25 interrupted for a second time within six months

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

o/1

2 because they had to leave the DV shelter. The court  
3 was extremely concerned about the welfare of the  
4 child and the instability of the child's services.  
5 Jenna greatly feared losing temporary custody, so in  
6 order to avoid that outcome, she actually moved back  
7 in with her abuser. Jenna felt that if she were  
8 home, she could protect her child, and if the father  
9 was awarded custody and had the child alone without  
10 her protection, then the child would be in danger,  
11 and all of this occurred because Jenna was limited to  
12 only 180 days in her DV shelter. Thank you for  
13 allowing me to share that client experience and for  
14 allowing me to testify.

15 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: I thank you for  
16 providing facts. It's clear to me that you're  
17 dedicated and thank you for that. Thank you for  
18 wearing our heart on your sleeve and making a  
19 difference, thank you.

20 DEBRA BERKMAN: Thank you very much.

21 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: You're welcome.

22 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
23 your testimony. Next, we will hear from Clare  
24 Plunkett.

25 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

as

2 CLARE PLUNKETT: Good afternoon. My name  
3 is Clare Plunkett and I am a Clinical Supervisor for  
4 DV emergency shelters at Sanctuary for Families, New  
5 York states largest provider of comprehensive  
6 services exclusively for abused survivors and their  
7 children. We're grateful to the City Council for the  
8 opportunity to testify today. We want to give  
9 special thanks to Darma Diaz, Chair of the Committee  
10 on Women and Gender Equity and Stephen Levin, Chair  
11 of the Committee on General Welfare for their strong  
12 advocacy on behalf of abuse survivors in the council,  
13 and to former Women and Gender Equity Committee  
14 Chair, Helen Rosenthal for her equally resolute  
15 efforts in that role. For almost 30 years, Sanctuary  
16 as been a large 58 family DV transitional shelter and  
17 four small DV crisis shelters; together provide safe  
18 confidential residence for 350 to 400 adults and  
19 children annually. At the height of the pandemic  
20 during which DV survivors were disproportionately  
21 accepted in addition to the challenges and trauma  
22 they already faced recovering from abuse. Sanctuary  
23 deeply appreciated HRA's responsiveness and expanded  
24 support for our clients. Sanctuary shelter staff  
25 were in daily communication with the HRA emergency

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

ac

2 intervention services unit. They provided PPE  
3 supplies, helped us quickly procure remote tech, and  
4 responded rapidly and compassionately in the event of  
5 a COVID case or exposure. HRA also relaxed rigid  
6 rules to accommodate shelter residence with COVID  
7 infections in hotels if needed and assured  
8 reimbursement in cases where rooms and shared  
9 apartments had to be left vacant to avoid exposure.  
10 HRA has been a longtime partner of Sanctuary,  
11 particularly during the pandemic and we truly  
12 appreciate their dedicated EIS staff, however, as  
13 others have been stating so far, our shelter clients  
14 continue to experience many of the same challenges  
15 we've highlighted in the past, particularly in their  
16 struggles to secure and maintain affordable permanent  
17 housing after exiting shelter. One of the primary  
18 obstacles our shelter clients face is navigating the  
19 housing subsidy system including FEP, CityFEP,  
20 Section 8, and NYCHA. This is especially concerning  
21 given that the federal and state eviction  
22 moratoriums will likely end soon. Those the  
23 CityFEP's voucher increase in September 2021, up to  
24 federal section 8 fair market rent levels was a  
25 critical step forward. Certain program requirements

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

a7

2 make it difficult for the low-income survivors we  
3 serve to participate. Apartment size requirement  
4 based on family size and composition can force  
5 families to search for unnecessary large apartments  
6 that over the voucher limit. For example, a one-  
7 bedroom apartment would not be permissible for a  
8 single father with a daughter, whereas a mother with  
9 a son would be eligible to sleep in the same room,  
10 and while the CityFEP's voucher recently increased,  
11 the FEP's vouchers are still only 1,580 for a family  
12 of four which is incredibly low in the New York City  
13 rental market. Too often, shelter residents who are  
14 on a path to economic stability and independence find  
15 that working to support their families can lead to  
16 exclusion or removal from voucher programs because  
17 their income is too high, a formula which is  
18 triggered at levels far below comfortable living  
19 wages. Additionally, a number of EIS staff vacancies  
20 at HRA (crosstalk) ...

21 SG SADOWSKY: Time expired.

22 CLARE PLUNKETT: ... should I end here?

23 I'm not sure. I'll finish up quickly. I was just  
24 speaking about hoping that HRA EIS staff vacancies  
25 can be filled quickly so that voucher response times

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

oø

2 and approvals for other benefits for shelter  
3 residents can happen in a timely manner. So,  
4 finally, we would just like to ask HRA to take this  
5 concrete steps and City Council to work with them  
6 revising housing voucher guidelines to make the  
7 program more accessible to low income survivors,  
8 increase staff capacity at HRA, advocate for more  
9 funding for crucial shelter supportive services  
10 including therapeutic services, and increase DV  
11 shelter options for single abuse survivors. Thank  
12 you for the opportunity to testify today and for your  
13 unwavering commitment to abuse survivors and New  
14 Yorkers in need.

15 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
16 your testimony. Last on this panel, we will hear  
17 from Jessica Sell Chambers.

18 SGT SADOWSKY: Time starts now

19 JESSICA SELL CHAMBERS: Thank you. I  
20 want to thank all of the Chairs, moderators and  
21 council members for the work that you're doing. I,  
22 too, am a councilwoman in my town and I understand  
23 that sometimes this is a thankless job, but it is  
24 much needed, so thank you, truly from the bottom of  
25 my heart. I want to share that I was a victim of a

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

aa

2 doctor. In 2004, I was a 23-year-old student at the  
3 City College of New York, and I thought that it was  
4 time for me to see my first OB-GYN. I seen nurse  
5 practitioners at Planned Parenthood and I thought it  
6 was just time for me to graduate to a formal doctor.  
7 I was fresh out of a breakup. I went into this  
8 doctor's office. He asked me all about it. He was  
9 very warm and welcoming and engaging and afterwards,  
10 he made personal calls to me to check on me. I had  
11 no idea at the time that what was happening to me was  
12 absolutely inappropriate and unusual and abusive. I  
13 had no idea that he was grooming me. I thought that  
14 what had happened to me was perhaps invited by me,  
15 that it was my fault. Like I said, I was 23, I was  
16 young, I was naïve, I was inexperienced. Instead, I  
17 just never went back to see him. I didn't answer his  
18 phone calls, but to this day, I'm 40 years old now,  
19 and I can see this man's face. I can see his hands.  
20 It's graphic, it's visceral, and yet, I had no idea  
21 that any of it wasn't my fault back then, so how  
22 could I have come forward? How could I have sought  
23 help when I was experiencing all of the same things  
24 that victims and survivors like me experience. What  
25 is crazies to me is that Columbia University, who was

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

100

2 his employer had known about his deplorable and sick  
3 actions from as early as 1994 and what happened to me  
4 never needed to happen if the university, if the  
5 institution had taken the action that would have been  
6 appropriate at the time, and his actions only became  
7 more grievous and sicker as time went on. So, that's  
8 said, I thank all of you and on behalf of the  
9 hundreds of his patients and the countless survivors  
10 and victims generally, that you please take action  
11 with the GMVA to allow all of us to seek justice in  
12 situations like this. Thank you.

13 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
14 your testimony. I will now ask for council members  
15 to raise hands if they have any questions for this  
16 panel before turning to Chair Diaz. Seeing no hands  
17 raised. We will move on to the next panel. In order  
18 of speaking we have Natalie Rubio Torio, Jean Son,  
19 and Dianna Prashad. I apologize for the commotion in  
20 the background. Natalie Rubio Torio, you may start  
21 when the Sergeant give you the cue.

22 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

23 NATALIE RUBIO TORIO: Thank you, Chair  
24 Diaz, Chair Levin, and Council Member Rosenthal for  
25 the opportunity to be able to give my testimony on

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

101

2 behalf of Introduction Bill 2424. My name is Natalie  
3 Rubio Torio. I'm the Executive Director of Voces  
4 Latina. We do HIV and violence prevention, so we do  
5 have a lot to say around domestic violence prevention  
6 in particular to victims that are undocumented and in  
7 the country less than two years, but for today, I  
8 want to speak a little bit more about my personal  
9 experience with street harassment and some of my;  
10 this is what the testimony has to do with today.

11 First, thank you so much for your time. This is a  
12 very serious topic that many individuals experience,  
13 yet most don't talk about. When it happened to me, I  
14 became silent, shocked, and never really told anyone.  
15 It took me a long time to understand and realize the  
16 seriousness of this harassment. As a young person, I  
17 had my share of incidences where I was harassed and  
18 actually assaulted on the street and on the subway,  
19 and all on my way to work. The hopelessness I felt  
20 on top of the fear is something that I will never  
21 forget. Now, as a mom of two daughters, one 18 years  
22 old and the other 22, I see it happening to them.  
23 One can never forget as a mom when your child calls  
24 and is afraid on the street saying these men were  
25 just yelling out these obscenities to me, what do I

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

100

2 do? That is constantly in my head, and I will never  
3 forget the advice I gave to her. I told her to go  
4 into a store, just ask for help if she needs help,  
5 but to be with people and not be alone. A mom should  
6 never have to go through this, but today, it looks  
7 quite different with the technology that exists such  
8 as social media, dating sites, apps, harassment is  
9 even more extreme, making one feel totally helpless,  
10 and even reporting the incident is hard to come by.  
11 My daughter's friends also have their pictures stolen  
12 and placed on porn sites, dating sites, and my other  
13 daughter had someone impersonating her on social  
14 media. It's so difficult to report these incidents  
15 and that's why it's becoming so much easier for  
16 individuals to get away with it. Additionally,  
17 street harassment has not changed since my days. I  
18 see it almost every day on the streets of (inaudible)  
19 Avenue in Queens. The words and statements young  
20 girls hear is damaging and not only sexualizes them  
21 at such a young age, but these girls are left  
22 confused with such messages. No one should have to  
23 experience this on their way to school, on their way  
24 to work, or just having a walk on the street. So, I  
25 thank you again for this time to listen to my

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

103

2 testimony and I thank you for taking this issue very  
3 seriously.

4 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: If I may, Ms. Rubio  
5 Torio, thank you for sharing your story, but also for  
6 breaking down what the harassment looks like. Many  
7 of us overlook situations that you shared with us,  
8 and overlook victims, because we have not had the  
9 conversation prior. So, again thank you. Thank you  
10 for breaking it down.

11 NATALIE RUBIO TORIO: Thank you.

12 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Thank you.

13 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
14 your testimony. Next, we will hear from Jean Son.

15 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now. It  
16 appears your still muted.

17 JEAN SON: Hi, sorry. Thank you to  
18 Council Member Diaz and the Committee on Women and  
19 Gender Equity and the Committee on General Welfare  
20 for honoring our request for this hearing. My name  
21 is Jean Son, and I grew up in Queens. My first  
22 experience with street harassment happened when I was  
23 11 years old. I was walking hand-in-hand with my mom  
24 down Main Street in Flushing when a man grabbed. My  
25 mom noticed what happened. A few seconds later, she

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

104

2 yelled at him in Korean. I remember the helplessness  
3 in her voice knowing that he didn't understand her,  
4 that he was already half way down the street and  
5 would not be turning back. We've heard a lot of  
6 similar stories over the past year in speaking to  
7 other advocates for this Bill. Some of the most  
8 heartbreaking were from those who happen to be  
9 parents like Natalie, for example, the worry that men  
10 are taking photos of their daughters at the gym or  
11 you know, looking at them inappropriately in public,  
12 looking at children in a way that reflects my own  
13 mother's experience. The stories from the LGBT  
14 community in particular, including the times that  
15 transgender folk, for example were gawked at or  
16 verbally targeted or had photos taken of them in  
17 public turn up without their consent on sex work  
18 websites were really chilling and opened my eyes to  
19 how street harassment affects the most vulnerable  
20 populations and how thus far, there's been little  
21 recourse for these people. So, I'm personally very  
22 happy to see this Bill up for vote and hope everyone  
23 on the council understands why it's necessary. As we  
24 wrote in our letter to you, respectful, equitable  
25 conduct in public is leaned behavior. Thank you so

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

105

2 much for listening and for your support of this  
3 important legislation.

4 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
5 your testimony. Next, we will hear from Diana  
6 Prashad.

7 SGT SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

8 DIANNA PRASHAD: Good afternoon. My name  
9 is Dianna Prashad. Thank you for allowing me the  
10 opportunity to address the committee members. I  
11 would like to bring my safety and quality of life  
12 issue to the attention of this committee that my  
13 household has been enduring close to two years at the  
14 hands of illegally placed DSS clients in a townhall  
15 zoned by 25 year owner occupancy clause. DSS has  
16 been paying that homeowner who is in an active  
17 contract with HPD to breach her owner occupancy  
18 provisions to house their clientele from March 2020  
19 to present. My wife and I have been placed in a very  
20 dangerous situation as owners of the adjacent  
21 property by these illegally placed DSS clients who  
22 have threatened our safety, damaged our property,  
23 have been habitually rushing out to attack us in and  
24 around our property. There were threats made to hit  
25 our parked vehicle on January 1, 2021. These threats

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

106

2 were realized when our parked vehicle was  
3 deliberately hit at 1:40 a.m. DSS clients have been  
4 dealing drugs out of the premises, having been  
5 running an illegal daycare, and have been operating  
6 an illegal car rental business from the premise. My  
7 wife and I have been and continue to be discouraged  
8 based on our sexual oriented, have been threatened  
9 with bodily harm and some of these threats by DSS  
10 clients, parents and children included were  
11 verbalized in the presence of the NYPD. HPD and DSS  
12 are aware of these issues since March 17, 2020, yet  
13 have failed to address them and have cited us as  
14 complainers as though we have no right to complain  
15 being thus targeted by these DSS clients. I would  
16 like to add that other homeowners on my block have  
17 also complained about the (inaudible) of life by  
18 these DSS clients to the Mayor's Office of Community  
19 Affairs. As LGBTQ black homeowners and tax payers,  
20 we have seen that there are gaps in legislation that  
21 fail to protect us, hence in over 20 months of  
22 ongoing harassment by DSS's illegally placed  
23 clientele. We, as homeowners have no reprise to  
24 obtain a protective order against our ongoing safety  
25 issues which are (inaudible) homophobia and active

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

107

2 threats of harm. As LGBTQ homeowners who are  
3 likewise subject to a homeowner occupancy (inaudible)  
4 our property for 25 years, and who have been actively  
5 dealing with issues of stranger violence, threats,  
6 and homophobia for over 20 months via this illegally  
7 placed DSS family into a home run by (inaudible) as  
8 there are no protections for us. All laws on  
9 (inaudible) must be precipitated by the actualization  
10 of physical violence which means that they are  
11 reactive rather than presumptive. As a part of a  
12 disenfranchise (inaudible) black and LGBTQ, we have  
13 been on the receiving end of a very dangerous  
14 situation that was literally brought to our doorstep  
15 by DSS and more needs to be done to address  
16 deficiencies in laws that do not offer any  
17 protections to individuals like me who are dealing  
18 with protractive harassment issues and intercepting  
19 issues of hate, violence, induced hate by DSS  
20 clients. Additionally, this committee needs to  
21 address harassment legislations that are  
22 (inaudible) that tax payers have to be harmed or  
23 killed before harassment can be addressed in an age  
24 where our community of LGBTQ continued to be killed  
25 at an unprecedented rate due to hate and ignorance.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

109

2 These archaic laws must be amended. There is no way  
3 that as an LGBTQ family that we should be enduring 20  
4 months of harassment ...

5 SGT SADOWSKY: Time expired.

6  
7 DIANNA PRASHAD: ... and threats by DSS  
8 clients devoid of legal ratification.

9 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Please continue, Ms.  
10 Prashad.

11  
12 DIANNA PRASHAD: Okay. Legislation has  
13 to be put in place to protect citizen from being  
14 targeted acts of harassment by DSS clients and a code  
15 of conduct needs to be underwritten into law  
16 governing the social services clientele, the  
17 corresponding loss of aid, so that there real life  
18 consequences for these targeted acts of harassment.  
19 There is no way that this DSS family should have been  
20 allowed to persist with 21 months of harassment,  
21 homophobic threats after being illegally placed into  
22 our community of working class law-abiding tax  
23 payers, yet are able to retain their benefits and are  
24 devoid of consequences. Our experiences at the hands  
25 of DSS and HPD are very reminiscent of aptitude of  
this administration under DiBlasio that is geared

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

10a

2 toward chaos and lawlessness. We are tired of paying  
3 taxes and participating in a city that does not care  
4 for citizens unless we are money or politically  
5 connected, and as a committee presiding on general  
6 welfare, you have to do a better job in addressing  
7 issues that are residents are dealing with  
8 referencing this management, abuse of power,  
9 harassment by DSS (inaudible) particularly since my  
10 wife and I have reached out to some of you directly.  
11 As a woman of color and LGBTQ, my wife and I have and  
12 continue to feel the effect of being marginalized,  
13 opposed, discriminated, and retaliated again under  
14 the DiBlasio administration and living in the 21st  
15 century in New York City, this should not be the  
16 case. Thank you.

17 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: I'm sorry. I'm  
18 baffled by your story.

19  
20 DIANNA PRASHAD: Okay.

21 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: At many levels.  
22 Please feel free to reach my office directly. I'd  
23 like to have meaning, direct, specific conversation  
24 with the administration. I'm alarmed just to think,  
25 to phantom that your case was elevated and it was not

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

110

2 looked upon. That's an issue. I'm a big advocate on  
3 both sides of the law and this is just not okay.  
4 Again, as Council Member Diaz and, I'll give you my  
5 email address if you don't have it, is  
6 [DDIAZ@councilnyc.gov](mailto:DDIAZ@councilnyc.gov). I urge you to allow me to  
7 assist you. Thank you.

8 DIANNA PRASHAD: Thank you very much.

9  
10 COUNCIL MEMBER DARMA DIAZ: (Crosstalk).

11 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
12 your testimony. I would like to add one more witness  
13 to this panel and that would be Emily May from  
14 Hollaback.

15  
16 SGT SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

17 EMILY MAY: Thank you so much for the  
18 invitation to join this panel and I also, before I  
19 get started, just want to make sure I take a second  
20 to thank Council Member Rosenthal, Council Member Van  
21 Bramer, Public Advocate Williams, Council Member  
22 Levin, and Council Member Cumbo who worked tirelessly  
23 on the issue of street harassment for the past 10  
24 years, and I also especially want to thank Jean Son  
25 for her exceptional leadership in shepherding this

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

111

2 Bill forward. For those of you who don't know me, I  
3 am Emily May. I am the Co-Founder and Executive  
4 Director of Hollaback. We are working to end  
5 harassment in all of its form including the very  
6 problem that intro 2424 is designed to tackle street  
7 harassment. Over the past two years alone, we have  
8 trained about 20,000 New York City residence in how  
9 to intervene when they see street harassment  
10 happening. We've done this work in partnership with  
11 Loreal Paris and the New York City Commission on  
12 Gender Equity. Initial research that we've done in  
13 partnership with the New York City Commission on  
14 Gender Equity shows that 75 percent of the people who  
15 witnessed street harassment after attending our  
16 training, tell us that they successfully intervened.  
17 That's an amazing outcome that we're so proud of,  
18 especially in light of the fact that many people  
19 mistake street harassment as a problem that has no  
20 solution, and while it can impact anybody, I do want  
21 to acknowledge today that those most impacted are the  
22 people who are most marginalized in our community;  
23 people of color, LGBTQ folks, people with  
24 disabilities, religious minorities, young people and  
25 more, and a solution that most policymakers turn to

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

112

2 is criminalization, but we know and the advocates  
3 here today know, and the council members who co-  
4 sponsored this Bill knows that criminalizing street  
5 harassment only stands to further marginalize  
6 communities already at risks and it has never been  
7 demonstrated to reduce the incidences or the impact  
8 of street harassment. Intro 2424 offers a bold new  
9 solution because it puts the job of creating  
10 solutions in the hands of advocates and community  
11 members who know this issue best. It's explicit in  
12 its intention to examine street harassment from the  
13 intersectional approach and without unnecessary  
14 increases in policing and criminalization. We saw a  
15 similar Bill passed in DC in 2018 and that Bill paved  
16 the way for a host of improvements in DC's approach  
17 to this issue. By adopting this Bill, New York City  
18 will become a global model for innovative and  
19 community-led approaches to street harassment, and  
20 the time to act is now. According to a recent study  
21 by (inaudible) Paris, almost one in three women, 31  
22 percent said they faced street harassment in 2020,  
23 and that figure jumps to 46 percent when you start to  
24 capture those between the ages 18 and 34. Even in  
25 the wake of this global pandemic ...

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

1 1 2

2 SGT SADOWSKY: Time expired.

3 EMILY MAY: ... street harassment exists  
4 and so must we. Thank you all.

5  
6 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
7 your testimony. Before I turn to council member  
8 questions, I'd like to ask the Chairs if they have  
9 any questions for this panel? Seeing no questions  
10 from the Chairs, let's turn to Council Member  
11 Rosenthal for her question.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
13 much. I just want to thank, first of all, of course,  
14 everyone on the panel for sharing your stories,  
15 sharing your support. Before I get to Hollaback, the  
16 three personal stories, the diversity that was shared  
17 in terms of the form of street harassment shows why  
18 there's no one excellent answer and why it's so  
19 important that we have robust participation and  
20 discussion on this advisory panel, so thank you,  
21 thank you so much for that, and I would ask, if you  
22 could, to submit your testimony to make sure it's  
23 submitted for the record. I don't think it's been  
24 submitted yet, so if you could submit it to  
25 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). If you don't feel

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

1 1 1

2 comfortable submitting it for some reason, if you  
3 could send it to me for my records because I really  
4 heard what you said. There were a couple of phrases  
5 that I thought were awfully important that I would  
6 like to reread, rethink about. So, my email address  
7 is [HRosenthal@council.nyc.gov](mailto:HRosenthal@council.nyc.gov). Emily, as always,  
8 thank you, thanks to Hollaback for all your work.  
9 Your prevention work is remarkable. As I've said in  
10 other hearings, I hope you get reimbursed by the city  
11 for all the work you do. I know your trainings are  
12 in so many agencies, so I really hope you're being  
13 properly remunerated, but you hit on two points that  
14 I think were not sufficiently addressed in the  
15 initial version of the Bill, but now in the A  
16 version, I think we've captured it, but I just want  
17 to confirm with you. The two issues were making sure  
18 there was a good robust advisory board, and secondly,  
19 that criminal justice solution not be part of the  
20 conversation. Are you satisfied with the A version  
21 of the Bill?

22  
23 EMILY MAY: I am, I am. I think the A  
24 version of the Bill is great and really addresses  
25 those two key issues that are so important. We  
really want to be leaders here in New York City and

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

115

2 say clearly, both to our community and to the rest of  
3 the world that criminalizing this issue is absolutely  
4 not the answer, that we have in our own communities,  
5 better answers than that, and we want to get those  
6 community member most impacted to be the ones really  
7 shaping those communities. I think that combo pack of  
8 those two issues is what's really going to make this  
9 Bill successful and in alignment with our values and  
10 really, you know, a light for the rest of the world  
11 to model itself after.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you for  
13 that, and by the way, your oral testimony was more  
14 robust than your written testimony. If you have an  
15 updated version, if you too could submit that for the  
16 record and certainly to myself; I'm interested in  
17 hearing about; we don't have to talk about it now,  
18 but I'm very interested in hearing about the  
19 alternative suggestions that were formulated by the  
20 DC advisory panel. We have a lot to learn and now we  
21 have an opportunity to move these ideas forward. So,  
22 as not to reinvent the wheel, if you can provide the  
23 advisory council with the first agenda item of ideas  
24 for it's first meeting, that would be incredibly  
25 helpful, and I'd be very interested in seeing what

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

116

2 those are as well. So, I look forward to following  
3 up with you about that. Chair Diaz, thank you so  
4 much for giving all of us the opportunity to hear  
5 this Bill, solicit feedback; I really have  
6 appreciated all of your support in the last few  
7 years.

8 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: No, it's definitely  
9 impressive. I thank you for the conversation and for  
10 going back, you know, and (inaudible). I think we're  
11 going to be in a better placed once this is passed.  
12 Thank you.

13  
14 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you.  
15 Seeing no other council member hand raised, we will  
16 turn to the next public panel testimony. In order of  
17 speaking, we will hear from Jessica Ibguy, Adina S,  
18 and Susan Crumiller. Jessica Ibguy, you may begin  
19 once the Sergeant gives you the cue.

20 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

21  
22 JESSICA IGBUY: Hi. Thank you very much  
23 for this opportunity. Good afternoon, Council Member  
24 Rivera, Council Member Brooks-Powers, committee  
25 members and guests. My name is Jessica Ibguy, and  
I'm one of the residence of Brooklyn where I grew up

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

117

2 in the 1980s with my father and stepmother. I grew  
3 up around the Jewish community in the 1980s often  
4 attending services at the (inaudible). My father  
5 began working for a permanent member of Habab  
6 community named Hishbicar (SP?) in 1991. Hishbicar  
7 was a silversmith (SP?) who created one of the most  
8 influential pieces of Jewish artwork of the 20th  
9 century, a 6-foot gilded Minora that sits till this  
10 day in (inaudible) as we speak. Each year during  
11 Hanukkah services, masses of people came and marveled  
12 at the lighting of this minora. This service, till  
13 this day, is broadcasted to millions all over the  
14 world. Today, exactly is the first day of Hanukkah,  
15 this night is the second lighting. I could tell you  
16 that I woke up last night, nightmare and looked at  
17 the hour and this is like a seven-gap hour, and I  
18 woke up just as people (inaudible). What none of  
19 these people knew until recently is that the  
20 celebrated man who crafted such a dazzling structure  
21 had also molested me over a dozen time when I was  
22 only six years old. They did not know that court had  
23 found him guilty of wrongdoing in my molestation as  
24 well as in the assault of other young girls, and yet  
25 they did nothing to punish him. Only in the past

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

119

2 year, while living here in Israel, I started  
3 realizing the reasons for my struggle with PTSD,  
4 anxiety, depression and an eating disorder for many  
5 years, but what could I do? I was already, it's been  
6 too many years now, and there was really nothing I  
7 could do about it in the state. I found out about  
8 the child victim actually before the August 14th  
9 deadline and rushed to file a lawsuit against him  
10 before time ran out. Then just two weeks before the  
11 deadline and on the evening of our filing, Hishbicar  
12 died. I was lucky to have found out about the child  
13 victim act before deadline, but I know that many  
14 other survivors were no so lucky. Now, they have to  
15 recourse, they must continue to suffer in silence as  
16 I suffered unless you vote, amend the gender-  
17 motivated violence act, extend upon a two-year look  
18 back window ...

19 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time expired.

20  
21 JESSICA IBGUY: Thank you.

22 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Please allow her more  
23 time, if need be.

24  
25 JESSICA IBGUY: That was basically it. I  
could only say that I have been pressing the 770

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

11a

2 Headquarters with Susan and me, myself, with a lot of  
3 pressure from inside to take down this minora. They  
4 would not even answer and they're just like, they're  
5 just keeping it up and lighting these nights too.  
6 That's it. Thank you very much.

7  
8 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
9 your testimony. Next, we will hear from Adina S.

10 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

11 ADINA S.: Hi. I cannot begin to thank  
12 everyone for all the support we've received thus far.  
13 Speaking publicly and getting this Bill passed was  
14 incredibly cathartic, if only we had been granted the  
15 opportunity six years ago as we've been promise.  
16 Going public and having it televised is scarier, but  
17 worth it, because if we keep abuse hush, hush, then  
18 we keep it stigmatized. We decrease the chances of  
19 victims coming forward and we reduce the chances of  
20 things ever changing. I don't know why this happened  
21 to me, but I do know that speaking this past July was  
22 huge for me. I took the biggest step from PTSD into  
23 posttraumatic roles. Trauma keeps you locked in the  
24 past and believe me, it gets dark there.  
25 Hopelessness feeds trauma, while time, support, and

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

120

2 professional help and action can heal. July 29th,  
3 2021 was the first time in 15 years that I felt hope.  
4 That I felt alive. Never ever let anyone take your  
5 power, right? Well, right now, our laws do just  
6 that. They basically state too little, too late.  
7 Processing trauma takes time, and this works in the  
8 predator's favor and against the victims. I didn't  
9 realize, by the way, that some of you guys didn't see  
10 what; I spoke publicly last time when the Bill was  
11 introduced and I spoke about how my gynecologist  
12 molested me while I had three babies with him. So,  
13 okay, so now I'll continue. Do you know what trauma  
14 abuse, sexual abuse does to a person? It is often an  
15 invisible poison. It leaves no visible scars. It  
16 seeps in undetected and is often a silent killer.  
17 You may not even know it's happened, especially when  
18 it's carried out over time. Instead of support and  
19 sympathy, you question your own sanity, and those  
20 around you will often do the same. Victims of trauma  
21 are more likely to self-harm or to numb themselves  
22 than to get help. It is the most perfect crime  
23 because our laws currently facilitate its coverup.  
24 Most often by the time the trauma is processed, it's too late  
25 to do anything about it, and the predators know it.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

121

2 Shall we discuss PTSD? Even if we are lucky enough  
3 to get the proper therapy, we can never control every  
4 outside trigger. How exhausting is it to be  
5 hypervigilant at all times, disassociating from life?  
6 Surviving, but not thriving. How for many it's  
7 easier to feel nothing at all than to risk feeling  
8 joy and its counterpart pain. How, for me  
9 personally, when I allow myself to feel joy, I get  
10 flashed with horrible flashback and migraines. How  
11 the more I face it, the more it hurts, but the more I  
12 run, the more it hurts too. There's no way out. I'm  
13 stuck in this horrific vortex. I can't erase it or  
14 undo it, so what then? Just accept it? Accept that  
15 it just wasn't fair. Accept that I was taught to  
16 accept that life's not fair instead of being taught  
17 to fight for justice, because when I did fight back,  
18 justice laughed in my face. When Hadden (SP?) got a  
19 plea deal behind our backs, as if the la was saying ...

20 SGT SADOWSKY: Time expire.

21  
22 ALINA S.: ... I told you so. So, what  
23 exactly was I taught? Compliance? Deference? It's  
24 time for change. Gender, racial, and religious  
25 biases cannot make us targets and then be used as  
excuses. The GMVA press conference and introduction

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

122

2 of the amendment was step one, but we need to get the  
3 Bill passed. Let's get rid of these ridiculously  
4 short statues of limitation, prioritize justice for  
5 victims and survivors over the comfort of rapist and  
6 criminals and help New York City serve as an example  
7 for the rest of the country to follow. Let's show  
8 New York and the rest of the world that we see you.  
9 You aren't alone, your pain is real, and the law  
10 understands that internal pain is just as valid as  
11 external pain. Thank you. Thank you for listening  
12 and hearing us.

13  
14 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
15 your testimony. Last on this panel, we will hear  
16 from Susan Crumiller.

17 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

18  
19 SUSAN CRUMILLER: Thank you. I'm only  
20 here today for the soul purposes of respectfully  
21 reading into the record the following written  
22 testimony which was submitted by Barzana Fruth (SP?).  
23 My name is Barzana Fruth. I am a 33-year-old woman  
24 born in Bangladesh. I immigrated to the United  
25 States in 2000 at age 13. When my family moved to  
Jackson Heights, they became acquainted with a well-

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

123

2 known and respected doctor in the Bangladeshi  
3 community, Dr. Fardous Condifer (SP?) in Jackson  
4 Heights. I regularly visited Dr. Condifer's facility  
5 for annual checkups, usually with my mother. On  
6 March 27th, 2009, when I was 21 years old, I went to  
7 see Conda Curlone (SP?). I had a sore throat and  
8 difficulty breathing. When I arrived, Condifer told  
9 me that he would check my breathing and my chest. He  
10 told me to sit on the examination table and stretch  
11 my legs out and place his stethoscope on my chest.  
12 Condifer then directed me to lower my shirt. He  
13 lowered my bra and took my breasts out of my bra one  
14 at a time. I felt paralyzed and tried to process  
15 what was going on. Afterwards, I left and never  
16 returned to the office. In June 2020, I saw a  
17 Facebook post noting Condifer for his COVID-related  
18 work in the Bengali community. I became distraught as  
19 I remember how Condifer had assaulted me in 2009.  
20 Around this time, many other individuals came forward  
21 with their own stories of Condifer's conduct again  
22 themselves, their mothers, their grandmothers. A  
23 class action lawsuit was filed against Condifer for  
24 sexual assault, gender-motivated violence, and  
25 medical malpractice. However, I was only able to

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

124

2 participate as a non-party witness, because as the  
3 law currently stands, the statute of limitations on my  
4 own claims have run out before I could file them, as  
5 with so many of the other women Condifer had also  
6 abused without repercussion. Condifer has a strong  
7 influence over the Bangladesh community in Jackson  
8 Heights, and for years, he has used his power and  
9 resources to intimidate victims into violence. I am  
10 telling my story today in hopes of shedding light on  
11 the many survivors of gender-motivated violence who  
12 (inaudible) and who are unable to gather resolution  
13 and justice that they deserve. I urge you to please  
14 move forward with the resolution to create a two-year  
15 window to revive civil action under the Gender-  
16 Motivated Violence Act so that survivors of violence  
17 like myself may get the justice we deserve. Thank  
18 you.

19 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
20 your testimony. That concludes this panel. Before I  
21 turn it to Chair Diaz or Chair Levin for their  
22 questions, do any other council members have any  
23 questions? You may use the raise hand function in  
24 Zoom. Chair Diaz?  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

125

2 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Frankly, I have no  
3 questions. I'm lost for words. The last testimony,  
4 again, was really heartfelt. I represent, a big  
5 piece of my district is Bengali community, so I  
6 unfortunately know firsthand of the suffrage that  
7 occurs and is underreported. So, again thank you for  
8 telling her story.

9 SUSAN CRUMILLER: Thank you.

10

11 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: This hearing is  
12 definitely about opening doors and breaking the  
13 silence. Thank you. I have no questions.

14

15 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Seeing no other  
16 council member hands ...

17

18 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: I think Council  
19 Member Rosenthal is speaking, but I think she is on  
20 mute.

21

22 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: I think it's  
23 possible she's on another hearing.

24

25 CHAIR STEPEHN LEVIN: Oh, okay. Thank  
you very much.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

126

2 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: No problem. We  
3 will now turn to the next public panel. First, we  
4 have Julie Johanna, followed by Tanisha Johnson, and  
5 then Ingrid H. Julie Johanna, you may start once the  
6 Sergeant gives you the cue.

7 SGT SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

8  
9 JULIE JOHANNA: Good afternoon. My name  
10 is Julie Johanna Piatrosky (SP?). I'm a former New  
11 Yorker and I'm a sexual assault survivor. Thank you  
12 to Chair Diaz ...

13 COUNCIL MEMBER HELEN ROSENTHAL: I'm so  
14 sorry. I was testifying on another hearing. I was  
15 multi-tasking, so Chair Diaz, I think you asked me a  
16 question. Did you, and I'm really sorry that I  
17 looked like I wasn't responding. I was talking with  
18 someone about ASL.

19  
20 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: It's okay. It's okay.  
21 I know that we're multi-talking. The question was  
22 if, Chair Levin just thought you had a question and  
23 if you do, I need you to hold your question so we can  
24 continue the testimony with Julie Johanna, if you do  
25 have a question, Chair Levin, is that okay with you?

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

127

2 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: I think that that  
3 was my mistake. I apologize.

4 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: No, no, I do the same  
5 thing. Thank you. Ms. Julie Johanna, please  
6 proceed. Thank you.

7  
8 JULIE JOHANNA: Good afternoon. My name  
9 is Julie Johanna Piatrosky (SP?). I'm a former New  
10 Yorker and I'm a sexual assault survivor. Thank you  
11 to Chair Diaz for calling this important hearing and  
12 to the Council Members Rivera and Brooks-Power for  
13 advancing this Bill, for the opportunity to speak in  
14 support of creating a two-year look back window for  
15 the GMVA. Trauma happens to us, to all of us as  
16 we've heard to our families, to our neighbors, we've  
17 heard some of the tough statistics this morning  
18 around domestic violence and assault. I learn so  
19 much from the discussion and it give me hope for New  
20 York City, especially in these difficult times to  
21 know that city leadership is working hard with  
22 advocates to care for citizens and with real  
23 integrity to make policy work for people. So, what  
24 happened to me? I was sexually assaulted by a  
25 gynecologist, Dr. Robert Hadden (SP?) at Columbia  
University. I've never said this in public before.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

129

2 Not only was I assaulted, I was assaulted repeatedly  
3 over the course of five years. He was my first real  
4 gynecologist. I was both a graduate student and a  
5 full time employee at the university. I was young,  
6 and I was sexually inexperienced. What happened to  
7 you, to those you love, to other you may know, you  
8 may have some memories or painful stories told or  
9 untold. Regardless of the types of traumas that all  
10 of us experience in life, or where we experience  
11 them, in our homes, our schools, our churches, our  
12 work places, other institutions, we know that one  
13 thing that all of us who are survivors have in common  
14 is that it takes tremendous energy to keep  
15 functioning while carrying with us the memory of  
16 terror, of shame, of other weakness and  
17 vulnerability, and this is why and Science tells us  
18 so many people repress memories of their difficult  
19 feelings around the violence and abuse that they  
20 experience. Transformation to heal, to push forward  
21 requires brutal honesty with one's self and with  
22 others to face very painful truths and while it might  
23 be uncomfortable, what isn't faced, generally can't  
24 be resolved, so we regress until we are ready to face  
25 the truth, but this process takes longer for some

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

12a

2 than for other and for some many reasons some people  
3 have better coping mechanisms or social support or  
4 financial resources. As Councilwoman Carlina Rivera  
5 powerfully said, there is no timeline for processing  
6 trauma. That's why amending the GMVA is so important  
7 to allow for civil actions to be filed that formally  
8 may have taken place beyond the statute of  
9 limitations. As leaders, as legislators, as members  
10 of the greater New York City community, it is not our  
11 business to determine how quickly and effectively  
12 people should be processing the trauma that happened  
13 to them or to compare their abilities with others.  
14 It is our business, it is our duty to provide safe  
15 environments in which people can thrive, and it is  
16 our business to provide the conditions under which  
17 including in our legal system, people may pursue  
18 action and justice when they're willing and able and  
19 when they have the courage and the conviction to  
20 pursue action.

21 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time expired.

22  
23 JULIE JOHANNA: In summary, there is no  
24 timeline on processing trauma. Not passing this  
25 Bills means we would be denying what it means to be  
fundamentally human and denying the research and the

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

120

2 science that it takes some of us longer than other,  
3 not only to come forward, but to tell our story.  
4 Please pass this Bill to allow survivors of gender-  
5 motivated violence the opportunity that they deserve,  
6 to seek justice in civil court. Thank you.

7  
8 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
9 your testimony. Next, we'll hear from Tanisha  
10 Johnson. You may begin when the Sergeant gives you  
11 the cue.

12 SGT SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

13 TANISHA JOHNSON: Good morning. I want  
14 to thank the committee for opportunity to speak. The  
15 Gender-Motivated Violence Protection Act says that  
16 gender-motivated violence inflicts serious, physical,  
17 psychological, emotional, and economic harm on its  
18 victims. My name is Tanisha Johnson and I am on such  
19 victim. My perpetrator was Dr. Ricardo Cushiani  
20 (SP?). He was world renown neurologist at Beth  
21 Israel Mt. Sinai here in New York. He used his  
22 prominence, his prescribing of massive amounts of  
23 addictive opioids in my own shame and fear that I  
24 wouldn't be believed, and it kept me quiet for years.  
25 Sexual assault victims like me are kept quiet for

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

1 2 1

2 these reasons and many other reasons you will hear  
3 today. We need laws which permit victims to come  
4 forward on their own terms. Only now, many years  
5 later in my journey can I talk about it. I've learned  
6 that the statute of limitations is a set time for  
7 someone to come forward and act under the law. I am  
8 here to tell you that a victim doesn't have a set  
9 time for when they come forward. A victim  
10 doesn't have a set when they go from being a victim  
11 to a survivor. A victim shouldn't have a set time to  
12 confront their perpetrator and their employers who  
13 shield them. Not changing the statute of limitations  
14 only helps criminals and those who facilitate those  
15 crime. Not changing the statute of limitations helps  
16 criminal hide and continue to harm more victims. Not  
17 changing the statute of limitations only hurts victims  
18 like me. Please pass the amendment to allow the  
19 window for justice to be pursued by all victims of  
20 gender-motivated violence. Thank you.

21  
22 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
23 your testimony. Last on this panel, we will hear  
24 from Ingrid H.

25 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

122

2 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Ingrid, if you  
3 see a button asking to unmute yourself? All right.  
4 We will hold Ingrid for a later panel, and we will  
5 move on to see if any council members have any  
6 questions for this panel before we move on to the  
7 next panel. All right.

8 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: I just want to just  
9 thank this panel for, and the previous panels for  
10 your remarkable courage and testifying at this  
11 hearing and for telling your story.

12 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you, Chair  
13 Levin. For the next panel, we will hear from Jane  
14 Doe, following Dan Scheffey, then Cat Rajnauth, and  
15 then Frazana Fraruck. If I have yet to call your  
16 name, I will make a call after this panel for anyone  
17 that I have missed. Observer, Jane Doe, you may  
18 begin once the Sergeant gives you the cue.

19 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

20 JANE DOE: Hello, and good afternoon  
21 everyone. Thank you for your time and all the hard  
22 work that's gone into this amendment of the Gender-  
23 Motivated Violence Act to create a two-year look back  
24 window for survivors. For the last six years plus,  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

1 2 2

2 I've been known as Jane Doe number 21. Shame is one  
3 of the biggest emotions to have to manage and it is  
4 essential to surviving sexual crimes. Perpetrators  
5 know this. This knowledge effectively leverages  
6 sexual predators. The entire judicial process  
7 leverages sexual predators. Please take my case as  
8 an example. Dozen of women sought medical care for  
9 themselves and their unborn babies and were sexually  
10 violated by their obstetrician. Who exactly can  
11 comprehend and assimilate this fact that you cannot  
12 trust your obstetrician? Are you brave enough to  
13 cast a hard shadow over the birth of your brand new  
14 baby? Are you brave enough to enter into contentious  
15 legal proceedings and take joy away from the imminent  
16 birth of your newborn, take joy away from all others  
17 closest to you? Shame is an insidious obstacle, it  
18 is haunting. No newborn mother wants to report  
19 sexual predation by her doctor, committed during the  
20 most vulnerable moments of seeking medical help. For  
21 victims of Dr. Hadden, the biggest humiliations  
22 happened during the great moments of greatest trust  
23 and Dr. Hadden knew that; that was his pattern. It  
24 was absolutely intrinsic to his crime. It motivated  
25 his crimes. He knew his victims would be trapped by

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

124

2 his crimes, by the shame of reporting such travesty,  
3 right, at the most meaningful and important moments  
4 of their lives. Can you image what this is like  
5 undergoing the (inaudible) of an obstetrician, and by  
6 extension, can you comprehend the (inaudible) of any  
7 sexual predator, but you can use the example of my  
8 case and others as a template for gender-motivated  
9 crimes. As a survivor, coming to terms with sexual  
10 abuse can take time to process, and find the courage  
11 to speak up. Because of this, I urge you to please  
12 support and amendment to the Gender-Motivated  
13 Violence Act, to create a two-year look back window  
14 for all gender-motivated crimes. Again, thank you so  
15 very much for your time.

16 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
17 your testimony. I would like to just mention, I made  
18 a mistake. A few of the names I have mentioned have  
19 already signed off, and so next, we are going to hear  
20 from Dan Scheffey. Then I'm going to make another  
21 call for Ingrid H, and then I'll make another call to  
22 see if I missed anyone else. Dan Scheffey, you may  
23 begin once the Sergeant gives you the cue.

24  
25 SERGEANT SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

125

2 DAN SCHEFFEY: Good afternoon. Thank you  
3 to the committee Chairs and to the staff who have  
4 been so generously supportive and helpful, and thank  
5 you to Council Members Rivera and Brooks-Powers for  
6 advancing this important legislation. I'm here to  
7 present testimony into the record on behalf of Marty  
8 Gould-Cummings, former City County candidate. They  
9 are out of the country this week and requested that I  
10 present their testimony on their behalf and on behalf  
11 of a broad coalition of support from the city council  
12 co-sponsors as well as from the LGBTQA communities of  
13 New York City. I'm grateful to Marty for their  
14 support. To the members of the New York City  
15 Council, Women and Gender Equity Committee, it is  
16 time to stand up and support LGBTQIA people who have  
17 been impacted by gender-based and gender-motivated  
18 violence. I firmly support the Bill, Intro 2372 and  
19 the pending revisions to the Gender-Motivated  
20 Violence Protection Act. I support survivors, and as  
21 a sexual assault survivor, I know firsthand the  
22 importance of being heard and being believed. This  
23 legislation will empower victims to come forward to  
24 be heard and no matter their gender, identity or

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

126

2 sexual orientation. Sincerely submitted, Marty Gould  
3 Alan Cummings. Thank you.

4 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
5 your testimony. I would like to ask Ingrid if she is  
6 available? Seeing that Ingrid is unresponsive to the  
7 unmute request, if I have missed anyone, please use  
8 the raise hand function in Zoom now so that we can  
9 call for additional witnesses to testify. Okay, I  
10 see Eric Agarijo. You may begin once the Sergeant  
11 gives you the cue.

12  
13 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

14 ERIC AGARIJO: Thank you very much, thank  
15 you Council Member Diaz, Chair Levin, and the  
16 Committee on Women and Gender Equity for holding this  
17 important meeting and providing us the opportunity to  
18 submit testimony. My name is Eric Agarijo, and I am  
19 the Communications and Special Agency Manager for the  
20 Korean-American Family Service Center. KSSC is a  
21 non-profit organization that provides social services  
22 to Korean-Asian immigrant survivors and their  
23 children who are affected by gender-based violence,  
24 sexual abuse, and child abuse for the past 33 years.  
25 Although all of our programs and services are offered

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

127

2 in a functionally and linguistically appropriate  
3 setting. Ninety-eight percent of our clients are  
4 immigrants and 100 percent of our staff members are  
5 immigrants themselves or children of immigrant  
6 parents. Over 95 percent of our client's first  
7 language is not English and come from low-income  
8 backgrounds. During New York state on pause and  
9 throughout the COVID public health and economic  
10 crisis, KAFC responded to a 300 percent increase in  
11 calls to our 24-hour bilingual hotline. Eighty-eight  
12 percent of these calls were related to domestic  
13 violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. In 2020,  
14 we responded to over 4,000 hotline calls and KAFC  
15 served 1,201 survivors of domestic violence and  
16 sexual assault and provided over 20,000 services  
17 related to domestic violence and sexual assault. As  
18 a direct service provided to all those who are  
19 affected by gender-based violence, sexual assault,  
20 and child abuse, harassment falls along a spectrum of  
21 violence. It is seen as a gateway to crime. Sexual  
22 harassment is often the first sexual experience for a  
23 young woman and street harassment is harmful and  
24 serious. Street harassment also relates to violence  
25 because it can cause (inaudible) and especially

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

129

2 upsetting for survivors. As a direct organization  
3 that serves gender-based violence survivors, we  
4 realize the importance of gender-based street  
5 harassment. People should not be harassed because of  
6 factors like race, nationality, religion, disability,  
7 or class. Harassment can come from a form of power  
8 control, and no form of harassment is ever okay.  
9 Everyone should be treated with respect, dignity, and  
10 empathy. Street harassment is a human rights issue  
11 and KAFC (inaudible) lead us today to the passage of  
12 Intro 2424. This would be a milestone achievement  
13 demonstrating (inaudible) for our safety and peace.  
14 Thank you very much for allowing me to testify, and  
15 we look forward to working with all of you. Thank  
16 you.

17  
18 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
19 your testimony. I would like to mention that I also  
20 see, we have been rejoined by Shari Deutsch, and then  
21 I'll try again for Ingrid and then we'll address  
22 other hands that have been raised. Shari Deutsch,  
23 you may begin once the Sergeant gives you the cue.

24 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

120

2 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Shari Deutsch,  
3 if you see an unmute request.

4 SHARI DEUTSCH: Hello, can you hear me?

5  
6 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Yes, thank you.  
7 You may begin.

8 SHARI DEUTSCH: Okay, sorry about that,  
9 but to read my testimony. My name is Shari Deutsch,  
10 and I'm a former patient of Dr. Robert Hadden, and  
11 sorry about this, I'm looking for my notes. I think  
12 I lost them. Here we go. So, thank you very much  
13 for taking the time to listen to my story today. I  
14 moved to New York City in 1999 at the age of 24. I  
15 decided to live in the city where my parents grew up,  
16 Brooklyn and the Bronx. I was referred to Dr. Hadden  
17 by PCP and was thrilled to see a gynecologist that  
18 works with a respected institution. I went to see  
19 Dr. Hadden for typical gynecological health concerns  
20 as well as my strong family history of breast cancer.  
21 He used my fears to condition me, but I (inaudible).

22  
23 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: I think Shari  
24 (crosstalk).

25 SHARI DEUTSCH: Hello?

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

110

2 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Shari, we lost  
3 you for a moment.

4 SHARI DEUTSCH: Oh, I'm sorry. I guess  
5 I'll start the paragraph again. I went to see Dr.  
6 Hadden for typical gynecological health concerns as  
7 well as my strong family history of breast cancer.

8 (Inaudible).

9  
10 CHAIR STEPHEN LEVIN: Shari, you dropped  
11 off again after the word cancer.

12 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: I think she has  
13 dropped off of the Zoom. Just give her one more  
14 moment. Okay, we will try and circle back to Shari  
15 if and when she rejoins. Next, I would like to call  
16 on, I believe, Susan Crumiller is someone, maybe you  
17 have the wrong name listed? Can we unmute Susan and  
18 see?

19  
20 SUSAN CRUMILLER: Hi, I just wanted to  
21 make sure everyone was aware that Cat RAJNAUTH is  
22 available to testify and has rejoined. I see Cat has  
23 her hand raised now.

24 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Yes.

25 SUSAN CRUMILLER: Thanks.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

1 1 1

2  
3 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Yes, thank you,  
4 okay. We will now move on to Cat RAJNAUTH.

5  
6 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

7 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Cat, if you see  
8 an unmute request, please hit that button to testify.

9  
10 CAT RAJNAUTH: Hi, my name is Cat  
11 RAJNAUTH. I'm a transgender woman raised in New  
12 York. I'm 42 years old. I identified as trans since  
13 I was 5 years old, not knowing if something was wrong  
14 with me or wrong with others on how they felt about  
15 me. Thirty-seven years later, realizing that nothing  
16 was never wrong with me, it's just the people who  
17 identified as being different. Speaking from my  
18 experience as a transgender woman over the years, I'm  
19 still nervous, to be honest, but I have experienced a  
20 lot in the HRA shelter system and the DHS shelter  
21 system.

22 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Take your time. This  
23 is Councilwoman Diaz, please, take your time. This  
24 is your opportunity to share your story with us.  
25 We're not judging, we're not criticizing. We want to

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

112

2 gather how society has impacted you and how we could  
3 make it better for you and for others in your  
4 situation, so please take your time if you need to.

5 CAT RAJNAUTH: Okay.

6 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Please.

7  
8 CAT RAJNAUTH: Okay, I'm going to try to  
9 read what I wrote. Thirty-seven years later,  
10 realizing that nothing was never wrong with me, but  
11 something was wrong with the people who viewed me as  
12 being different, weird, gay, fag, or trans, or a drag  
13 queen. So, soon I realized I didn't fit anywhere.  
14 Speaking as a transgender woman two decades later,  
15 I've only been looked at and used in a sexual form.  
16 In the last three decades, there has been minimum job  
17 opportunities for a transgender woman other than sex  
18 work such as Backpage, Craig's List, Eros, Twitter,  
19 Snap Chat, Only Fans, and Facebook. It exposes our  
20 LGTB community to high rates of sexual violence and  
21 abuse. Everyday we are exploited in our community.  
22 In 2021, the world we live in still doesn't  
23 understand gender at all. Here is a brief experience  
24 of what I go through. In 2019, I went to apply for  
25 my driver's license to renew my license here in New

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

1 1 2

2 York, and I was told that I had to take female off my  
3 license because I did not have a sex change. After  
4 having my license like this for 10 years where it  
5 stated female due to the fact that I went to Dubai in  
6 2010 and was arrested and held for 14 days in a  
7 country in a room with no toilet bowl, just a hole in  
8 the floor for me to urinate and poop in just because  
9 of my gender, and to have that changed back to being  
10 male because of the laws here in New York was really  
11 horrible for me. Moving on to registering my kids  
12 here in September 2020, also being a parent of three  
13 kids, my two daughters, I was denied registering my  
14 kids once they found out that I was actually the  
15 biological father and not the mother of the kids.  
16 They wanted me to prove basically that I should have  
17 had custody of the kids or the kids should have been  
18 with me only when I got involved, Ms. Susan Crumiller  
19 and Benjamin Pachesky (SP?) was when they allowed my  
20 kids to register for school. My 10-year-old daughter  
21 who now identifies as a male, other than female, has  
22 been through so much dealing with her identity and  
23 being scared as a kid, also coming home at 9 years  
24 old peeing on herself due to the fact that she  
25 couldn't use the bathroom at school because she was

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

1 1 1

2 being called a transformer. Located here in Callum  
3 Elementary School where we reside at now. I, myself  
4 have been targeted in different places like Best Buy,  
5 Smith Haven Mall just from using a gift card. I feel  
6 now that, I guess that's the new way of targeting  
7 black people while being black in America. Not only  
8 that, having HIV and being diagnosed January 1st, or  
9 New Years, January 1st, of 2018, that was my New  
10 Year's gift to have my Medicaid cut off last month or  
11 since November, all of my benefits was cut off during  
12 the pandemic and still is cut off right now as of  
13 January. Once this new law kicks back in, I'll be  
14 going back to DHS shelters because I'm backed up in  
15 \$10,000 in rent which CASA has ...

16 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time expired.

17  
18 CAT RAJNAUTH: ... refused to pay and has  
19 not paid, and I'm still fighting today. It got to a  
20 point where last month, two months ago, I couldn't  
21 even pay for my medication which cost me \$1500 out of  
22 my pocket and I had to have a friend pay that for me  
23 just to have medication, a pill that I need to  
24 survive every day. I don't understand how in New  
25 York you're diagnosed with HIV and they have the  
audacity to cut our Medicaid or the resources or the

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

115

2 help that we have, like HIV is going to leave our  
3 system tomorrow. We're going to wake up HIV free.  
4 That's not what happens here, and if I didn't have  
5 the resources that I had to help me, I would have  
6 been just like any other transwoman who would have to  
7 turn back to sex work and going back into the  
8 community of working. Putting these laws in place  
9 would not only help me and other people in the LGBT  
10 community be more acceptable in society and also in  
11 public. I'm hoping that this law, I'm sorry you all,  
12 I'm sorry, Ms. Susan.

13 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: No, no, don't be sorry  
14 when you're a victim of circumstance, you've been  
15 victimized over and over again. I'm sorry that our  
16 system has failed you.

17  
18 CAT RAJNAUTH: I'm just hoping that this  
19 system actually starts working better and doesn't  
20 fail anybody else moving forward and I'm hoping that  
21 this law helps that in the best way it can. I'm  
22 sorry, I'm sorry you all.

23 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Don't be sorry. If I  
24 may, after this conversation today, please reach out  
25 to Chair Levin, Chair Rosenthal, or myself.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

1 1 6

2 CAT RAJNAUTH: Yes.

3 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: It definitely, in a  
4 place, medically and housing that we have to make  
5 sure we get you on the right track and get you the  
6 leadership that can help you.

7  
8 CAT RAJNAUTH: And to let you all  
9 understand, HRA and DHS, why people swat back and  
10 forth. HRA basically only allows you to be in that  
11 system for a little bit, but they also push your case  
12 faster for you to get into a home where DHS enables  
13 you and keep you basically financed to stay in the  
14 shelter where some people get enabled and get  
15 comfortable with living like that. Do you  
16 understand? You all have to have a program that  
17 works for everybody to get out, a program that helps  
18 rehabilitate these people to want to get back out  
19 into the world and work instead of enabling them,  
20 keeping them sheltered, and you can't mix people from  
21 domestic with regular people because someone who is  
22 going through abuse and is scared to go outside, you  
23 can't have them in a regular shelter where people  
24 already accustomed to be being outside and are just  
25 dealing with homelessness, if that makes sense.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

117

2 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: It makes a lot of  
3 sense. Before becoming a council member, I worked  
4 13.5 years in a shelter system and some of what you  
5 stated, most recently, and your last few sentences is  
6 what I've been trying to fight against as a council  
7 member and why we are having this conversation here  
8 today. This is not a one-plan fits all for  
9 everybody, but we have common denominators, common  
10 conversations, and that means we're doing something  
11 wrong, and we have to find a better way.

12 CAT RAJANUGH: Yes.

13  
14 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Thank you for  
15 depicting the difference between HRA and DHS. I'm  
16 sure many of my colleagues just see it as one system,  
17 but in reality, it's not.

18 CAT RAJNAUTH: It's not at all.

19  
20 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Which doesn't make a  
21 lot of sense to me either. Thank you. I think Chair  
22 Rosenthal has a, maybe a question or a statement.

23 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Before we turn  
24 to council member questions, I have a few more people  
25 waiting to testify. Can we see (crosstalk) ...

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

1 1 2

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HELEN ROSENTHAL: Uhm, may  
3 I have, I just want to say one quick thing to the  
4 last panelist. Just to thank her for coming forward  
5 and testifying. Cat, you're a beautiful person and  
6 I'm sure you know this, but wanting to make sure that  
7 you know about the anti-violence project. It's just  
8 an amazing organization that I think, might be a good  
9 resource for you and just wanted to mention that.

10 CAT RAJNAUTH: Thank you.

11  
12 COUNCIL MEMBER HELEN ROSENTHAL: But  
13 thank you.

14 CAT RAJNAUTH: Thank you.

15  
16 COUNCIL MEMBER HELEN ROSENTHAL: Thank  
17 you, Chloe, apologies.

18 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: No problem.  
19 Next, we'd like to turn to Ingrid, please.

20  
21 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

22 INGRID H.: Hi, can you hear me?

23  
24 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Yes.

25 INGRID H.: Great. Thank you to the  
council and to Darma Diaz, Chloe Rivera, and Anthony

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

110

2 Dipierro (SP?) for the opportunity to speak on the  
3 important topic of extending the statute of  
4 limitations for victims, survivors of gender-  
5 motivated violence, domestic violence, and sexual  
6 harassment. I too am a former patient of Robert  
7 Hadden, former gynecologist in New York who abused  
8 his patients. The former doctor subjected me to  
9 sexual molestation, inappropriate breast exams,  
10 mental abuse, and performed what I now know was an  
11 unnecessary hysterectomy. He enjoyed hurting his  
12 patients and demoralizing them while presenting  
13 himself as a caring healthcare provider when he was,  
14 in fact, a sexual predator who used his position to  
15 gain access to women while they were at their most  
16 vulnerable. I am a plaintiff in a case related to  
17 him in a system that allowed him this access to  
18 victims for years, and he did these things to us very  
19 (inaudible). I needed time and I needed the  
20 knowledge I now have in order to bring this to light  
21 and to join the lawsuit that's in place against him  
22 and Columbia. It's necessary to enable people to be  
23 able to come to terms with the abuse they have  
24 sustained and help make it less prevalent in our  
25 society. Many of us who have sustained sexual

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

150

2 harassment, mistreatment, molestation, sexual assault  
3 in or out of the home or workplace are faced with  
4 many personal obstacles for reporting. Questions  
5 arise such as will I be believed? Will I lose my  
6 job? Will my husband or my partner still love me?  
7 Will my reputation be ruined, and how will I maintain  
8 my dignity at a time when I need it the absolute  
9 most? As individual responses to trauma vary greatly  
10 from person to person depending on their history of  
11 prior abuse or victimization and often a freeze  
12 response to trauma is experienced. It's not uncommon  
13 that a freeze response can temporarily render  
14 victims, survivors unable to process what has  
15 happened to them, and there can be disassociation to  
16 trauma and that takes time to work through.  
17 Additionally, the legal system is quite lengthy and  
18 complicated and for many of us who don't know where  
19 to start or have limited funds, it can be quite  
20 overwhelming, so time is needed in order to  
21 ethically, humanly, empathically ensure that the  
22 voices of us victims and those who are victimized are  
23 heard. I speak as someone who has experienced sexual  
24 harassment, molestation, assault both in and out of  
25 the workplace and I had I had more time to process

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

151

2 what happened to me, I might have been able to have  
3 my voice heard more in those cases to help change  
4 things for the better or for the next survivor, and I  
5 hope that by speaking up today, I can help now.  
6 Thank you.

7  
8 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
9 your testimony. For the next panel, before I turn to  
10 the next panel, I just want to name everyone so they  
11 know that they're next. Shari Deutsch will revisit,  
12 then we have an anonymous speaker, and then Marissa  
13 Hoechstetter. Chairs, do you have any questions for  
14 this panel before we move on or any other council  
15 member questions?

16 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Diaz has no questions.  
17 I'm just mortified to hear that professional doctors  
18 that we entrust our bodies to think it's okay, and  
19 there is a system knowing it and allowing it to  
20 continue. This just cannot be. I'm sorry, I'm just  
21 moved over and over again, and the stories just get  
22 that much horrific. Sorry, Chloe, you can move on.

23 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: No, thank you,  
24 Chair Diaz. So, next, we'll move to Shari Deutsch.  
25 You may begin once the Sergeant gives you the cue.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

152

2 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

3 SHARI DEUTSCH: So again, my name is  
4 Shari Deutsch. I'm sorry for the audio issues. I'm  
5 a bit in transit right now. As I said, I'm a former  
6 patient of Dr. Hadden, seeing in 1999 when I moved to  
7 New York City, and it was very important for me to go  
8 see him because he was a member of such an important,  
9 and well-loved institution, and I myself, had great  
10 concerns about my risks for breast cancer due to my  
11 family history, and he was able to convince me that I  
12 needed to come in for a pelvic exam every six months  
13 which was completely unnecessary, and therefore,  
14 allowed him basically to penetrate me an additional  
15 time a year for his own pleasure. In addition, I had  
16 a colposcopy done and we're not entirely sure if that  
17 was necessary, and so as I looked back, I realized he  
18 was overly friendly. He did his best to (inaudible)  
19 me. He was like, "we don't need a nurse in here, do  
20 we?" and of course, I was like no because this was  
21 someone I trusted with my health, and it was  
22 unfortunately not exactly obviously as it seemed, but  
23 the worst part about it is that Columbia knew about  
24 it and did nothing, and they could have prevented  
25 this from happening. They could have prevented my

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

152

2 future panic attacks every time I go to the doctor,  
3 and I know my story is just one of many, and until we  
4 send a signal against these institutions, they need  
5 to stop protecting these men or stop protecting the  
6 people who are harming others and are coming to them  
7 for help. Nothing is going to change. As I said, it  
8 is evident by what happened at USC and UCLA, this is  
9 not an isolated incident, and I think New York as  
10 always been a leader in progressive policy. This  
11 would be an excellent opportunity shine a spotlight  
12 on these types of abusers again, and to put  
13 institutions on notice so that they know that they  
14 lose far more by harboring such a person than they  
15 will by throwing them out. So, again, I'm sorry for  
16 the audio issues, and thank you again for your time.

17  
18 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
19 your testimony. Next, we will hear from an anonymous  
20 witness. You may begin once the Sergeant gives you  
21 the cue.

22 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

23 ANONYMOUS WITNESS: Hi, can you hear me?  
24

25 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Yes.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

154

2 ANONYMOUS WITNESS: Okay. Am I free to  
3 speak?

4 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Yes, you may  
5 begin.

6  
7 ANONYMOUS WITNESS: Okay. I am also just  
8 like the former two ladies, a former patient of  
9 Robert Hadden and (inaudible) multiple levels for the  
10 involvement of this. I sought out Columbia because I  
11 was of advanced maternal age, having a child, and  
12 they are known as the most technologically advanced  
13 healthcare system, especially in New York and I felt  
14 very lucky to be there and have access to it. So, I  
15 sought them out specifically for that. I did that, I  
16 had never heard of Robert Hadden. I went to Columbia  
17 Medical Obstetrician Group and there, when I called,  
18 the assigned me to Dr. Hadden, so my first step was  
19 going towards Columbia for having the respect of  
20 their reputation and their technologies. So, it was  
21 there that I experienced the sexual assault and  
22 molestation of Dr. Hadden many times. The reason I  
23 say many times is because I had also phoned Blue  
24 Cross Blue Shield of New York after the first  
25 incident and said I need to switch my obstetrician  
and this is why, and they said, "I'm sorry, it's

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

155

2 against New York state law to switch in mid-  
3 pregnancy. No obstetrician will take you. You have  
4 to stay where you are." So, I was forced then to  
5 stay and submit myself to these recurring  
6 inappropriate advances and molestation and just so  
7 that I would be able to have a healthy child, which  
8 is absolutely horrendous, inappropriate. I mean,  
9 just, I almost lose words for what I had to go  
10 through with this just because there was so many  
11 levels of failure where this could have been stopped.  
12 From what I understand, Columbia knew about this for  
13 years and years before. My occurrence was in 2011,  
14 and because I had pressure to be silent, I'm also a  
15 healthcare provider. I also had a practice in New  
16 York, and I felt very worried about how this was  
17 going to look upon me, had I come out and said  
18 something. So, I just buried it and buried it really  
19 deeply, and I wasn't able to process it and work  
20 through it until well after I had experienced the  
21 experiences that I went through. So, the one thing  
22 that I can say which is really important to amend  
23 this law is that when you have these deeply  
24 psychologically abusing situations, people take their  
25 own time to be able to work them out and it's

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

156

2 whatever that person can manage psychologically and  
3 these things are (inaudible) for a reason, so that  
4 you can function and carry on, and I was a new mom to  
5 a new baby. I didn't have time to deal with my  
6 feelings of shame or guilt or any inappropriate  
7 feelings that I may have been feeling other than  
8 feeling like a victim and if anybody knows me, I'm an  
9 extremely strong woman. I'm not the woman that you  
10 find in the corner, curled up, crying, and this broke  
11 me. This was really horrendous, but it broke me  
12 years later. We should have all have our path to  
13 justice. Our path to justice is also our form of  
14 closure and dealing with it and healing from it, and  
15 I think that's one of the most important things that  
16 there must always be a path for justice, for healing  
17 again wrongdoing and it ought not have statue of  
18 limitations or time limits. Thank you for listening.

19  
20 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
21 your testimony. Last on this panel, we will hear  
22 from Marissa Hoechstetter.

23 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time starts now.

24  
25 MARISSA HOECHSTETTER: Hi, my name is  
Marissa Hoechstetter. I also want to thank the

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

157

2 Chairs for hearing testimony today about the Gender-  
3 Motivated Violence Protection Act and to thank  
4 Council Members Rivera and Brooks-Powers for  
5 introducing the legislation, but most importantly, I  
6 want to thank my other sister survivors who are  
7 sharing just incredible testimony today about what  
8 sexual assault looks like and the trail that it  
9 leaves in our lives. So, I was also sexually  
10 assaulted by Robert Hadden when I was pregnant with  
11 my twin girls. I reported the crimes against me to  
12 law enforcement and was failed by a system that bends  
13 to those of power and privilege. I wanted to be  
14 heard. I wanted to protect others. Instead, I was  
15 gaslit and casted aside. My experience with law  
16 enforcement meant that I really lost precious time,  
17 my courage, and so much more. I know now that what  
18 happened to me and hundreds of other women, many of  
19 whom you've heard from today, happened repeatedly  
20 over decades at Columbia University and New York  
21 Presbyterian Hospital because institutions will  
22 always protect themselves first. Their own  
23 reputation, profits, and liability almost always win  
24 out over survivor's humanity. Without time to  
25 process the trauma or find resources and support and

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

159

2 without the validation of law enforcement, too many  
3 survivors are left with little to no recourse. We  
4 know that those with access to power will use it to  
5 protect themselves and so the imbalance grows,  
6 abusers are (inaudible) and too many people continue  
7 to look away. It keeps happening though because we  
8 let them, and I will really ask the council and the  
9 committee to think carefully, like are we really that  
10 weak that we're willing to let the same story play  
11 out in front of us over and over again, with the  
12 catholic church, boy scouts, universities, doctor's  
13 offices, all kinds of workplaces. We know people need  
14 more time, especially to surface the true nature of  
15 serial crimes that happen in these institutions.  
16 There is no way to have a true public reckoning to  
17 sexual assault without access to justice and  
18 institutional accountability, and the changes to the  
19 Gender-Motivated Violence Protection Act provides a  
20 window for victims to regain their voice and that  
21 amendment would open up the statue of limitations  
22 providing a path for victims and survivors no matter  
23 when the abuse occurred. I share my story of  
24 survivorship and failure by law enforcement not  
25 because I want pity, but because I want to be

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

150

2 productive. I'm tired of gender-based violence not  
3 being a real priority for elected officials. It is a  
4 through line, through many forms of corruption across  
5 race and class and for far too many people in the  
6 city, meaningful change means giving survivors  
7 options. Most importantly, it means offering them  
8 more time. This legislation does that. It's not  
9 enough to just say that you support us. Government  
10 must take actions to lift our voices, protect us and  
11 hold accountable those complicit in our abuse.

12 Council Member Rivera and Council Member Brooks-  
13 Powers along with many, many colleagues, many of you  
14 who have signed on as co-sponsors are showing people  
15 that they are willing to take ...

16 SGT. SADOWSKY: Time expire.

17  
18 MARISSA HOECHSTETTER: ... meaningful action  
19 to give survivors a chance to get their voice back.  
20 I respectfully ask the committee and the council to  
21 support Intro 2372. Thank you.

22 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Thank you for  
23 your testimony, Marissa Hoechstetter. Sorry for  
24 mispronouncing your last name. If I have  
25 inadvertently missed anyone else who would like to

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

160

2 testify, please use the raise hand function in Zoom  
3 now. Seeing no additional witnesses, I'd like to  
4 turn it to Chair Diaz for questions for this panel.

5 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: I have no questions.

6  
7 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Great, and Chair  
8 Levin, and if any other council members have any  
9 questions, please use the raise hand function in  
10 Zoom. Seeing no additional questions from council  
11 members or Chair Levin, we have concluded public  
12 testimony for this hearing. Chair Diaz.

13 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: I want to begin by  
14 thanking my colleagues for introducing the Bills, for  
15 going outside the box, and letting the community, the  
16 residence tell their story and transition a basic  
17 conversation into law. That's our role and our  
18 responsibility. Thank you for the advocates. Thank  
19 you for the individuals that found the strength to  
20 tell your stories. I also exit on December 31st and  
21 I hope that my colleagues, the incoming council pays  
22 attention to recordings such as this nature. It's  
23 our job and it's our duty to serve the underserved.  
24 In closing, again, I can just thank you all for being  
25 apart of the process. I walked into this

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

161

2 conversation strictly thinking about domestic  
3 violence and the effects of it, and I walk away a  
4 much stronger person for it, a more knowledgeable  
5 individual as I'm an advocate for your issues. Again  
6 thank you. Thank you, Chloe and the staff for  
7 putting this together. It is 2:00 with 19 minutes,  
8 thank you and I want to thank the Administration for  
9 at least staying through half of today's  
10 conversation. Often the Administration will leave,  
11 but until about an hour ago, we did have an Admin  
12 person with us.

13  
14 CHAIR STEPEN LEVIN: Chair, before you  
15 adjourn, I just wanted to express my gratitude to  
16 everybody and particular the last several panels of  
17 survivors who testified and shared with us their very  
18 personal experiences, but it's so important for us  
19 the city to hear these stories and make sure that  
20 public policy responds to the moral challenge that  
21 your stories presented to us. I thank you from the  
22 bottom of my heart for your courage and your  
23 testimony, thank you.

24 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: I'm not seeing,  
25 Council Member Rosenthal? Is she still on?

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

162

2 MODERATOR CHLOE RIVERA: Nope, just the  
3 Chairs.

4 CHAIR DARMA DIAZ: Just the Chairs?

5 Well, she's also a Chair. But again, Sergeant Perez,  
6 I'm going to end it with our traditional (inaudible).  
7 My staff on this side, thank you Sherry Cox (SP?) for  
8 bringing me back into focus, but being a member of  
9 the council I (inaudible) to Introduce the Bill 2379  
10 that discusses men, men and the roles that men play  
11 in society, and how difficult it is for a men who has  
12 been raise to not cry, be strong and be tough, to be  
13 victimized and have to chug it up to experience.  
14 It's not to take away from any women, please, I don't  
15 want my Bill to be seen that. As a survivor, I know  
16 better. My goal is to change the system. My  
17 daughter's father, I look back and say like, he loved  
18 me, he didn't know how love me. He came from a  
19 broken home where his mom was also a victim. My  
20 desire is to change where our little people grow up  
21 and what they think is natural, and in my heart, I  
22 feel that Introduction of Bill 2379 could help change  
23 that. Someone mentioned earlier, we learn from what  
24 we see. Society has to do better. We have to figure  
25 out what makes men victimize women and why women

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

163

2 victimize. So, this Bill, Chair Levin and I thank  
3 you for supporting me on my Bill. I'm trying to  
4 change the conversation. We have men that are broken  
5 and we have to figure out a way. The doctor that you  
6 spoke of, obviously there is something wrong with  
7 him, and I would love to know what empowered him to  
8 think that it was okay to do this over and over and  
9 over again. Again, thank you all for hearing me out.  
10 Chloe, thank you. You worked with me over the  
11 weekend with me for deliverance today. Thank you  
12 all. Sergeant. Thank you.

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

Worldwide 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 January 23, 2022