

**Joint Committee Oversight and Investigations and Civil Service and Labor
Hearing: Maintaining New York City's Municipal Workforce**

Introduction

Good afternoon, Chairs Brewer and De La Rosa and members of the Committees on Oversight and Investigations and Civil Service and Labor. I am Barbara Dannenberg, Deputy Commissioner for Human Capital at the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS.) I am joined today by my colleagues Daniel Pollak from the Office of Labor Relations (OLR) and Ken Godiner from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

I would like to start by thanking you all for this opportunity to discuss how we are maintaining the City's workforce.

For more than 20 years, I have proudly served the City of New York. I love the work I do because it is filled with purpose and meaning. Civil service is a calling, and it is a call we hope to be answered by passionate, hardworking, and knowledgeable candidates who want to impact the lives of over eight million New Yorkers. When we talk about civil service today, labor shortages, and exams, we are talking about people. It's paramount to our city's recovery, to our progression, and to our sustainable future that we keep in mind that people interwoven like fabric keep our city thriving and moving.

Over the course of my career, I've had the privilege of supporting the City's efforts to recruit and retain a world-class workforce. Through a combination of recruitment, civil service lists based on merit and fitness, and our exam administration, we strive to develop a diverse, talented pool of candidates who are eager to serve the people of New York City.

The work we do at DCAS, and the success of our workforce, is bigger than any one specific agency; it requires a cross pollination of ideas and consistent collaboration. To that end, we work closely with our colleagues at OMB and OLR. Together, we help recruit, fortify, and support the City's workforce. We are fortunate to partner with other agencies and rely on each other to tackle new challenges, lend support, and prioritize the needs of all New Yorkers so that city agencies have what they need to effectively deliver services.

Current Climate/Labor Shortage

Currently, the New York City government is the City's largest employer with a workforce of 304,000 public servants. Headcount has remained flat since the start of this Administration. Our employees are dedicated to providing the highest level of service to all New Yorkers despite the many challenges the City has recently faced. Over the past two years, cities around the world have been plagued with unprecedented challenges as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic; unfortunately, New York City is no exception. We are now facing a job market that is in uncharted territory. Job options for employees are at a recent high nationwide. Based on the most inclusive measure of unemployment, the unemployed or underemployed share of the national labor force is the lowest on record since at least 1994. Between 2001 and 2017, there were never fewer than 105 unemployed people for every 100 job openings nationwide. Today, there are currently about 50 unemployed people for every 100 job openings, whereas in January 2020 there were 81 unemployed people for every 100 openings – indicating that the **supply** of available workers has not kept pace with **demand** for workers. Under these conditions, it is harder to fill openings.

In the face of the lingering impacts of the pandemic, there are many positive economic trend lines in New York City – job growth is outpacing the national average, tourism is returning, and large employers are expanding their footprints in New York City.

Despite the harsh realities that have upended the workforce as we know it, we are proud that our civil servants have continued to provide critical services and ensure that New Yorkers have access to adequate resources, opportunities, and information. In the face of the well-documented, national labor shortage, our city continues to make every effort to provide services effectively, efficiently, and equitably, and we continue to aggressively recruit talented candidates to fill these roles. Our commitment to providing equitable access to careers in civil service and sharpening the skills of those serving the City are at the forefront of our mind and aligned with our mission to make city government work for all New Yorkers.

Civil Service Process

Central to the life of the City's municipal workforce are the career opportunities afforded to New Yorkers through civil service hiring. As one of the largest local government employers anywhere, we offer candidates an opportunity to serve their community and city in their chosen profession. We provide a wealth of career opportunities, a clear path for growth, and great benefits. Over 80% of civil service positions with the City are designated as competitive class. These roles require an exam to qualify, and range from law enforcement, emergency services, administration, technical positions and more.

Civil service, a system based on merit and fitness for the job, serves as the foundation on which this city identifies competent, skilled employees to keep New York City thriving. Through the civil service system, applicants are afforded opportunities to prove their competence and experience based on an objective assessment of their demonstrated knowledge, skills, and abilities for entry level and senior level roles at our city agencies.

Civil service also serves as a pathway to the middle class for underserved and underrepresented communities. It is therefore critical that we operate the civil service

system competently, fairly, and expeditiously. DCAS continues to work diligently to introduce system improvements, strengthen collaborative partnerships, and reduce the provisional workforce as required, all while we keep New York City working. Among these improvements, DCAS also integrates innovative approaches to recruit new, quality talent through initiatives like Civil Service 101 sessions. Civil Service 101 is a comprehensive information session tailored to prospective employees and job seekers who want to learn more about the civil service process and make it easier to understand. The goal is to demystify the civil service process and disassociate it with being slow and arduous. By reframing the civil service process, we hope to attract the best candidates to work for our city.

It is important to note that while civil service lists establish a viable candidate pool, it is indeed a process separate and apart from the hiring process executed in close collaboration between our colleagues at OMB and each respective agency to fill specific roles. The hiring process hinges upon vacancy availability and funding.

Exam Administration

DCAS utilizes exams to equitably identify candidates who demonstrate the necessary knowledge, qualifications, and skills to excel in specific roles. We offer:

- **Open-competitive exams**, which are available to anyone who meets the minimum qualifications.
- **Promotion exams**, which are available only to permanent or 55-a City employees who are seeking a promotion within their career track.
- **Qualified-incumbent exams**, which are available to those who already work for the City as a provisional employee in certain job titles, after two or more years of service.

DCAS has worked to improve the cycle time of the examination process and to break down barriers to careers in civil service. On average over the last five years (Fiscal Year 2018 - Fiscal Year 2022), DCAS administered 180 exams per year to more than 103,000 candidates and established over 150 lists for agencies to hire from. Paramount to DCAS's vision of ensuring equitable access to civil service and city government, DCAS has proudly created a community-based footprint for civil service application and examinations through the opening of one Computer-based Testing and Application Center (CTAC) in each of the five boroughs.

In addition to establishing a community-based presence, DCAS has moved forward with the digitization of our work and utilized automation to provide faster service. This is evidenced through our computerized testing system and our education and experience exam systems which provide instant tentative results as soon as the candidate completes these exams. For candidates who disagree with the rating received by DCAS, we allow them to initiate, transmit, and track appeals of their ratings within their Online Application System dashboard.

In an effort to widen the net and provide more opportunities for interested candidates, DCAS launched a pilot program in Fiscal Year '22 called the NYC Bridge exam. Through this pilot, DCAS departed from our traditional testing process in which we offer one exam for one title. The NYC Bridge exam allows candidates to apply for one exam, pay one application fee, and take a singular test, that can be used for up to 10 titles. The NYC Bridge exam was open for filing in April 2022, and DCAS received over 4,000

applications. Later this month, the multiple-choice test will be held for these candidates. This new test format allows DCAS to offer a greater quantity of exams annually without increasing the need for staffing resources. For the Fiscal Year 2023 exam schedule, additional titles are being reviewed for inclusion in the next NYC Bridge exam.

Recruitment and Pipeline

DCAS's Office of Citywide Recruitment (OCR) promotes the vision that the City of New York is an employer of choice with a growing, talented, and diverse workforce. The work done through OCR is integral to our targeted recruitment efforts. OCR conducts extensive outreach to educate the public and current employees on civil service career opportunities and manages the City's 55-a Program that affords qualified persons with disabilities an entry into City government without the need to take civil service exams. Since its inception in 2015, OCR has participated in more than 1500 events and has reached nearly 75,000 participants. They are also the division responsible for organizing and facilitating the Civil Service 101 information sessions.

In response to the pandemic, in April 2020, OCR switched to virtual events, allowing for more flexibility for participants. Over 23,500 participants joined approximately 481 events between April 2020 and August 2022; OCR is now back in the field and participating in both virtual and in-person events. As part of these events, OCR partners with sister agencies to host agency spotlight sessions to highlight their hard to fill recruitment needs for each respective agency. This includes partnership with HPD, CCRB, Emergency Management, FDNY, and others.

To attract prospective employees, DCAS also hosts CityTalk panel discussions to spotlight employees across various agencies. These events serve as opportunities to promote City careers, the many different City agencies, and the work employees perform across these agencies. We also issue a monthly newsletter to job seekers and career services partners across educational institutions, community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, and others, that highlights current exams that are open for filing and open job opportunities across different agencies.

Beyond our recruitment outreach, we have also established other pipelines for those interested in joining city service through fellowships and internships. As the City's public university system, the City University of New York (CUNY) helps funnel talented, college educated candidates into government through our collaborative Civil Service Pathway Fellowship. This initiative connects recent graduates with full-time careers in civil service including competitive pay and benefits. Candidates selected to participate receive professional development, build networking and mentorship relationships, and specialized training.

Similar to the Civil Service Pathway Fellowship, each year, the Urban Fellows program recruits nationally for a 9-month fellowship program that provides participants with a unique opportunity to work with current city agency decision-makers and assist in the implementation of public policy. Each cohort consists of 25 talented recent graduates who were selected from a pool of hundreds of applicants from across the nation. It serves as an entry point into city government and public service.

DCAS also facilitates an annual Summer Internship Program, collecting and posting internship opportunities across the city and providing learning opportunities to all interns. This year, three courses were conducted: Civil Service 101; Unconscious Bias:

Why it Matters to You; and, Interviewing and Networking. DCAS also assisted agencies in providing mandated training, such as sexual harassment prevention training, to their summer interns.

Retention and Professional Development

Recruiting a world-class workforce is only a valuable investment if we can retain and develop that talent. With that in mind, DCAS continues to establish and maintain opportunities for professional growth throughout an individual's civil service career through the DCAS Human Capital Citywide Training Center (CTC.) The CTC provides employees with opportunities to learn new skills, strengthen existing abilities, and engage in career driven programs. The CTC has expanded its reach to employees by offering live-webinars, CBT training modules and in-person learning at the training center or an alternate agency location. Although in-person learning had been paused due to the pandemic, we are happy to say that both agency-specific and open-enrollment classes have resumed. Our upcoming fall training catalog will contain more than 50 class titles available in-person at the CTC.

DCAS is also working to specifically develop the City's human resources community through the development and management of the New York City Human Resource Academy (NYC HR Academy). This program is designed by HR practitioners and thought leaders and is especially designed and intended for the city's HR professionals. The curriculum focuses on common trends, best practices, emerging issues and case studies for topics related to personnel management. The goal of the NYC HR Academy is to be an instrumental asset that equips agency HR professionals with resources and the network needed to align their workforce with the City's policies, structures, and initiatives.

Professional Development is available for all employees through DCAS Learning & Development. A catalog is published three times per year with hundreds of program offerings across six portfolio areas: Executive Development, Management & Supervision, No-cost learning, Personal Development and Technology Skills. We also have a robust portfolio of New York City specific programming that includes cultural awareness and inclusivity, programs focused on professional practice areas, and programming offered by sister agencies.

Provisional Reduction

With multiple stakeholders in the City's eco system, we strive to provide a level playing field for New York City's workforce, meet the business needs of City government and ensure compliance with federal, state and local laws. We are committed to ensuring that the City's workforce is diverse and inclusive, and that all communities are offered opportunities to engage with civil service career opportunities. To achieve this goal and ensure that employees who are classified as provisional have a pathway to permanency. A provisional employee is an employee who has met the minimum qualification requirements for the title and may be serving satisfactorily in that title but has not taken a civil service exam and given a permanent civil service title. We have made it a priority to address this issue and I am proud to share that, in tandem with the City's mandate to reduce the number of provisionals serving across city agencies, the City of New York currently has 10,131 employees serving provisionally; an 8% decrease from the start of the current provisional reduction plan and an overall decrease of 73% since the start of provisional reduction efforts where the provisional count was nearly 38,000 in May 2008. Moving the needle closer to compliance would not have been

possible without the partnership of our sister agencies across the City, and their commitment to the heart of civil service and competitive examination processes.

Conclusion

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you all again for the opportunity to testify before you. Our municipal workforce is the lifeblood of our city, and we will continue to aggressively recruit, identify the best candidates, work in close partnership with our sister agencies, the City Council, and all stakeholders to get the right people in place to best serve our city. We are always looking for additional ideas for how to recruit and retain our world-class workforce and welcome your partnership in those efforts. With that, I am happy to answer any questions at this time.

Testimony of
Marianne Pizzitola
President
NYC Organization of Public Service Retirees
FDNY EMS Retirees Association

CITY HALL Friday, September 9, 2022, 1300 HRS

Joint Hearing on Maintaining NYC's Municipal Workforce

Good afternoon Chair Brewer and members of the Committee on Oversight and Investigation, and Chair De La Rosa and members of the Committee on Civil Service and Labor. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on how to maintain NYC's Municipal workforce.

My name is Marianne Pizzitola and I am here to speak to you about workforce retention. I am retired from NYC EMS, FDNY.

I am the President of the FDNY EMS Retirees Association, a group I founded after 9/11 to advocate for responders and those impacted by the events of 9/11 of which the 21st Anniversary is this weekend. I am also the President of the NYC Organization of Public Service Retirees, the group which sued the City successfully to stop the City from forcing us into a Medicare Advantage plan or charging us a penalty premium to stay in our current plans.

Workers join City service for many reasons; service, community, love of the work we do, the excitement and joy of having an impact on someone's life, the lights and sirens (like me!), and the benefits we would be entitled to if we stay until retirement. We retirees counted on the promise to us that we would collect a pension and receive health insurance. No city worker has ever said, "I am joining the city and will stay there for my career because the salary is amazingly high!" The salaries were not high compared to our private sector counterparts, but job security and benefits attracted us and we stayed. We invested in our futures by remaining City employees and dedicating our lives to service.

Just yesterday, the Municipal Labor Committee voted to support a change in Administrative Code 12-126 that would permit them and the City to change the statutory cap for City health insurance coverage for any "class of individuals" they so choose. And knowing that four of the City's largest unions swayed that vote yesterday, that is a lot of power to give these unions. If the amendment is adopted, it would mean that both retirees and current City employees could have their health plans severely cut. For example, the MLC and the City tried to force retirees into a Medicare Advantage plan last year and our lawsuit stopped them because their plan violated current law. That's the same law that the City Council enacted in 1967. These health benefits were promised to us and to current City employees: we earned them and paid for them. If you permit this amendment to be introduced and adopted, your ability to attract and retain workers will become even harder. Why would anyone join City government and dedicate their life to work for the city, give their heart, soul, and health in some cases, just to have inferior health care during their City employment or have what they have already earned in health care benefits stripped away from them in retirement? The NYC Fire Department suffered a great loss of knowledge and experience after 9/11 with the death of many of our members and it took quite a while to recover from that.

Yesterday's vote by the Municipal Labor Committee will NO DOUBT affect the City's ability to attract and retain workers. The current law, Administrative Code Section 12-126, protects employees and retirees, and has done so for over 50 years. No matter what happened in the City, not even the fiscal crisis of the 1970's, the Council never changed the law or diminished its benefits. And this deal which will impact City finances, was negotiated behind closed doors by a small group of unelected officials and labor bosses. The Council should have been involved as your knowledge and experience, never mind Council history with this code could have found a solution and ended the craziness. We have too many retirees whose pensions are under \$25,000 where the impact on them will be disproportionate.

It will be a difficult task to attract and retain people when the fear of what they are working towards can be taken away from them. We were always told we

would have a choice of free health plans, that the plans we had during our employment we could take into retirement. I see disabled retirees and senior citizens living in fear because the cost of the newly-added co-pays on their fixed incomes are like car payments. They fear that premiums they did not plan for will be added because the City and Unions want to replenish a fund they misused. We are better than this.

Sitting in this very Council chamber, former Council Members Mario Merola, Edmund Farrell, Mary Pinkett, Aileen Ryan, Miriam Friedlander and Peter Vallone protected retirees. I think if they were all here today, they would agree with me that the best way to attract and maintain a loyal workforce is to keep the promises made to employees and retirees.

I might also add that the City should not be pitting unions against one another and making them give up benefits promised to their retired members. I'd say, in short, keep your promises. You will find that people will want to work for the City because it is the greatest City in the world. But if the City's workforce sees that they risk losing what they earned, they will take the experience they gained in City employment and work somewhere else as to not risk losing their future.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Jumaane D. Williams

**TESTIMONY OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND LABOR AND
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
SEPTEMBER 9, 2022**

Good afternoon,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. I would like to thank Chair De La Rosa, Chair Brewer, members of the Committee on Civil Service and Labor, and members of the Committee on Oversight and Investigations for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to share testimony. This hearing is incredibly timely and is needed now more than ever.

To start off, our municipal workers are what keeps the gears of our city government running. There are over 300,000 municipal workers in the City of New York¹; without them, our city would fall into disarray. So it is alarming that we have been seeing reports of high vacancy rates across city agencies. The overall vacancy rate as of June 2022 was 7.9%², with some agencies' vacancy rates as high as 27.2%³. In January 2020, the overall vacancy rate was 1.6%⁴. There are of course a number of factors that have contributed to this stark jump, and there is one I wish to specifically focus on. Since January 2020, we have endured an entire pandemic, and throughout a significant portion of this pandemic, our city workers worked remotely. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven to us all that remote and hybrid work models do work and are just as efficient as full-time, in-person work. One of the essential components in retaining our municipal workforce is to offer this level of flexibility now and beyond the pandemic. The City must follow through in implementing a hybrid work model to ensure we do not lose any more employees when it could have been avoided otherwise.

Furthermore, our city must move with the changing landscape that is the modern workplace. Approximately 80% of New York City employers intend to move forward with a hybrid work model.⁵ As a non-mayoral agency, my office is currently operating on a hybrid work schedule. We recognize that our employees are just as productive working remotely as they are in person. We want to retain this option and flexibility in order for them to maintain a healthier work-life balance, and also to establish a flexible scheduling framework to adjust in the face of COVID surges or other causes down the line. Additionally, with a hybrid work model, we do not leave behind nor ignore the concerns of our city workers who are immunocompromised—and thus continuously at high risk in an ongoing pandemic—, those who have childcare responsibilities, those who have found themselves in the position of caretaker for their families, and many others.

¹ <https://cbcny.org/research/nyc-employee-headcount>

² <https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/politics/2022/09/02/city-workers-leave-over-in-office-requirement-vacancy-rate-hits-8->

³ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2022/9/6/23340069/health-housing-buildings-public-sector-unemployment-rate-high>

⁴ <https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/politics/2022/09/02/city-workers-leave-over-in-office-requirement-vacancy-rate-hits-8->

⁵

<https://pfny.org/news/nearly-80-of-new-york-city-employers-anticipate-hybrid-work-model-moving-forward-partnership-survey-finds/>



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Jumaane D. Williams

**TESTIMONY OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND LABOR AND
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
SEPTEMBER 9, 2022**

If our city does not meet our workers where they are, then it will lead to further attrition in the municipal workforce. Earlier I mentioned the growing number of city vacancies. These are not just abstract numbers; these are positions that need to be filled or else homes will fall into disrepair, tenants will be left unhoused, healthcare providers will find themselves under greater strain, New Yorkers will struggle to find adequate legal representation, and many more harrowing scenarios. The rippling effects of these vacancies are already being felt, and they will increase tenfold if the concerns and asks of municipal workers are not met and addressed.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge that while not all municipal jobs have the potential for hybrid work—certain fields will always require a physical presence—enabling hybrid work models where possible is necessary for the safety of our city and the retention of our workforce. I also want to acknowledge again that the lack of hybrid and remote work options is not the sole factor contributing to city workforce attrition. However, factors such as lack of competitive salary and slow hiring practices⁶ have existed prior to the pandemic (and need to see significant changes), whereas hybrid work is something our city can implement almost immediately and lead by example. Government is only as good as the people who keep it moving forward, and the onus is on city leaders to retain its workforce in order to ensure the immediate and long-term success of our city.

Thank you.

⁶ <https://gothamist.com/news/this-isnt-just-normal-attrition-why-city-workers-say-theyre-quitting>

Chapter 41

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Testimony to the Committee on Oversight and Investigations and the Committee on Civil Service and Labor September 9, 2022

Chair Brewer, Chair De La Rosa, and members of the Committees on Oversight and Investigations and Civil Service and Labor:

Thank you for holding this hearing on an issue of critical importance to all New Yorkers: The unprecedented crisis our city is facing in attracting and retaining an effective, innovative, adept municipal workforce.

I appear before you as President of Chapter 41 of Local 375, DC37, representing 34 employees in the Landmarks Preservationist, Urban Archeologist, and Research Scientist positions at the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Our members perform the day-to-day work of the Commission—researching proposed landmarks and historic districts, overseeing the city’s archeological repository, administering the Historic Preservation Grants Program, and reviewing and approving work on the more than 37,000 designated landmarks and historic district properties across New York City.

Almost all of our members have a master’s or doctoral degree. They are highly educated, skilled “knowledge workers” of the type that New York must attract, retain, and invest in to maintain its position as the greatest city in the world. Unfortunately, most depart the Commission after working for it for only a few years.

If there is one point I would like to make it is this: While the pandemic and the “great resignation” may have exacerbated the city’s current staffing crisis, they did not cause them. I have worked at the Commission since 2003 and have watched the staffing crisis develop first-hand over that time due to a slow, steady erosion in salaries and benefits. There will be no cheap, easy fix. The only solution is to raise city employees’ compensation considerably—and institute workplace flexibility—to bring it in line with the private sector and with other government agencies across the country.

The Landmarks Commission is typical of other city agencies, in that our staffing remains about 20% below its pre-pandemic level. Numerous experienced staff members capable of handling demanding, complex projects have left, and the agency has struggled to find replacements, who will take years to reach the same level of proficiency. This has increased

workload on an already overburdened staff and hampered the agency's ability to review and process work applications, and survey and designate new landmarks, in a timely manner.

These are the key factors in the Landmarks Commission's staffing crisis:

- Staff compensation has declined drastically over the past 20 years. In 2003, the starting salary for a Landmarks Preservationist was \$40,000, equivalent to \$64,000 today. Yet our starting salary is stuck at under \$56,000, representing a decline, in real dollars, of 12% over that time. This occurred over a period when the city budget more than doubled and housing costs skyrocketed. Years without raises during the Bloomberg administration and only small increases since then have dropped our salaries substantially. Had our wages simply increased with the rate of inflation, every staff member would be making at least \$8,000 more than they are now.
- When I started at the Commission in 2003, salaries were below those of the private sector, but the Tier 4 pension made up for it. This is no longer the case, since the 2012 institution of Tier 6. Tier 6 members must continue paying 4.5% of their gross incomes even after they vest, a major expense to people who are already struggling to make ends meet. Many younger but highly proficient staff members choose to leave the Commission before vesting to cash out a lump sum of their contributions.
- During the pandemic, staff went above and beyond in performing our work remotely. Most knowledge workers find remote work to be a major contributor to their quality of life, and won't work someplace that doesn't offer it. And yet Mayor Adams has made it clear that he is staunchly opposed. This is short-sighted and counterproductive.

To attract and retain skilled, experienced, knowledge workers like ours, the city must take the following steps:

- Raise salaries considerably, at least to their level of 20 years ago;
- Reform Tier 6 to make it equivalent to Tier 4;
- Increase workplace flexibility, making part- or full-time telework permanent.

Our contract expired more than a year ago. This fall, the city and DC37 will negotiate our new contract. It is crucial for the city to make a good-faith effort to address these concerns if it hopes to attract and retain qualified, experienced staff. For too long, city employees have been treated as an expense rather than as an investment.

Sincerely,
Michael Caratzas
President, Chapter 41
Local 375, DC37



240 West 35th Street ■ Suite 302 ■ New York, New York 10001

Testimony on the NYC Municipal Workforce

Delivered before the New York City Council Committees on Civil Service and Labor, and
Oversight and Investigations

September 9, 2022

Ana Champeny, Vice President for Research, Citizens Budget Commission

Good afternoon. I am Ana Champeny, Vice President for Research at the Citizens Budget Commission (CBC), a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank and watchdog dedicated to constructive change in the services and finances of New York City and New York State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify about New York City's workforce.

CBC's research has long shown that government can and should be more efficient and deliver quality services. We have identified opportunities to improve services while in some instances requiring fewer workers. When the workforce hit a new high pre-pandemic of 326,739 full-time and full-time equivalents (FTEs)—17,500 more than its previous peak before the Great Recession—CBC advocated for using attrition to appropriately shrink the workforce.

Now, however, with 304,641 full-time and full-time equivalent staff on board as of April, there are reports that some agencies and units are not able to perform their duties effectively due to staff shortages. During the pandemic, the City's on-board headcount declined significantly through attrition. As employees resigned, retired, or otherwise left, they were not replaced at the same pace. The total number of on-board full-time and full-time equivalents declined from March 2020 to April 2022 by 21,551. However, the City's full-time and full-time equivalent authorized headcount only decreased by around 2,000, and remains inordinately high at 333,129.

Given the fiscal crisis facing the City in 2020, instituting the partial hiring freeze to facilitate this downsizing by attrition made sense. However, attrition is a blunt tool. It doesn't facilitate the intentional choices that are necessary to create a sustainably smaller, more efficient workforce.

Over time, some agencies and programs have seen a significant decline in their staffing beyond what might have been desirable—especially without restructuring to increase operational efficiency—and this appears to now be impeding service delivery in some cases.

But, we must be perfectly clear: the problem is not a lack of authorized headcount. The City has plenty of available positions, and in fact many more than it needs. The current staffing issues faced by some agencies and units are the result of management, procedural, and labor market challenges. The City has authorized headcount of 333,129 for fiscal year 2023. As of April 2022, with 304,461 full-time and full-time equivalent staff on board, there were more than 28,500 vacant positions (23,793 full-time). The City can and should significantly reduce the number of authorized vacant positions without impeding its ability to provide high-quality efficient services, but it also should strategically fill some vacant positions in agencies and units that are currently unable to deliver the volume and quality of service that New Yorkers rightly expect.

The solution to this challenge is not increasing authorized headcount or the total Personal Services (PS) budget. Instead, the City needs to move the existing vacancies to where they are needed, streamline the hiring process, and consider how to be more flexible given the tight labor market and modern career paths.

Specifically, the City should:

1. Move available positions to where they are needed and increase the flexibility of processes used to control, allocate, and reallocate headcount;
2. Improve and speed up the processes and procedures it uses to control and manage hiring and to administer the civil service system;
3. Institute policies to increase retention of high-performing employees;
4. Modernize civil service and job paths to increase the attractiveness of public sector employment; and
5. Report transparently on vacancies, hires, separations, and promotions.

Move Vacant Positions to Where Needed and Increase Flexibility in Allocating Vacancies

The City as a whole, and almost every agency, has more than enough vacant positions to hire in priority areas. If units and some smaller agencies require more full-time staff, the City should reallocate positions and better manage agency personnel and hiring, rather than create and fund unneeded additional vacant positions.

Providing greater flexibility to allocate and reallocate headcount to better align vacancies with priorities would make the City nimbler in responding to service and staffing needs, and labor

availability. The current policies and procedures are inflexible and cumbersome and better facilitate control than hiring and service delivery. Vacant positions are not easily moved across functions within agencies, let alone between agencies. Some vacant positions have been vacant for years and are likely unnecessary; they should be reallocated to units and agencies where additional staff are needed to deliver efficient, high-quality services. Greater flexibility—to move headcount across agencies, within agencies across units, or to allocate vacancies agency-wide—would improve the ability to hire staff in priority areas.

Better Manage Hiring

The current systems make it too hard to hire staff. Many offices within and outside service-providing agencies are involved and control multiple steps in the hiring process, including posting open positions, making offers, approving salary levels, and setting start dates. Speeding up the process is especially important in the current competitive job market. Furthermore, anecdotally we have been told that agencies are not being allowed to fill many of their vacant positions. After the City properly allocates vacancies, agencies should be supported to fill them with qualified staff as quickly as possible. If currently vacant positions are not needed, they should be eliminated.

Improving recruitment and hiring systems and processes could reduce the time to fill positions, increase the number of on-board staff, and perhaps eliminate the slowness that discourages some from working for the City. This includes examining and hopefully streamlining the approval steps and ensuring that criteria for approvals are not redundant, such as approving a job posting based on available headcount and budget and then checking the same criteria upon hiring.

Ensuring adequate, timely civil service tests and lists also will speed hiring and encourage more applicants to seek City employment. Compounding historical challenges, in-person civil service testing was paused during the pandemic and titles may not have active lists with enough candidates at this time. Furthermore, the time between administering tests and certifying civil service lists is very long; in the first four months of fiscal year 2022, the median time between exam administration and results was 246 days (though still below the City's target of 290 days). DCAS should seek to leverage technology and other process reforms to speed up the process.

Improve Employee Retention

Retaining high-performing employees is as important as hiring. There are costs associated with staff turnover, including those associated with recruiting and training new employees. Career public sector employment is not the goal for all positions or employees, but efforts to increase

retention can reduce hiring costs and improve service quality. The City should provide training, upskilling, and advancement opportunities to acknowledge and retain high performers.

Modernize Civil Service and Public Sector Employment

The civil service system was designed to provide job stability and minimize discrimination by hiring and promoting staff based on merit, as determined by various rules and tests. Public sector employment has been a path to the middle class for many, offering stability and generous retirement benefits to long-tenured employees. However, work and career paths have changed over time. In fact, many employees now change jobs frequently and seek flexibility and growth opportunities. Given the tight labor market the City is currently facing, providing more skills training and negotiating flexibility and other work rules changes, such as merit increases or bonuses that the City can afford within the existing budget, could increase the attractiveness of public service. However, the longer-term solution would be for the City and other public sector employers to consider what changes and improvements to public sector employment and the civil service systems are needed to attract and retain the next generation of talented, hard-working, and innovative individuals in public service.

Improve Reporting

While data on authorized and on-board headcount are included in the budget, more granular data on authorized, on-board, and vacant positions by program area or unit would assist in identifying specific areas where high vacancy rates may reduce service provision or quality. These staffing metrics could be connected to performance metrics in the Mayor's Management Report (MMR) and would help assess the extent to which changes in procedures and processes improve the hiring and retention of City employees.

Furthermore, like many internal processes, hiring processes within the City are somewhat of a black box. Shedding light on the length and complexity of this process would be useful to assess how effective the City's processes are; this would allow policymakers and the public to identify the bottlenecks that slow the process. For example, how many of the vacant positions have been posted, how many filled, what was the average time from posting to making an offer to having an employee start, and what percentage of offers are accepted? For uniformed titles that hire in classes, how many were in each class at the start of training, at the start of employment, and one year later? For those that separated, what was the reason, and how many years of service did they have? For civil service titles, how many titles with vacancies have active lists and how long ago were those lists certified? Conversely, how many vacant positions are in titles that do not have active civil service lists?

Conclusion

The real challenges the City faces in staffing priority activities are rigid headcount management and time-consuming hiring processes. The City should increase flexibility in allocating vacant positions, reform hiring to speed up the process, implement efforts to improve retention, undertake a longer-term assessment to modernize civil service and keep public sector employment attractive, and increase reporting to shed more transparency on where challenges and roadblocks exist.

Thank you. I can answer any questions if you would like.

Testimony of Saul Fishman, President of the Civil Service Bar Association, on behalf of NYC government Agency Attorneys – joint hearing of Oversight & Investigations and Civil Service & Labor Committees – September 9, 2022

Good afternoon distinguished City Council Committee Chairs and Committee Members, Councilmembers, government officials and concerned New Yorkers,

I am here today to testify about how city agencies, specifically the legal divisions and units of city agencies, have been greatly diminished in staffing, had dedicated, experienced employees, their morale crushed, leave city employment, and how city policies and an unrealistic Mayor are making a bad situation worse each and every day. I'm Saul Fishman, the President of the Civil Service Bar Association, proudly affiliated with Teamsters Local 237. We represent the Attorneys, Agency Attorneys, Agency Attorney Interns and related titles in virtually every Mayoral agency and in the Housing Authority and in the Transit Authority (roughly 40 agencies in all).

I have represented these very dedicated, competent legal professionals for a full decade, and I have to say that, although we've endured tough times before, we have never suffered the mass exodus that we are currently experiencing.

One year ago, we conducted a survey of our membership, and the vast majority of members who responded indicated that they were able to perform their work "at least as well" remotely during the approximately 18-month shutdown period. The large majority wanted the ability to telework 2-3 days per week, and stated that if they were not provided with such an option, it would negatively impact their morale and/or desire to stay with their agency.

It turns out that they were not just venting, they were telling the truth. Here are the figures on changes to our membership from March 1, 2020 (just before the pandemic shutdown), to September 1, 2021 (just before the ordered full-time Return to the Office ordered by the former Mayor), and finally some brand-new numbers as of this past Tuesday September 6, 2022, approximately one year after the ordered full-time return. All of these numbers have been provided to us courtesy of our own IT department, who receives the underlying data from a weekly Roster supplied by FISA-OPA (the NYC Office of Payroll Administration).

We had a total of 1,057 members in the various Attorney titles as of March 1, 2020. As of September 1, 2021, after months of threatening a full return to the office but actually approximately two weeks before it was actually implemented, membership was already reduced to 970 members. As of this past Tuesday, approximately one year after the full return to the office with absolutely no teleworking allowed, we were all the way down to 831 agency attorneys. So the bottom line is that in the course of two and a half years, from March 1, 2020 to September 6, 2022, the agencies and the public that they serve have lost 226 hard-working

attorneys. That's nearly 22 percent of our entire membership! 139 attorneys in the past year alone!

Let me start with one tangible example of how an agency's workforce has been decimated, and its damaging effect on the public:

- Taxi & Limousine Commission ("TLC"), where our members have decreased a shockingly high 43%, from 46 attorneys to 34 attorneys to 26 attorneys from March 2020 until the present.

Here is an email I received from a member yesterday from TLC, who knew that I would be testifying today. They wrote: "Our staffing shortage in the Prosecution Unit at TLC is catastrophic. Pre-pandemic we had 26 staff attorneys (all present), 9 supervising/ senior supervising attorneys. Fully staffed, we should have 31 staff attorneys and 10 supervisors. On return to office we had 19 and 9. We currently have 15 staff attorneys, (including 1 attorney on FMLA, 1 attorney on FMLA, 1 attorney on loan to DOC and 2 attorneys who have given notice) and 10 supervising attorneys..."

"It's not just how short we are, it's the challenges we face filling vacancies, we know that over a dozen candidates cancelled interviews beforehand or declined offers after an interview. (Some specifically citing salary and lack of schedule flexibility, or lack of remote work). Additionally, at least 2 candidates who accepted offers declined because OMB took so long to approve them they got other offers... This means, for example, that when the public files a complaint against a TLC licensee they wait an average of 36 days before we can even call them to pursue it. That's AFTER whatever time it took other units to process the Respondent's information and provide it to us. Then, because other supervisors and I are working in other units, we cannot review and approve cases for settlement so they wait another 70 days for the case to even receive a settlement officer or be scheduled for hearing."

Further, every single one of us is doing our job while also loaning ourselves out to other units for hours at a time, and the jobs of anyone who calls out sick or takes other leave. We expect to see hearings dismissed at any point because we will quite simply be unable to appear. We are beyond exhausted. There is the same amount of work as when we are fully staffed. We are all doing 2 or 3 jobs. We fully expect to continue to lose people."

(end of letter)

And here are serious staffing losses from other agencies that the public relies on most:

- Administration for Children's Services ("ACS"), where attorneys represent children who are being seriously abused physically, sexually, educationally and otherwise, we went

from 246 attorneys to 221 attorneys to 177 attorneys, a drop of approximately 28% in the attorneys who can help convince the Family Court to protect and sometimes remove children in harm's way from becoming the next Nixzmary Brown or the long litany of other murdered children at the hands of their own supposed guardians;

- Commission on Human Rights ("CCHR), the city agency whose mission is to protect us from discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodation and more, holding mediations and issuing findings of probable cause allowing people to sue and otherwise seek important remedies, preventing further conflict and smoldering tensions: we went from 25 attorneys to 22 attorneys to 15 attorneys, a loss of approximately 40% in skilled legal personnel who would otherwise be available to help nip discrimination in the bud.
- Department of Buildings, whose mission is to make our streets safer from collapse by shoddy work, our workers safer by making sure that contractors and subcontractors follow the Building Codes and other rules; our attorneys work in several units including in the Administrative Enforcement Unit, making sure as best they can through crushing caseloads and calendars that summonses with merit do not get dismissed until the needed repairs and conditions are resolved properly. They too have seen an approximately 40% reduction in their ranks, having gone from 48 attorneys to 43 attorneys to 29 attorneys.
- OATH (Office of Administrative Trials & Hearings), the tribunal which hears the violations issued by most if not all city agencies: down from 35 attorneys to 31 attorneys to 25 attorneys, a reduction of approximately 29%. Needless to say, reduced staffing causes delays inconveniencing all, not to mention tremendous stress, denied personal and vacation days to the remaining staff and further turnover.
- Department of Finance, an agency which performs many functions, including making sure that the right amount of tax gets paid on time, essential to keeping the city running, and the attorneys there go against skilled, high-priced outside attorneys and auditors. The attorney staff at Finance has seen attrition totaling approximately 27%, going from 33 attorneys to 29 attorneys to 24 attorneys.
- Department of Social Services (a/k/a Human Resources Administration and Homeless Services), which provides much of the safety net for our poor and our population who have fallen on hard times: we went from 113 attorneys to 104 attorneys to 92 attorneys, a drop of approximately 19% in the people who can make sure that the laws protecting the neediest are followed in a fair and non-discriminatory manner, and that child support payments are recouped where feasible.
- Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP, formerly Department of Consumer Affairs), an agency which serves many functions, to name a few, it licenses some 60 different types of businesses, and can seek the revocation of licenses needed to operate stores that repeatedly sell tobacco to minors, cheat workers out of their full pay by systematically undercounting hours worked, home improvement contractors preying on senior citizens, etc. It takes attorneys to carefully draft the charges and

present them at OATH hearings and sometimes in State Supreme Court. We're down approximately 19% there, from 32 attorneys to 28 attorneys to 26 attorneys.

I could go on, but you get the point. Our ranks are being decimated. Our morale is being destroyed. So many of those who haven't left yet are *actively seeking employment* elsewhere, in record numbers and percentages. They have given up hope that their employer cares about them, is respecting their work-life balance, their limits and their *ethical obligation to act in a professional manner* and to not take on more cases than they can competently handle. These are the same individuals who, with almost no exceptions, *successfully performed their work from home* for approximately 18 months.

Yet they, who often have student debt approaching or even exceeding \$200,000, are being told they must come in each and every day to perform the same work, no better than from home, so they can allegedly spend big bucks on lunch out and getting their shoes shined. How tone deaf and out of touch can one be?

And they are being paid less than at comparable employers, such as Legal Aid and Legal Services, who generally have pay scales which increase with each year's experience. By contrast, we theoretically have four Agency Attorney levels. The city's dirty secrets along these lines, which attorneys learn after being onboard for a short time, is that almost no one gets to a Level 4, there are relatively few Level 3s, and that "minimum" and "maximum" pay for each level, as specified in our contract, is illusory. There is no mechanism to get anywhere approaching maximum pay, or even above the incumbent minimum. Yes, we do have paltry Recurring Increment Payments ("RIPs") but they don't amount to much compared to a true step pay plan, which other employers offer. Indeed some city titles enjoy Step Pay Plans, but the city refuses to offer it to us each and every time we engage in collective bargaining. And they wonder between the shabby treatment, the refusal to offer a hybrid schedule allowing even one or two days a week working from home, very high case loads, minimal opportunity for advancement, lower salaries and so forth, why people are leaving in record numbers, and it's extremely hard to attract new attorneys? Really?

Here are some steps that this City Council, through recommendations from your joint Oversight and Civil Service and Labor committees, can and should take that could make a difference:

- Closely scrutinize the delays involved with onboarding. A high percentage of persons who would consider taking city positions, and even interview for jobs, wind up going elsewhere due to the months of delays inherent in the system as it currently exists. Can there not be budgetary preapproval for a certain number of specified, necessary positions?
- Insist that each agency, starting with the ones enumerated above, show their attempts at recruiting, and whether or not they have had difficulty in recruitment. Almost without exception, they have had tremendous difficulty finding qualified

applicants willing to take these positions, especially when the applicants find out that they can only get the posted minimum (and not the range indicated in the posting).

- Given the difficulty in recruiting, our titles **should be exempted** from Administrative Code 12-119 through 12-121's Residency Requirement. For some reason, Commissioners seem afraid to take this logical step!
- While you are examining the above-referenced sections of the Administrative Code, we strongly suggest that it also be **amended to cover not only difficult to recruit but also difficult to retain titles**. Absolutely no knowledgeable Agency Commissioner or General Counsel will tell you that we are not difficult to retain! Growing families need the option to live where suitable housing is both available and affordable, including in nearby New Jersey and Connecticut towns. Already a bunch of agency titles are exempt from any residency requirements. For example, the attorneys at Corporation Counsel ("the Law Department"), *who we went to law school with, are exempt from any residency requirement*, because their Commissioner approached DCAS with that request.
- Demand, draft, sponsor, co-sponsor and support legislation to require each city agency to prepare a policy offering employees the ability to work remotely.
- Hold hearings demanding that agency commissioners explain the policy and the need for any excess restrictions on eligibility.
- Require that each agency provide all internal reports, studies, documents, etc. related to worker productivity during the period when many workers performed their duties remotely.
- Help create paths for advancement within agencies as a means to better retain qualified, experienced personnel. One way to do so is to require DCAS to update/modify their Job Assignment by title code, including "Typical Tasks". Hardly anyone performs these so-called "Typical Tasks", and some tasks more typical of higher levels are inserted into lower level titles in order to defeat the possibility of a successful out-of-level grievance. For example, one "Examples of Typical Tasks" for an Agency Attorney Assignment Level I is to "Recommends statutory and regulatory revisions related to agency issues". Another for a Level I is "May assist in training and supervising the activities of subordinate staff. Guides, supervises and/or reviews work of support staff to ensure completeness and compliance with agency policy and professional standards". This should instead be the work of an Agency Attorney Level II, whose stated tasks already include "Assists in the overall supervision of the unit, including filling in for other legal staff in emergency situations and reviewing work of the unit" and "May train and oversee the work of attorneys and internes..."
- And to further defeat Level II grievances, "typical tasks" include "May be responsible for the administration, improvement and maintenance of any agency law library" – who has a law library these days? Level II supposedly also has "May serve as the

Records Access Appeal Officer under the Freedom of Information Law". No one I know is doing that. Level II was created to provide an opportunity for promotion for more senior attorneys so they don't leave before having the opportunity to rise to Level III.

- Assignment Level IV is almost impossible to achieve, causing agencies to make people "Managerial", i.e.- M1 or M3, even though they perform CSBA bargaining unit work and often do not supervise any more than a Level 3 or 4. And some General Counsels and Chiefs even tell us that they hire non-union "*Managerials*" *because they can't find qualified attorneys for what they can pay us*. The head of the Real Estate unit at HPD recently admitted that to us in a Labor-Management meeting! In short, this whole scheme needs to be reexamined with an eye to make it more workable and to encourage talented people to come to and stay working for the City.

Thank you very much for your conducting this hearing, and hopefully for taking the needed follow-up hearings for maintaining the city workforce and for corrective legislation and other measures. I am happy to answer any of your questions and will submit the longer version of my testimony by email on Monday.

October 13, 2021

Dear Mayor DeBlasio,

We are concerned unionized and non-unionized employees of the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) writing in response to the abrupt and ill-considered return to office (RTO) mandate that was hastily implemented on September 13, 2021. Now that we have been working from the office full-time for one month, we feel it is imperative to address the failures of this policy.

Our disapproval of this rushed return to office is not a reflection of our dedication to New York City or our cultural constituents. These cultural creators – whose spaces were first to close, and last to reopen – have been individually, institutionally, and systemically devastated by the impacts of this virus. We too want New York City's economy and cultural sector to recover and thrive, and agree with you that arts and culture are the "[heart and soul of this city](#)." We are committed to improving the access to meaningful cultural and creative activities for all New Yorkers. You supported our work in [March 2021 at the Queens Museum](#), when you stated that "the Department of Cultural Affairs is taking its mission and going much farther to finding ways to help people build at the community level. This is a really expansive vision of what Cultural Affairs means. I think it's the right vision." We do not believe that forcing non-public facing workers into antiquated office spaces is the best way to serve our field, which responded positively to the modernizations and updates that we have been able to provide remotely.

In the first month back to the office, our small agency has been notified of multiple positive tests and close contacts, causing intense anxiety among staff. The insufficient communication surrounding exposure and subsequent safety measures has increased the collective distrust in the adequacy of these measures and has led to significant distraction from our work. Staff have voiced concerns about logistics such as safe spaces to eat at the office, mask compliance enforcement, and updated technology needs without adequate response from New York City leadership. This has been an extraordinarily and unnecessarily stressful return that has endangered staff and their families, and interfered with the productivity of our agency.

DCLA's current expense budget is \$230.1 million, and our ten year capital budget totals \$1.26 billion. Our agency is responsible for the ongoing support of over 1,000 non-profit organizations with a current staff headcount of only 64 people. The current RTO mandate has already led to staff absenteeism as increased requests for reasonable accommodations. Positive COVID-19 cases among our staff result in additional time off for staff illness, family care, and recuperation. Our agency has already struggled to hire and retain staff prior to the RTO mandate. Many current and potential workers at DCLA will no doubt seek employment elsewhere when so many other employers in the private sector continue to allow for hybrid work. These factors threaten our agency's ability to effectively serve a cultural sector that is already struggling to stay alive and has been a key factor in the City's recovery plan.

Our agency proudly employs parents of young children who are not yet eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccinations. We share the concerns made in [this New York Times op-ed](#) about the extreme detrimental impact of this policy on parent-employees. This full return to the office puts a further inequitable burden on parents of young children, especially single parents, women, and parents of color. It also burdens employees who live with immunocompromised or elderly relatives, populations who are eligible for vaccination but for whom the vaccine may be less effective. This is explicitly at odds with your publicly stated values of equity, upon which you were elected, and the [First Lady's statement in May of 2021](#) that "*Now, more than ever, we must support the mental health and emotional well-being of our children, parents, and families* [emphasis added]."

While the most dire worries of the pandemic have dissipated for some New Yorkers, we are mindful of the continued hardships faced by our colleagues who are also caregivers, parents, residents of communities ravaged by the virus, and those who remain vulnerable despite vaccination. The New York City that we strive towards everyday should not ask civil servants to make impossible decisions, where choosing to maintain a livelihood may sacrifice the health and safety of a vulnerable household.

On September 10, 2021, your statement on *Ask The Mayor with Brian Lehrer* that “we will serve [people] better by resuming the work we did the way we did it,” ran in direct conflict with [your statement](#) at the Queens Museum in March of 2021. In your statement at the Queens Museum in March, you also said “We do not want to go to the status quo before the pandemic. I want to be really clear. *We do not just want to recreate what was there before the pandemic, because it wasn't good enough* [emphasis added.] We want to do something different.” We agree that instead of returning to the way things were, the City can be reborn as a better version of its past self, evolving to meet the needs of a world that has changed while limiting the risk of exposure to all City workers - including those who do not have the option to work remotely. If the City continues to provide hybrid and telework options to office-based employees, we will have greater success retaining the skilled and diverse employees our agency needs to serve our cultural field.

We work in support of an equitable recovery for New York City, the spirit of which asks that we relegate historic inequities, especially those amplified by the pandemic, to the workplace of the past. If we are to honor our commitment to creating truly diverse and inclusive workforces, we must also acknowledge that an inflexible return to office mandate will inevitably force out individuals who most need obstacles to employment removed.

In an effort to address the short-term needs related to the RTO disaster and the long-term needs of the City to employ a competitive workforce, we implore you to implement the following measures:

1. Delay the full RTO mandate until January 1, 2022, to allow for a more humane, safe and prepared roll-out for return to commuting and office that allows employees and agencies adequate time to prepare for the significant change in lifestyle and work practice. Any return to office deadline should align with the timing of vaccine eligibility for all New Yorkers (i.e., all children under age 12 who will be cared for while we work).
2. Advance conversations with unions and executive management to implement a long-term, responsive, flexible remote telework policy for office workers citywide to allow the City to compete with the private and not-for-profit sectors for administrative talent.
3. Implement immediate compliance with the NYS HERO Act by reinstating social distancing requirements for those working on site, and providing accountability regarding on-site safety, including anonymized site testing outcomes and appropriate hazard pay and PPE.

We look forward to a comprehensive reconsideration of this unnecessarily risky and rushed policy, and encourage immediate and meaningful conversations with union leadership and related stakeholders to inform a more humane, respectful, and impactful return for all New York office workers.

DCLA Telework Advocacy Group
DCLA Parent Affinity Group

CC:
Governor Kathy Hochul

NYS DOL Commissioner Roberta Reardon
Deputy Mayor Vicki Been
Senior Advisor Ali Davis
DCLA Commissioner Gonzalo Casals
DCLA Deputy Commissioner Sheelah Feinberg
Councilmember Jimmy Van Bramer (Chair, Cultural Affairs & Libraries Committee)
Council Member Laurie Cumbo (Cultural Affairs & Libraries Committee)
Council Member Marc Gjonaj (Cultural Affairs & Libraries Committee)
Council Member Francisco Moya (Cultural Affairs & Libraries Committee)
Council Member James F. Gennaro (Cultural Affairs & Libraries Committee)
Council Member Darma V. Diaz (Cultural Affairs & Libraries Committee)
Council Member Mark Levine (Chair, Health Committee)
Comptroller Scott Stringer
Public Advocate Jumaane Williams
DC 37 Executive Director Henry Garrido
DC 37 Local 299 President Jackie Rowe Adams
DC 37 Local 299 Vice President DeJon Williams
DC 37 Local 371 President Anthony Wells
DC 37 Local 371 H. Omar Quhshi
District 18 Senator Julia Salazar
Legislative Director, Senator Julia Salazar (D18), Mark Mishler
New District Policy and Organizing Director, Senator Julia Salazar (D18), Ramon Pebenito
District 50 Assemblymember Emily Gallagher
Chief of Staff, Assemblymember Emily Gallagher (D50), Andrew Epstein

Firefighter Jason Freed's online testimony

When the "pandemic" began in March 2020, my coworkers and I knew that we would be expected to once again go above and beyond our duties and face a problem that we were never trained for. Our limited medical training does not include the treatment for respiratory viruses, yet we are and have been sent to respond to these calls since day 1 of the "pandemic". We knew that we couldn't really provide any substantive care for these patients- no 1st responder can help cure Covid, the only thing we could do is provide CPR to those who were too old or too sick to fight off the virus. And in doing so, we knew that these calls would mainly serve to infect us, and ultimately our families. In the beginning of the "pandemic", this was a daunting and scary idea, yet we went ahead and did our job because that's what the FDNY does.

When I got Covid in March of 2020, the death ticker was on the news 24/7, adding to the level of anxiety. My case of Covid was pretty bad. I had a fever for 2 weeks, developed pneumonia, and just felt like absolute shit. My lungs felt destroyed for a while, I lost about 20 lbs, and ultimately I missed about 5 weeks of work. I also gave Covid to my wife who thankfully had a much easier time with it than I did.

When all was said and done, I felt very confident about my natural immunity and went right back to work serving the city I was born and raised in. A city I once loved. A city I would once brag about being from, and one which I am now so disgusted and disappointed by. A city I can't wait to flee and never return. Why the complete 180 degree on my hometown? Because of the tyranny of the awful politicians of NY. And yes, that includes the city council and both dipshit mayors, Diblasio and Eric Adams. It includes the corrupt governors Cuomo and the unelected Kathy Hochul. The people who would use a "pandemic" as a power grab that to this day they're unwilling to let go, are as overbearing and evil as they come. Using people's fears to increase their own authority, without regard to the consequences of the people they're supposed to serve is an immeasurable crime. Locking people in their homes, stripping their fundamental human freedoms, destroying people's entire livelihoods are immeasurable crimes. Causing people to miss out on final moments with loved ones, funerals, weddings, vacations, graduations, school years, athletics seasons, etc- immeasurable harm. And did it help? Did we flatten the curve? I think we all know the answer to that.

Now let's get to the issue at hand- my brothers and sisters who are fighting for their careers that were stolen from them. I watched my high school friend Brendan Fogarty testify about his painful forced early retirement. I don't even know to say to my good friend and coworker of 15 years Sophy Medina when I see her, as she and her husband Tommy remain on leave without pay, while I collect a paycheck. What's been done to them (and to the thousands who took your forced "vaccines" against our wills), has caused immeasurable harm. The very people who served you and the rest of

the city, the people who were “essential”, who you banged pots and pans for at 7pm, who were called heroes (even though most of us hate that moniker and just consider it our job), are the very people you’re punishing in the harshest way possible. You’re taking away their jobs, because they want to be free to make their own decisions about what to inject in their bodies. During the “pandemic”, when this “vaccine” didn’t exist yet, the last thing you’d ever think to do would be to get rid of one of your so called heroes. What sense does any of this make?

The immeasurable harm will never be undone. But at the very least, you can admit to the wrongs that have been done to some very good people- and you can try to make them whole again. Reverse the senseless mandates. Don’t let your politics continue to get in the way of doing the right thing. Give them their jobs back. Let them continue to serve the city. I for one will be leaving the job in the very near future, never to look back. These years are the ones a guy my age on the job looks forward to. The years where you can sit back a bit, drive the rig and do less wear and tear on your broken down body, and impart some knowledge to the younger guys. Leave a lasting imprint and try to make the firehouse better than you found it. But instead I’ll just go. I’m disheartened and disappointed. But I hope and pray for the guys who have to stay, that the city turns itself around and finds the greatness it once had.

-Jason Freed (FDNY Engine 9)



LOCAL 1549, DC37, AFSCME

State, Administrative and Authorities Division – We're All About New York

Greetings and thank you to the Chair and the members Committee on Oversight and Investigations & Civil Service & Labor, Panelist and audience

My name is Brenda Walker, HRA Chapter Chairperson/DC37 Local 1549 Grievance Representative for the State Administration of & Authorities Division.

I have proudly served the city of New York as a civil servant for almost 40 years. The members I currently represent as a Grievance Representative are predominately women of color and mothers who earn a median income of approximately \$35 -40,000 annually) Some of them have to take on second jobs, have experienced homelessness as they attempt to maintain their families in the midst of inflation and the sky rocketing cost of living in New York City. New York is deemed a sanctuary city who prides themselves of taking in refugees and immigrants (except of course Haitians) that boasts catapulting them to the front of the line to receive housing, food stamps Medicaid and other services that native New Yorkers themselves have difficulty obtaining, especially in the case of homelessness and housing where many languish in homeless shelters for years hoping to acquire permanent housing.

Local 1549 members are in most cases frontline workers, and those that determine eligibility whom you would first encounter upon entering a job center to apply for benefits. Many of them have worked throughout the pandemic facing danger daily, navigating to their locations in the midst of the Covid storm while dealing with the trauma and loss of family members, friends and co-workers. They are responsible for keeping the lights on and seeing to it that desperate New Yorkers were fed, received medical benefits and more while many themselves could not qualify for any of these services. They worked tirelessly, sacrificing their time, participating in the grueling mandatory overtime that lasted for seven months, yet they never received the Hero's pay, essential workers' pay, or even a thank you. Instead, they are subjected to the heavy hand of management as the city attempts to operate in the time of the Great Resignation while job vacancy rates rise to 19% in Social Services. Across the city they are enduring working on faulty equipment but are constantly blamed for not producing while doing the work of three people. Through the systems breakdown, lack of training, and short staff, there are faced with maltreatment and bullying behavior, toxic and hostile environments, low morale, disparate treatment giving rise to stress and mental fatigue and prompting many to resign, retire early with penalties or simply opting to find employment elsewhere for their health. To add to this, thousands of dedicated city workers were fired for not complying to a vaccine mandate that was never a condition of their employment but were thrown away without a care for their health or well-being. And although

there were opportunities to apply for exemptions, most were denied without real just cause, and only given a short amount time of medical coverage with not pay, till they became clients themselves.

Last but not least DCAS has allowed for three Eligibility lists to exist at the same time, and one of the lists has been active for 10 years with the same salary. Meanwhile other non-completive titles are allowed to thrive as the hiring continues even throughout the pandemic, while the much-needed Eligibility Specialist, and the Clerical Associate titles fight to exist

This revisited approach to doing more with less, has not worked before and it will work now, as the vacancies continue to rise while city struggles to attract new talent with low wages and plenty of competition from the private sector.

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Testimony for the NYC Council's Committee on Oversight and Investigations September 9, 2022 Meeting

Oversight – Maintaining New York City's Municipal Workforce Jointly with the Committee on Civil Service and Labor

I am a senior manager and have worked for nearly 8 years in the central offices of the NYCDOE, where my mission is to support the development and engagement of about 7,000 employees in central and field offices. Based on research, I know that employee morale and engagement is critical to workforce productivity, longevity, loyalty, safety, and health. I believe we are currently in a crisis related to all of the above, because of ongoing stressors due the pandemic, compounded by the current mandate that employees work full-time in person.

In addition, I've heard anecdotally that my colleagues across DOE offices are leaving en masse. My office has lost several employees, most recently 2 of the most senior having left for private not-for-profits. This is also a trend of the Great Resignation, or Great Reshuffle, which increases stress for managers in particular as they're left to complete even more of the work while they have more demands on their usual managerial roles. This is a public health crisis, as well as a concern for the city. Here at the DOE central offices, it means less capacity to support schools in many ways—staffing with capable teachers, administrators, mental health staff in schools, etc.; maintaining the transportation fleet, serving quality meals, purchasing supplies, maintaining buildings, and so on.

For many of my colleagues, there is one clear solution: offer remote or hybrid options, to support their need to care for families, care for themselves, avoid the ongoing risk of infection on public transportation, and save time and money commuting. There are other ways to engage employees and show that they are valued, but this is a key need at this time. DOE central and field employees proved during the remote work period that they could not only continue to accomplish their work—many also moved mountains to go above and beyond while working from home, in order to support the rapid transition to remote learning. Please consider taking action in order to guarantee remote options for city workforce as soon as possible.

In the long run, there is a larger need to engage and value employees. I am happy to discuss further.

Thank you,

Dr. Kira Krenichyn
kkrenichyn@gmail.com



**NEW YORK CITY
MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES
ASSOCIATION**

**“Oversight: Maintaining New York City’s Municipal
Workforce.”**

New York City Council

**Oversight & Investigations Committee
and
Civil Service & Labor Committee**

**Joint Hearing
Friday, September 9
1:00pm
Council Chambers
City Hall, New York, NY**



**NEW YORK CITY
MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES
ASSOCIATION**

DARRELL L. SIMS
President

January 3, 2022

EDGAR LANDAS
Executive Vice President

Dear Mayor Adams,

BERNARD ORLAN
Treasurer

Congratulations on your overwhelming victory in November's elections. The New York City Managerial Employees Association (MEA) is proud to have worked with you as Brooklyn Borough President and hopes to continue and strengthen our relationship in your new position.

LISA YEE
Recording Secretary

ALICE WONG
Executive Director

We request a meeting with you or your designees to discuss the following issues relevant to the 16,000 managers in our City's government.

SAM BORKOW
Director-at-large

Paid Parental Leave (PPL)

PETER KOTOGIANNIS
Director-at-large

- We request restoration of the two annual leave days per year taken from managers who earned 27 days per year to fund the Paid Parental Leave Program.
- MEA requests a Paid Family Leave Program in lieu of continuation of the Paid Parental Leave Program. A Paid Family Leave Program would be more appropriate and practical for use by a greater number of managers than a Paid Parental Leave Program.

CESARE LUCIDO
Director-at-large

PAMELA ROSS
Director-at-large

SHELLY SHULMAN
President Emeritus

Pay Plan for Managerial Employees (PPME)

STUART EBER
President Emeritus

MEA advises revising the Pay Plan for Managerial Employees to address salary compression. Anytime a non-manager is offered a promotion to the managerial titles, pay compensation for the promotion shall be a guaranteed increase of 8% or more. All promotions within the managerial titles shall also be accompanied by a guaranteed salary increase of 8% or more.

WILLIAM DWORKIN
President Emeritus

STUART SALLES
Legal Counsel

Managerial Longevity Pay

In recognition of career managers' dedicated public service and as an incentive for permanent civil service managers to remain in public service, MEA requests that longevity service increments be added to the salaries of qualified managers. Implementation of a longevity service increment pay plan for managers would provide parity in compensation with non-managerial civil service employees. It is proposed that longevity compensation be awarded to managers who have maintained at least a satisfactory rating on their performance evaluations for three or more years.

Seminars on Healthcare Benefits

With the conversion of NYC Retirees Original Medicare healthcare benefits to a Medicare Advantage Plan, we are requesting OLR to provide membership seminars for that transition and for members anticipating retirement. We strongly believe the more informed our members are, the better choices they will be able to make when deciding on healthcare benefits.



Managerial Performance Evaluations

It is good business practice for employers and employees to have an annual contract detailing work tasks and standards based on objective criteria. Evaluations should formally document work performance to justify promotions, increases in compensation and demotions. In addition, evaluations should provide a manager with specific information regarding performance strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, MEA requests a productive managerial performance evaluation system.

Meaningful Adverse Action Appeal Procedure

MEA requests a meaningful adverse action appeal procedure for managers. The appeal procedure should be transparent, independent, and not in a conflict of interest with those reviewing and making a final decision on the appeal.

Standardization of Regulations for All NYC Managers

There appears to be a lack of uniform and consistent standard of rules and rights for managers working at the various agencies throughout City government. MEA requests that the Office of Labor Relations (OLR) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) create standardization and distribution of regulations to all managers and all agencies' human resources units. All managers should be informed of managerial employment guidelines and treated equally and fairly using the same policies and procedures.

Increase MEA Manager Enrollment in The DCAS Leadership Academy

Continuing education and professional development are extremely important in today's work environment. MEA requests increased enrollment of MEA managers in the DCAS Leadership Academy to enhance managerial skills and abilities.

Reimbursement for Professional License Renewal Fees

Non-managers are contractually entitled to be reimbursed for renewal of their professional licenses while only some managers receive reimbursement for license renewal for select professions by a limited number of agencies. Not all professionals in all agencies are reimbursed accordingly. All professionals who are required to maintain a license in order to perform their vocational responsibilities should be reimbursed for license renewal.

Terminal Sick Leave Compensation Equality with Non-Managerial Employees

There is an inequality in the value of sick leave upon retirement that the managerial work force receives when compared to the non-managerial work force. Upon retirement, managerial sick leave is reimbursed at the rate of one day for every three days of sick leave earned with a required minimum balance of at least 60 days of sick leave to be eligible to receive any sick leave compensation. Non-managerial sick leave is reimbursed at the rate of one day for every two days of sick leave earned with no minimum balance requirement. MEA requests equal treatment of all managers in all agencies and authorities by providing parity with all non-managerial employees regarding terminal sick leave compensation. This would provide all managers with no minimum accrued sick leave requirement and one paid sick day for each two accrued sick days.

Sincerely,
Darrell L. Sims
President



NEW YORK CITY
**MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES
ASSOCIATION**

DARRELL L. SIMS
President

July 29, 2020

EDGAR LANDAS
Executive Vice President

Dear Commissioner Campion and Deputy Assistant Counsel Pollak,

BERNARD ORLAN
Treasurer

STEPHEN FISHER
Recording Secretary

ALICE WONG
Executive Director

Thank you for taking time to meet with the MEA. We look forward to continuing development of a working relationship with the Office of Labor Relations. Kindly find attached the January 3, 2022 letter the MEA sent to Mayor Adams. This is a copy of the same letter we presented at our July 13th meeting. In addition to topics in this letter; we have highlighted and expanded our advocacy and discussion regarding the following issues:

SAM BORKOW
Director-at-large

PETER KOTOGIANNIS
Director-at-large

CESARE LUCIDO
Director-at-large

PAMELA ROSS
Director-at-large

SHELLY SHULMAN
President Emeritus

STUART EBER
President Emeritus

WILLIAM DWORKIN
President Emeritus

STUART SALLES
Legal Counsel

Paid Parental Leave. OLR committed to revisiting this matter with Mayor Adams and will communicate with MEA regarding overall usage data for the PPL Program. MEA proposed a Paid Family Leave Program similar to the unions for the managers. A City employee must work fifteen years to earn twenty-seven days of annual leave per year. By the time an employee reaches fifteen years of City service (a senior manager), he or she in most cases is beyond child rearing age. Because of the age of most senior managers, the PPL Program does not provide any benefit for them although they are contributing two annual leave days per year to help fund the Program. Based on this rationale, the PPL Program is unfair and inappropriate for most senior managers whose age renders them beyond child rearing. Whereas, a Paid Family Leave Program would more appropriately provide leave for the care of children, parents, and immediate family members for all managers. The Paid Parental Leave Program is outdated / obsolete because of limitations on what managers are eligible to benefit from its usage.

Although not discussed, in addition to two annual leave days being taken from each senior manager who earns twenty-seven days of annual leave per year, a .47% pay raise (effective July 1, 2017) was repurposed from all managers to assist in funding the PPL Program. A Paid Family Leave Program would be available for more managers and provide more equitable usage by a greater number of managers regardless of family composition. Feasibility for a Paid Family Leave Program will be explored.

Pay Raises. It was stated that pay raises are tied to reductions in City healthcare benefit costs. The Healthcare Fund reserve has been depleted. The City and unions must resolve high healthcare benefit costs before pay raises can be considered. Contract negotiations with unions have not commenced. It was expressed that there is no timetable for when raises will be provided for managers or unionized employees. Managerial raises are usually after union collective bargaining raise patterns have been set.



Telework / Work From Home Policy. We were glad to be informed that OLR has already approached Mayor Adams regarding this topic. MEA endorses the establishment of a policy and program that allows employees to perform their duties through teleworking at alternative work sites, to the maximum extent possible, without diminished performance and services to the people of the City in accordance with each agency's mandate. MEA's endorsement letter to the NYS Senate and Assembly is posted on our website, [here](#).

Managerial Longevity Pay. MEA stressed the importance for managers to have longevity pay as an incentive to become a manager, and as an incentive for the retention of managerial employees. Managerial longevity pay would create a sense of some pay equity with union employees. Because managers do not receive overtime pay nor accumulate compensation time when working more than 35 hours per week, longevity pay would help narrow the inequity in compensation between managers and union employees. Many times, the unionized staff, who the manager supervises, earns more pay than the manager because of longevity and overtime pay. This can also be demoralizing for managers.

Seminars on Healthcare Benefits. Healthcare benefits seminars to be available for MEA members. We look forward to the contact information and calendar of events to coordinate programs.

Managerial Performance Evaluations. Both parties agreed it was important that evaluations should be provided annually. OLR will follow-up with DCAS for the city-wide policy. Please Note: a requirement for Managerial Performance Evaluations would be an example of "Standardization of Regulations for All NYC Managers" pursuant to the MEA letter to Mayor Adams.

Terminal Sick Leave Parity for Managers and Unionized Employees. MEA advocated for parity with unionized employees in terminal sick leave compensation for managers upon permanent separation from City government. We strongly believe the requirement for a minimum balance of 60 days of sick leave to be eligible for any sick leave compensation be eliminated. This 60-day minimum balance is not required for unionized employees. We also advocated for compensation for terminal sick leave be allocated at the same rate as unionized employees, one day for every two days of sick leave earned, in lieu of one day for every three sick days earned. It was stated at the meeting that recently hired unionized employees' terminal sick leave is allocated for compensation at a rate of one day for every three sick days earned. However, MEA still advocates, at separation from City government, sick leave for managers should be compensated at one day for every two sick days earned in lieu of one day for every three sick days earned.

City Council Pay Equity Report. Pay disparity among women and minorities was raised by MEA pursuant to the August 2021 "Pay Equality In NYC" by the New York City Council. Both parties agreed to have further discussions on this issue. MEA stated that we would like to participate in any follow-up committees or activities by City agencies or the City Council regarding this Report.

We will follow-up with your office in the coming weeks. Thank you for your time and attention to these important topics. If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact Executive Director Alice Wong.

Sincerely,
Darrell L. Sims
President



**NEW YORK CITY
MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES
ASSOCIATION**

DARRELL L. SIMS
President

February 14, 2022

EDGAR LANDAS
Executive Vice President

BERNARD ORLAN
Treasurer

LISA YEE
Recording Secretary

ALICE WONG
Executive Director

SAM BORKOW
Director-at-large

PETER KOTOGIANNIS
Director-at-large

CESARE LUCIDO
Director-at-large

PAMELA ROSS
Director-at-large

SHELLY SHULMAN
President Emeritus

STUART EBER
President Emeritus

WILLIAM DWORKIN
President Emeritus

STUART SALLES
Legal Counsel

Dear Assembly Speaker Heastie and Senate Majority Leader Stewart Cousins:

The New York City Managerial Employees Association's Executive Board passed a resolution in support of the New York City Teleworking Expansion Act Senate Bill S5536 and Assembly Bill A457 on January 18, 2022.

We endorse the establishment of a policy and program that allows employees to perform their duties through teleworking at alternative work sites, to the maximum extent possible, without diminished performance and services to the people of the City in accordance with each agency's mandate.

Teleworking will help all agencies particularly in times of crisis like the current pandemic, be they health or climate related, by allowing alternate work sites for thousands of employees. It will establish new means of attracting highly qualified employees who have been able to work remotely in the private sector during, and even before, the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you wish to have further discussions with us regarding these bills, please contact our Executive Director, Alice Wong.

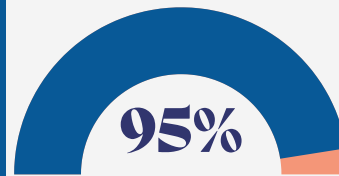
Sincerely yours,

Darrell L. Sims,
President



NEW YORK CITY MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

MEA surveyed our members to gauge current Telework/WFH (work from home) and its adoption as a future policy for NYC Employees. July 2022



YES

Do you support
Telework/WFH as
an option?

26.1%
Commute/Travel Safety

25.4%
Health/COVID-19

15.6%
No benefit to being in person

9.6%
Crime/Public Safety

5.7%
Childcare/Household concerns

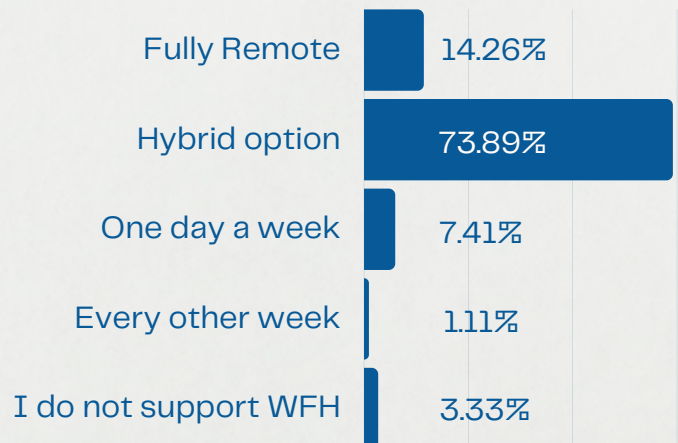
17.6%
Other

COMMUTE / TRAVEL SAFETY

Since returning to work, what is
your primary concern about
working in the office?

HYBIRD OPTION

What is your preference
for Telework/WFH?

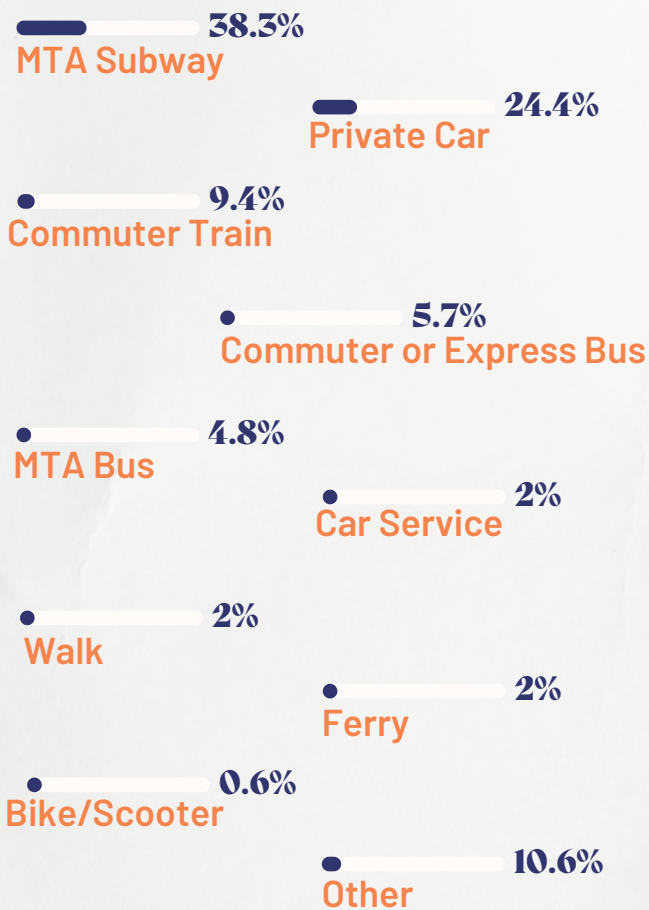
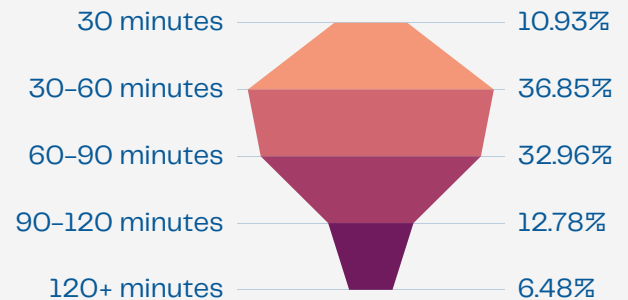




NEW YORK CITY MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AVERAGE OF 60 MINUTES

How long is your
commute to the
office?

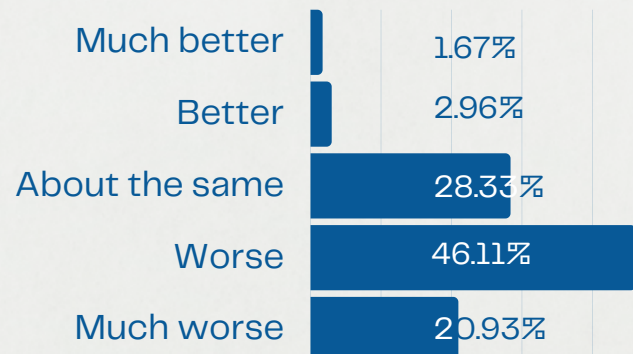


MTA SUBWAY

What method of
transportation do you use to
commute to the office?

WORSE

Rate your work-life balance
since returning to the office.





NEW YORK CITY MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

Retention

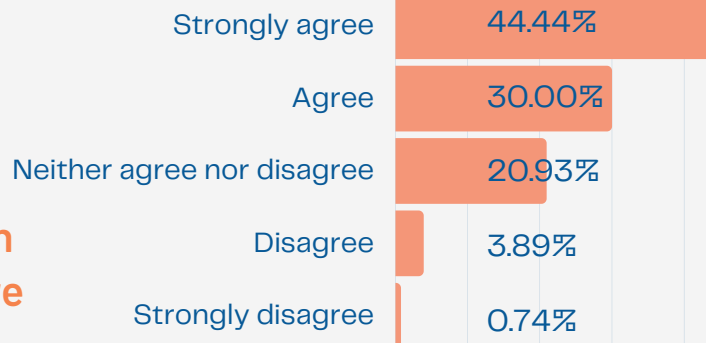
YES

I want a pay raise.



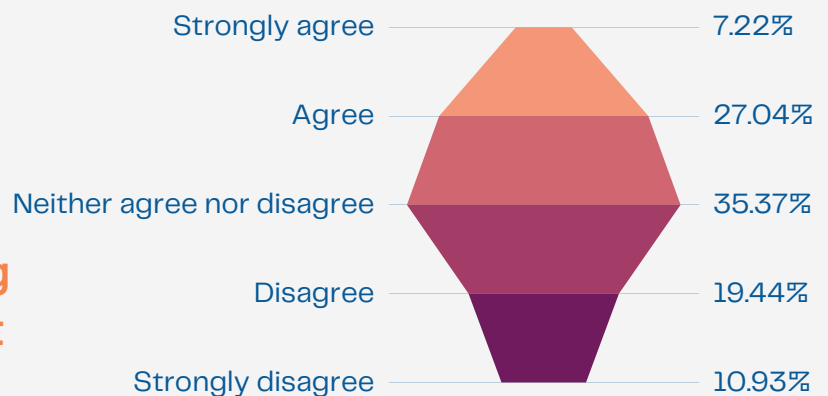
AGREE

As a hiring manager,
the City's lack of
Telework/WFH option
makes it harder to hire
people.



CITY
SUPPORT

My agency is doing
its best to support
me and my team.





NEW YORK CITY
MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES
ASSOCIATION

Darrell Sims
President of the Board

Alice Wong
Executive Director

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42 Broadway
Suite 1945
New York, NY 10004

"Oversight: Maintaining New York City's Municipal Workforce"

New York City Council
Oversight & Investigations Committee and
Civil Service and Labor Committee Joint Hearing

Friday, September 9, 2022
1:00 pm
Council Chambers
City Hall, New York, NY

Good afternoon, Madame Chairs Gale Brewer and Carmen De La Rosa, Committee Members and all attendees. I am Darrell Sims, R.A., President of the New York City Managerial Employees Association (MEA) and with me is Alice Wong, the Executive Director of the MEA. We would like to thank the Committees for providing us with the opportunity to testify on behalf of the 16,000 NYC managerial employees and MEA members.

After a 39-year tenure working at HPD, I retired on January 1, 2020. Elected as MEA President, I commenced my term on January 1, 2022. Based on my experience and from information expressed to me by the MEA Executive Board and our members, there are various reasons as to why it has become difficult and challenging to maintain the municipal workforce especially during the Covid-19 Pandemic. As most would agree, pay raises and the ability to work from home are the main issues confronting the municipal workforce today. Recently, we conducted a survey of our active working members and Ms. Wong will present those findings subsequently.

MEA is quite aware of the fact that all municipal employees are in desperate need of pay raises now. Salaries are stagnant and significantly inadequate to relieve the financial strain of cost-of-living increases and the highest inflation rate in over forty years. The lack of fair and timely pay raises has negatively impacted the morale of employees. It is MEA's opinion that pay raises should not be dependent on reductions in health care costs, especially during a pandemic with extraordinarily high inflation. Based on the status of efforts to reduce health care costs, pay raises will be substantially delayed. This has intensified frustration among the municipal workforce.

As part of MEA's testimony, we have presented our correspondence with The City of New York and the New York State Assembly and Senate expressing our advocacy for improvements in the work life experience for the betterment of New York City managers and MEA members. Please see the attachments.

To remedy the high number of job vacancies among municipal agencies, it will require both expeditious and effective recruitment as well as meaningful efforts to retain the existing municipal workforce. Recruitment and retention must be addressed simultaneously to prevent a counterproductive cyclic trend of hirings and resignations.

I will now relinquish to Ms. Wong to discuss the results of MEA's teleworking survey.

Good afternoon, City Council members and all attendees. I am Alice Wong, the Executive Director of MEA. Thank you for your time.

MEA surveyed our members regarding telework and its adoption as a future policy for NYC employees. The survey also included questions related to retention and job-related support systems. We found that morale among City employees is low - we hear this from our members, time and time again. The two drivers are pay raises and telework options.

Today, we heard from OLR regarding negotiations with unions. It would be remissive not to remind OLR of the non-union employees, specifically, managers. Career managers are responsible for the day-to-day and year-to-year public service operations of City government. They are responsible for achieving individual Agency goals as well as satisfying Administration mandates. Within given parameters and sometimes with unforeseen limitations and handicaps, these tasks are achieved on a regular basis by career managers. Managers consistently fulfill the expectations of the City's Administration.

Managers accumulate knowledge and wisdom from training and everyday experience on the front line managing the activities required to provide unwavering public service to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Their leadership and management skills provide the direction for the performance of non-managerial staff. With this said, career managers should be identified and compensated fairly and reasonably for the magnitude of their responsibilities. Managers deserve the same level of respect and attention for their dedication and hard work as other municipal employees.

Some Survey Statistics include:

- 1) 95% support WFH option
- 2) 51% commute/travel safety and health safety are the top concerns for returning in-person
- 3) 67% work-life balance has gotten worse since returning to the office
- 4) 70% managers have taken on additional work as colleagues leave
- 5) 74% harder to fill open vacancies and believe the lack of WFH is a main factor
- 6) 90% strongly want a pay increase

Top issues include:

- 1) IT technology and infrastructure upgrades are needed to support WFH
- 2) Investment for IT equipment, including computers and headsets, needed/updated
- 3) Standardized WFH city wide policy v per agency is of concern
- 4) WFH policy might not be applicable or able to be offered to everyone, thus it might not be fair policy
- 5) Preference for hybrid option for flexibility to collaborate with colleagues
- 6) Flexibility of not commuting for an improved work-life balance
- 7) Be competitive in the job market to attract talent
- 8) Mental health focus should be a priority

While these are the highlights of the survey, a full report can be provided to the council. We look forward to continuing development of a working relationship and open lines of communication with The City Council. Thank you for time and attention to these important matters.

Good day,

I'm Iliana Gordon, a Police Communications Technician with the New York City Police Department I've written to almost every member of the former public safety committee regarding issues plaguing the Public Safety Answering Center as far back as 2017-2018. I've written to the former speaker and the present speaker as recent as May of this year, nothing. I've spoken and written to the former Mayor and my letter was forward to the then Police Commissioner who provided absolutely no help, nothing has happened regarding improving working conditions and low pay at the New York City Department - Communications Division 911 Operators and Dispatchers.

You see the problem lies in that over the past 20 years there exist a problem with retaining the labor force at the center. It doesn't take a genius to figure out the root cause of the problem and to that being of sub par wages that is not up to par with the cost of living in New York City. I know for a fact without seeing the spreadsheet that over the years NYC has spent millions hiring operators, recruiting events, DCAS test sittings, training sessions only for these new operators to leave in less than 3 years because for a job that requires so much, the salary is a joke.

For such a demanding and stressful job who really wants to be paid a starting salary of \$39,329 annually topping of at \$53,251? The average rent in Brooklyn is an estimated \$3100. We are majority women of color and I know I speak for everyone when I say I'm tired of it all.

This past summer operators were held to perform mandatory overtime 3-5 days were week. My coworkers are overworked and exhausted they have been experiencing a high level of job burnout. Do you guys even care? The little staff that is left there is made to keep up with the staff the command is suppose to have every single day, every single tour of duty.

Please note:

-We are the lowest paid dispatchers/operators in the tri-state area. Nassau County, Westchester County and Orange County operators all make more money than we do.

-We cover the 77 precincts, 12 transit districts and 9 housing bureaus. The largest police department in the world and we are yet to be fairly compensated for the work we do.

-The Mayors office alongside the union and the police department has been dragging their feet for years with compressed tours for the staff. How long is this pilot program going to be? Recently, the city and the police department is going ahead with plans to remove work schedules for staff that works for the mere fact that they are mother's.

Last year when former Mayor of Atlanta Keisha Lance Bottoms left, she proposed a pay study to match the salary of the 911 system in the city of Atlanta to that of similar sized cities. I really don't need you guys to conduct another study, I've done it for you. The only city with a large population like New York City would be Los Angeles, the starting salary for their 911 operators is roughly \$54,000 and tops off at \$96,000. Don't let New York City become like the Broward County Sheriffs office where it had to cost people their lives to impact meaningful change. I'm going to challenge you guys to visit the centers on all tours of duty, and assess and analyze for yourselves if this is what we're worth.

My coworkers and I love this city and would love to live and work in the city we love. Please render some sort of change in a timely manner.

Iliana Gordon

To Whom It May Concern;

My name is Adam Magniccari. I used to work for the DSNY until I was terminated for not receiving the covid 19 vaccine. A vaccine that has proven to neither prevent getting the virus nor spreading it to other people. We all knew this information while the terminations were occurring but the city of new york and its beauracrats pushed forward anyway. They never considered the livelihoods of its residents or the freedom of medical choice that we used to have in this country. It is an insult not only to take that choice out of my own hands but to do it under the guise of science. We worked for an entire year with no vaccine and no precautions taken except for a covid hotline which was as inept as the rest of this corrupt institution of a city I used to be proud of. You asked us to do our jobs as civil servants, without knowing what we were bringing home to our families on a daily basis. The months went by and we saw the city as well as the rest of the country get absolutely everything wrong with a level of ineptitude and incompetence that had never been seen before. They fumbled every opportunity to bring this city together, instead opting for fear and false narratives. In the end there was no choice. There was never an explanation or scientific proof as to why we had to get an experimental, unproven medicine. They turned this experiment into a political football that all of us had to endure. In the end nothing was prevented with these policies, more people died of covid when the vaccine was available then did before it was available. Make it make sense was all we were asking or let us keep our jobs. The city did none of this parading around everyday with an arrogance that they knew what they knew what was best for its residents. They lost the trust of so many and actually ruined lives. I lost my health benefits for my four children. I lost my salary which I could not live without. Never an apology, just an ultimatum. The people who represent this city are gutless and disgraceful. Thank you.

My name is Alex Munoz and I'm a proud Parkie, honored to work for this city that I love, and a member of City Workers for Justice. I'm also a veteran of the US Army with one deployment each to Iraq and Afghanistan. I say that not to simply wrap myself in the flag, but to highlight a failure in current city government standards and accountability and its impact on retention. When I served in the 101st Airborne, we trained on the systems we would deploy with – the needs of everyday realities matched with our preparations.

Yet on Friday, September 9th I heard the DCAS Commissioner defend their exams when they have no connection to the needs of the modern day workforce. She proudly touted an optional typing test as if we're staffing 1950s steno pools. I have over 10 direct reports, all community coordinators, each of which that support more than 50 volunteer groups. I need individuals that can handle data, that can analyze Excel, that can sort through Outlook, that can coordinate and communicate via Teams, SharePoint, and more. I am sick and tired of doing the work of both vacancies and people that never bothered learning basic excel or Outlook. I am tired of having to re-train and re-train and remind and remind staff that should have learned essential computer programs for their jobs years, if not decades ago.

Yet none of these skills are tested in DCAS' vaunted exam system. None of the City agencies have annual knowledge tests in these subjects. Why is it there's a regular driving requirement, but nothing computer skills-based for office knowledge workers, when 99% more of their work is related to critical office skills? Why is DCAS uninterested or unwilling to connect DCAS exams with modern programs? Instead, their questions are either outdated, divorced from modern programs and technology. Or they're simply fake "exams" masking as a resume check and I've heard too many cases of good, smart, and honest women, passed over because they were not coached to pad and stretch their answers and accomplishments. The result? Good women denied promotions and under-qualified male candidates drifting ever upwards.

Instead of attracting the best and the brightest to City government, we're racing to the bottom. Those of us embracing the tools of the modern workforce are tired of doing the jobs of both vacancies and less then competent employees that should have been held accountable years ago. And as we talk of another Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG) the agencies will do what they always do – make those of us working cover more vacancies and avoid the hard conversations and decisions of actually enforcing accountability. Not everyone is cut out to be a knowledge worker in 2022. Not everyone has been willing to learn. And it is far past time that DCAS and the agencies develop meaningful exams to set relevant benchmarks and metrics, based on actual skills necessary and useful in 2022, and begin to hold more employees and their supervisors accountable. New York City deserves the greatest municipal government in the world, instead, we're just continuing to slide to the bottom and losing talent that is increasingly tired and demoralized.

I humbly ask that City Council look into the real usefulness and value of DCAS exams and their relevance to 2022 job skills and priorities and work with DCAS to make necessary changes and to prompt agencies to have the difficult but essential conversations demanded by real accountability.

Regards,

Alex Munoz

Employed at NYC Parks - GreenThumb

City Workers for Justice

Avm241@nyu.edu

9/9/2022

To Whom It May Concern,

First, I would like to thank the City Council for hearing the testimonials of workers that were fired this year over the vaccine mandate. It's been a challenging year between getting our voices heard and losing our jobs. Thank you for this opportunity.

Personally, I was a NYC DOE District 75 teacher. I worked with children on the Autism Spectrum in the 6-1-1 class setting. My students were severely Autistic and between the ages of 14 and 17. I worked in person in 2020-2021. I returned to my classroom, followed the protocols, bought a \$200 air sanitizer out of my own pocket to protect my class and staff, worked hard to make sure my classroom was clean, and did my best to provide a nurturing educational environment for my fragile students, despite the chaos and uncertainty with COVID-19 around them. My family and I had COVID-19 in December 2020. For my family, it was no worse than the flu. In early 2021, the vaccine came out.

I have an extensive medical history of seizures and medication reactions (Almost 13 years in remission). I don't jump to take any medication or any medical procedure. I heard of people having seizures after getting vaccinated and that raised the alarm for me that it might not be the best decision for me. On top of that, after almost a full school year of wearing a mask, I began to develop dizzy spells reminiscent of auras I would have before having a seizure. At 3:00 everyday towards the end of the school year, I was scared to drive home safely. I did my research and found that this was not uncommon. I got through the 2020-2021 school year. Summer 2020 I obtained a medical exemption for mask wearing from a neurologist. I also went for an antibody test and found that I had COVID antibodies almost a year after having COVID.

To my shock when I returned to work in September 2021, I could not obtain a full mask exemption. It was a "hard ship". They offered me part time mask wearing or full time face shield only. I tried both and could tolerate neither. At that point, I was too scared over my seizure history to tolerate either the mask or face shield. There was no consideration given to people who already had antibodies to COVID-19. By October, 2021, it was vaccine or go on leave without pay. I chose the leave because I had my 93 year old Grandma at home, who was neglected in the nursing homes. We chose to keep her home and I devoted my leave to taking care of her. After the DOE disregarded my medical history and voiced concerns, they added insult to injury by telling me to the continue my leave without pay, I would have to waive my right to sue. After I feel my medical rights had been violated, the terms of employment were to waive the rights that were already violated.

I served my students and school with love, compassion, and hard work in the 2020-2021 school year and was treated very unfairly in 2021-2022 school year. I hope to raise awareness and I hope we can keep together to ensure this doesn't happen again.

Thank you so much for your consideration in this matter.

Best,

Andrea Rogers

Contact information : andrearogers012@yahoo.com

Testimony

Annette Backof

abackof@gmail.com

September 9 2022 1:00) Committee on Civil Service and Labor

My name is Annette Backof, I have been full-time teacher working for the New York City Department of Education since 1998. All New York City teachers needed to be vaccinated by September 21st 2021, or they would be placed on involuntary leave without pay. On October 6th 2021, I submitted religious exemption to the COVID-19 vaccine. Then, on October 31st 2021, I was denied my religious accommodation by the New York City DOE because I was considered a undue hardship. I was told by both the union and DOE that Catholics and other religious organizations who were in favor of the vaccine were not being considered for a accommodation since their leaders spoke positively about the vaccine. I was always ready and willing to work every day, and I did during the height of the pandemic. I am a dedicated, well qualified teacher.

I was terminated on February 11th 2021. I was terminated without my Education Law 820-a due process rights. I was tripped up by both my contractual, constitutional, and civil rights. I have a family to provide for. I have a husband and three children. My family depends on me financially, mentally and emotionally.

My union and city failed me. My union leader, Michael Milgrew and the DOE both greed and in my opinion colluded to a arbitration award that had illegal terms that violated my contract. This arbitration award was written by Martin Steinman, a former Mayor De Blasio campaign contributor. The arbitration award violated my contract. As a teacher, you are never to be placed on leave without pay. Also before a tenured teacher is terminated you must receive your Education Law 820-a due process. I did not!!! I believe this arbitration award never should have occurred. I was never barged with any barges. However, As a tenured teacher, I should have been kept on salary until my individual case was decided by an independent agency. When I was terminated I applied for New York State unemployment with the Department of Labor. The New York State Department of Labor refused to give me any unemployment benefits because the NYC DOE lied and said that I quit my job and another determination they said was I was barged with misconduct. These outrageous barges were given to the Department of Labor by the New York City Department of Education and they misrepresent my situation and are untrue. If I was barged with misconduct legally I should have received my 820-a due process rights. During my hearing with the Department of Labor judge I was denied unemployment for quitting my job, however I was terminated. I appealed the judge's ruling. It has been 5 months since my appeal and I still have not received a decision from the judge. I paid into unemployment and when I needed it most, I was denied.

Recently, the NYC DOE sent me a letter that I am getting my job back if I receive the COVID vaccine which contradicts CDC guidance on vaccination. The NYC DOE is still coercing and forcing me

to get a vaccine to work. When is this illegal mandate going to end, when is the city going to stop and uphold the laws and my constitutional and civil rights. When will the people who caused this be held accountable for the disparate treatment I have endured.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter!!!

Annette Backof
Terminated NYC DOE Teacher

9/8/22 Testimony

Hello, my name is Bridget Boyle. I'm testifying as a former employee at the Office of Management and Budget, and I left my role in June because of the City's treatment of its workforce, particularly salary and promotion policies and treatment of employees seeking flexibility to work safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. I should note personally I was very happy with my salary, because as a managerial employee I and other OMB employees were not subject to the same salary restrictions linked to civil service title minimums that OMB enforces with other agencies.

The city has a retention problem. It has worsened during the pandemic-era 2:1 hiring freeze, and in the last 12 months after City Hall mandated a no-flexibility return to office for the workers who can most easily do their jobs from home. I experienced it as an Analyst, and eventually Supervising Analyst, at OMB reviewing Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) hiring & promotion requests (also known as PARs), and their capital projects.

It's been well-reported that HPD cannot close housing projects as quickly as they used to. HPD cannot spend at the same rate because they do not have the staff necessary to move projects. Project managers eager to make \$65,000 in NYC are hard to find when those skills can snag a similar job with a private developer for at least a \$20,000 pay bump, if not more.

Part of our work at OMB involved working with HPD to negotiate and ultimately approve the "term sheets" for loans that are the basis of the City's affordable housing programs. In an era of rising costs, these term sheets quickly became outdated when construction picked back up in 2021. But, we were told over and over again that HPD lacked the staffing necessary to engage in the process to set these term sheets, which are essentially public-facing policy documents for developers. Instead, many deals have had to be negotiated one-by-one, further delaying the process of building and preserving rent-regulated housing.

Beyond City Hall's 2:1 hiring policy, a tangled web of salary restrictions limits promotions for existing employees. Rules are rarely if ever given in writing to agency heads. For existing employees, promotion salaries are either capped at a percentage basis, severely limiting mobility options for the lowest paid employees; their civil service title minimums; or in the event of a role backfilling a vacancy, may be capped at the wage of the incumbent *previously* in the role. This incumbent may have had a completely different set of experiences, salary negotiation history, or even civil service title. For all the same reasons NYS law prohibits asking a job candidate about salary history, I was deeply uncomfortable implementing City Hall and OMB policies based on a completely different employee's salary history.

I ask councilmembers to first, demand transparency into the City's hiring processes, with publicly communicated salary rules and reports to Council on the length of time it takes to receive OMB approval of a new hire or promotion. Second, implement a hybrid work policy for City workers. Finally, please scrutinize every "vacancy savings" line celebrated in budget submissions to figure out the operational impacts behind these unfilled positions. Thank you for your time.

**New York City Council Committee on Oversight and Investigations
and Committee on Civil Service and Labor
Meeting September 9, 2022
Maintaining New York City's Municipal Workforce**

September 8, 2022

Dear Joint Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony to the Committee on Oversight. Thank you for your leadership in addressing the issues and obstacles involved in maintaining of a robust municipal workforce in New York City. In this regard, I would call for additional resources and attention to the struggles of members of the municipal workforce who also find themselves in caretaking roles, whether that be caring for children, elderly parents or sick loved ones.

While I am a relatively new civil servant, I have already seen many colleagues leave in this post-pandemic climate in search of work that promises greater flexibility and support resources in the private sector. The disproportionate amount of work now shifting to those who remain also takes its toll. Attrition is high and it is disheartening to watch, especially as I begin my own career in civil service. The disproportionate amount of work now shifting to those who remain also takes its toll, diminishing morale and exacerbating existing hardship.

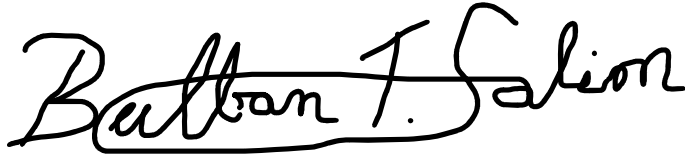
I have listened to the stories of my colleagues and I sympathize with many of their struggles. I too am trying to balance my job duties while caring for my elderly medically vulnerable parents. My father has limited mobility and both parents have limited English-speaking ability, so I find myself constantly acting as a translator, liaison and advocate to make sure all their medical needs are being met. A significant portion of my income goes towards financially supporting them as well.

Municipal workers like myself and my other caregiving colleagues would benefit from additional flexibility in terms of work schedules and more permissive remote work policies (if our job duties permit) than are currently in place as well as better access to support resources so we can also engage in self-care.

While it has been argued that requiring more of the workforce to return to in-person work sites would further stimulate the economy, it is my view that such an effort would mainly concentrate and shift revenue into Manhattan (where most office buildings are) in favor of starving the outer boroughs and

other New York City communities where many members of the current municipal work force live and reside. It is also worth noting that many of our counterparts in the private sector already enjoy liberal remote work policies without any noticeable change in their output or productivity. It would appear that it would be in the City's best interest to offer more resources and flexibility to remain competitive and retain quality workers. It is my view that the benefits of such an approach would outweigh the costs. I know that it would mean a great deal to my family and many others in our situation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bulban T. Salim". The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first name "Bulban" and the last name "Salim" being more prominent, and the middle initial "T." in between. The signature is written on a white background.

Bulban Salim, Esq.
Agency Attorney,
New York City Department of Education- Special Education Unit

To all council members,

As I sit down to write to you I am reminded of my humble beginnings. I grew up with a single mother who struggled to raise 3 girls. We didn't have a lot growing up but having my sisters with me was my strength. We were outcasted in our community and Catholic Church. We were poor and my mother was a single mother working multiple jobs. As kids we were forced to grow up and care for each other and ourselves. I found a Christian church at a young age and attended a youth group every weekend on my own. I had a connection to the faith and support in church community. I brought my sisters to youth groups with me to follow my path. I've worked since the 5th grade, I used to deliver newspapers before school. I was just a kid but it taught me responsibility, resilience and drive very early, something I am glad I learned so young and has molded me for what was to come later in life. As my mother struggled she fell into addictions which landed us in Forster care, my sisters and I were separated. My whole world turned upside down. I've slept on the porch of friendly neighbors a few times in my life and when I had the privilege to buy a car I've lived out of my car. Being in the forster care system you had two options; provide for yourself or become a part of the street life. I knew I had to work really hard so I could be in a position to have a stable environment for my sisters and I. I worked hard to unite my sisters and I, it took years. I knew I wanted to help people in whatever capacity I could. I thought my experiences could help others who may find themselves struggling to have faith. Many people who face similar obstacles give up, they see no way out but to turn to the streets-drugs, alcohol, gangs etc. I couldn't allow myself fall to that or my sisters. Then I had the opportunity to join the FDNY. To me I made a big accomplishment, a secure job with benefits and a pension. I didn't even know what all that meant at the time. I wore my uniform with pride and enjoyed

helping people on a daily basis. I've worked through the hard times of hurricane sandy and of course through the pandemic. The pandemic was one of the hardest experiences in my career. I've worked more hours than normal, call volumes at an all time high with each job getting tougher and tougher. I was on the streets providing life saving measure to the community while experiencing death of my friends and family- not to COVID. In March I lost my grandmother- the matriarch of my family. It was a time where we couldn't even allow for all our family to be a part of the funeral process. We were given an hour in total and had to take groups of 10 in at one time. I had all of 10 minutes to say goodbye. Six months later I tragically lost my cousin. One year later I lost my uncle(my cousins father). One month later I was placed on leave without pay and told I cannot have any other gainful employment. 20 days after that I lost a friend. 3 months after that I was terminated. My life was spiraling fast downhill. I jumped back into survival mood as I did when I was a kid. Knowing I have to pick up and push hard but this time it's different. Every opportunity I obtained I am shut down. I cannot get a job in NY with the skill I have. Every job I apply to they are impressed with my experience and want to hire me until the question if I am vaccinated comes up. Then I am denied. Financially I am drowning, mentally and emotionally I am depleted. My car is two months payment behind and I struggle every month to make one payment to keep it from being repossessed. Every morning I fear when I look outside that it has been taken away. Not for materialistic reasons but because I know if I loose my apartment I could always sleep in my car. Every month I have the threat of loosing my apartment, my car, my electricity being shut off, my phone being shut off, loosing my auto insurance etc. my credit cards were maxed out and closed from being unable to pay. My credit history is down the drain. Emotionally this has caused stress on my family. They don't want to see my struggle and do not many ways of aiding me, it

is breaking their heart. The past two years has been extremely hard on me. I was experiencing death on the job (from what I saw not to COVID but to wrong treatments that medical professionals were following from the government.) Death from those closet to me and now death and serve vaccine adverse reactions of former co-workers, friends and family. Watching the carve outs in the mandates have been infuriating. You see I can play a paramedic character now on Broadway or TV but I can't actually work as a paramedic. I can be exempt from the mandate if become a stripper, driving me closer to that street life and possibly have me fall to addictions like many in my family but I can't work hard and be a productive member of society. The Mayor had the power to change this segregation and I believe you all have power to apply pressure for that change. All of us essential workers were out there saving the city, will you help save us?

Love and liberty,
Carin Rosado

Good afternoon,

My name is Catherine Jean I am a Registered Nurse, before I was wrongfully terminated, I used to work for NYC health and hospital Queens and Young adult institute (YAI). On September 27, 2021 I was placed on leave without paid and was terminated on November 28 2021 from Queens's hospital, and on January 14 I was also terminated from YAI. Both of these companies terminated me without acknowledging my sincere religious exemption letter which I submitted to both companies HR. I was discriminating against my religion which violates my title 7 of the civil right act. As a FREE human being I have the right to choose what goes in my body especially if it's against my belief, my body is a temple of God as it says in the bible so therefore by forcing me to take an experiment vaccine which until now there is no transparency on to what the vaccine ingredients are . I had covid in March 2020 and since then had developed natural immunity and I never caught covid since then. I have done a lot of research regarding this vaccine and as we now know the new CDC guidelines. All this left a big impact in my life, I was discriminating against one of Queens Hospital HR staff told me I was not allowed to come inside the office because I was not vaccinated. I now suffer depressions, anxiety, I am very stress, i am scared, sleep disturbance, financial burden, debt, lost wages, I am now facing eviction, collections debts, and unpaid utilities. I lost all my benefits and pensions which cause me to have great amount of stress. I had to withdraw my children from their Christian school. This has a great impact on me and my family that I can never forget.

My Testimony:
From Cely Batista Decolongon
09/11/2022

This is my written testimony to address the staffing crisis in the NYPD. I am a Sergeant and 17 year old veteran of the NYPD and I also hold a Masters of Science in Human Resources Management. I have studied employment law and have studied oeeo and labor relations so I am well versed in this topic and have interned in intervention services to address Human Resource issues such as staffing.

Right now you all have a crisis in the NYPD where there is a mass exodus and also problems in recruitment. There are many factors as to why this is happening. The main issue is a lack of morale and that is for the whole city. There is a lack of morale throughout the entire city and the reason for this is because there seems to be a loss of touch with reality and just doing things for photo ops on social media mean while there are grave issues at stake that aren't being addressed.

You have the vaccine mandate: This mandate has caused thousands of people to leave prematurely before retiring and also retiring without necessarily wanting to. You also have people that were terminated and also who resigned prior to being eligible to vest out. There is a problem of communication. What has been mentioned to the press and what is only being counted is the amount of people terminated but that is manipulating data. You fail to realize that people have been forced and coerced to leave early by resigning or retiring, retiring because they want to keep their hard earned pensions. The press who seems to work for you all also misreports and only talk about terminations without talking about people resigning/retiring. Every time these denials for exemptions are emailed there are a handful of people that simultaneously leave and it comes down in the orders.

The fact that DCAS was asked this questions about how many people retired because of the mandates and they failed to have an answer is unacceptable. We were told that our appeals to our denials for exemption were being taken care of by DCAS. Again there is a lack of communication and not sure if it's to manipulate the situation. There is a lack of trust. Employees don't trust this organization because of the constant lack of communication and misinformation. You all need to realize that we have thousands upon thousands of people leaving. We had a huge class that was hired in 2002 post 9/11 that are not gonna get vaccinated if they don't have to and they are retiring. There were many classes of this sort that had about 2,000 plus per academy class and they don't care anymore they are leaving.

Those days were people would stay 25 years plus are over. Nobody wants to feel coerced and this is exactly what this vaccine mandate is doing. It's coercing people. Coercion is illegal in the US Federal Code. You have to pay attention to the flow of people leaving, the people eligible to leave, and the amount of people joining. The amount of people joining will not add up because you can only hire people that are vaccinated, so people that don't want to be vaccinated will not join. On top of that it was stated in the news that the Mayor was thinking of removing the college credits to join. So now we have to lower standards in order to recruit people? In HR that is horrible practice because you will get less quality and the people you already have will again not trust their employer and feel resentful. It will give them more reason to want to leave. Besides the college credits they removed the need to pass the mile and half run. So again you have people that worked extremely hard to get on and now have to work with someone that didn't have to work as hard. This decreases morale. This sounds weak and shows that the organization is lacking and isn't strong. Not only is the Mayor considering to decrease standards. At one point in order to resolve staffing issues, he wanted to have solo patrols in transit because it used to be that way. That was not a tactically sound move. We are living in a climate that there is bail reform cause criminals who are even locked up for

assaulting police officers are let loose. The Antifa and Black Lives Matter movement that promoted Police hate and destroyed our cars and streets in flames left this sense of hate all over and Police are constantly under attack.

Why would the Mayor think it is okay to have solo patrol? When he did that he got Detective hurt. The perp tried to go for the Detective's gun and the the Detective called for back up, another officer got hurt getting to him. This is completely unacceptable. Thank God the Detective and the other officer didn't get seriously hurt. How do you think the workforce feels after something like that? Again they loose trust. The Mayor did this not long after we lost two Cops due to gun battle this year. He forgot that in a 2 week in the beginning of he year a span of 5 cops were shot and 2 died. We had to have a funeral and we had Officer Rivera's wife at his funeral in tears beg for bail reform to be removed. The fact that people have cried begged have been in tears due to their loved ones getting killed due to bail reform and the Governor maliciously continues to keep this bail reform is concerning. It is a huge huge concern. It is self destructive. The mayor on top of that endorses the Governor who is continuing this endangering behavior. All of this again makes people that work for him loose complete trust in him.

I'll continue talking about the lack of morale and trust in the Mayor. During the anti shooter incident in the subway this year, that same same exact day denials were sent down for the vaccine exemptions. A cop was shot this year and the very next morning denials were sent down for the vaccine exemptions. So this means to me that they clearly don't need cops and that they don't want people to be safe by forcing people to leave the department. It makes no sense and a lot of people were upset at how the denials were sent out the same day of these devastating situations. Again there is no morale. Another example of no morale. The 9/11 museum was closed down. They needed funding but the Mayor instead decided to donated millions of tax payer dollars to a hip hop museum; why?? We had a ceremony today for 9/11 and there was so much anger cause there is not respect for first responders at all. We have no more trust because there is not morale. It makes people sick with disgust because it should make sense yet people in high authority choose to look past what should be right to do. Those are the key words communication, morale and trust. That is why I keep mentioning them. You can't have a functional workforce without these words.

Now you have the pay. Police Officers have not gotten a contract for 6 YEARS!!! This is something that I have never ever seen ever. How is this even possible and even legal? Its equivalent to slavery. When you have an organization that is severely underpaid this is also catastrophic. This is another reason young cops are saying goodbye and leaving to other police departments that are offering better pay. The pay makes no sense with the cost of living in the city. Again this makes employees loose trust with the Mayor. I'm also hearing that medical benefits are getting changed etc. Why is this happening? Why isn't anyone explaining to us what is actually happening. Upper management and the Mayor does not want to admit to possibly an economic crisis. Nobody is going to apply for a job that isn't paying who puts their employees in danger by making tactically unsound decisions and by also coercing them into medical procedures that are experimental and that should be a choice.

Me personally I don't want to stay on this job past 20. I have been so disillussioned and if more people leave the force I can basically kiss my family my kids goodbye because I'm not gonna see them until I retire. I will not be a part in their life. How is that normal? That's another reason why people are leaving cause they feel overworked. I was denied my religious exemption by the NYPD, after that I had to seek a lawyer while there was a grid lock locking for one. I finally found one after 3 days before my appeal was due and was able to submit it in time. A week after I submitted it, I was admitted in the hospital for chest pains and was put out from work for 2 and half weeks. On top of that I was dealing with retaliation from people at work because I was speaking up against this publicly. I lost friendships with people on this job and it destroyed

me. I cried I was so upset because people didn't get it. It was retaliation, all of this was ethically wrong. I have family that were injured from these vaccines. There is so much evidence out there of the injuries. I also had legit medical documentation ekgs etc to prove why I shouldn't get the vaccine and medical exemption was denied. It's my choice!!!

In July I was approved my religious accommodation by DCAS who has no clue, no numbers no data as to what is going on which is unbelievable. That's really wrong and concerning that they don't know what is going on and they are responsible for staffing. I am Roman Catholic and was approved. Legally if I was approved, then everyone similarly situated should be approved. Why is it that thousands are being denied? My lawyer couldn't figure it out why so many of her clients were getting denied. She asked me if I worked inside. I said no I work in NYC transit. It made no sense. It was clear to me that this was a lottery system and that there is a disparate form of approving people which is completely illegal. The religious discrimination is by the 10 fold. What you all need to understand is that one's religion is not for the government to interrogate. Religious Interrogation is not up to the government!! That is illegal. The government is not divine. DCAS or whoever is reading these exemptions are not divine and do not have the power that GOD does to judge someone's religion and how they practice it. This is all illegal.

Coercing someone to take an experimental vaccine to keep their employment is illegal, it's called coercion especially with no liability to the employer if the employee is injured. it is also corporate assault and possibly corporate manslaughter.

The vaccine mandate is also Extortion and Discrimination under the Civil Rights Act and the American with Disabilities Act. There are many federal us codes that have been violated and could be investigated by the federal government. The vaccine mandate and the vast amount of years of underpaying and enslaving staff can all be federally investigated. This has been fought for many many months and the Mayor and Governor refuse to do anything about it. Together they are defunding the Police and in turn endangering the welfare of the people that reside here which is another federal offense.

As a public official you can't constantly gain distrust from people because this is what makes people want to leave the city, and leave the state. The more damage and distrust you gain the chances for federal investigation and possible impeachment.

How to fix what is already in the brink of collapse; is as a leader owning up to the mistakes and gaining the trust of the people again by employing everyone back, giving people back pay, paying people their proper salary and cracking down on crime with tougher sentencing. You want people to feel secure and safe and right now nobody feels that way and it has caused not only a mass exodus in the NYPD but a mass exodus in NYC and NY state.

Good Afternoon,

My name is Christina Failla and like many others out there, I am just one of the teachers who has been greatly affected by these mandates. In order to better understand my story I must first give you a little background. I had four goals in life: to go to Italy, to be a wife, to be a mother, and to be a teacher (not necessarily in that order). These mandates took what should have been amazing happy moments in my life and made them into sad, and stressful times. In May of 2021 I was married and became a wife. A week later I had laparoscopic laser removal surgery for Endometriosis. This was one of many obstacles which my husband and I had to go through in order to get pregnant.

Being a District 75 teacher, for those of you who do not know it is a 12 month program, we waited until mid- August to go on our honeymoon. I finally had the chance to go to Italy, a trip I'd been dreaming of my entire life. We were in Positano enjoying our honeymoon when the news came down that teachers were being blackmailed to get the shot or lose their job. I spent the rest of that day crying because I knew I would be returning home jobless. Instead of enjoying the rest of my time on our trip, I stressed about how much money we were spending, and what we were going to do once we returned home. How could we make it through this especially if I was pregnant as we had hoped for. A week after returning, I confirmed what I already suspected, I was indeed pregnant. Less than a month later, I lost my job because I refused to take an experimental shot that has no effectiveness, and has a ridiculous amount of negative side effects, many of which would directly affect my health.

Being a high risk pregnancy, I applied not for a medical exemption, but for a medical accommodation. This was because I did not fall into the DOE's slim category of accepted medical reasons for an exemption. I was also told by numerous doctors that they were not allowed to write exemption letters for pregnancy. I did however, get one doctor to agree to recommend working remotely or in limited capacity since the CDC DID consider being pregnant as a high risk for getting dangerous forms of Covid.

While waiting for the decision on my medical accommodation, I also tried to apply for a Religious Exemption. As a Roman Catholic, there are multiple reasons I refuse this injection. When I attempted to submit my exemption in the SOLAS system I was blocked from uploading. The system informed me that since I had a medical request pending I was unable to apply for a new exemption. By the time I got my denial (a scanned single sheet of copy paper that had my name, the word medical and denied checked off... I did not get my appeal as I should have) but anyways, by the time I got my medical denial the deadline had already passed for being able to apply for a Religious Exemption. So, on LWOP I went. I tried multiple times throughout the year to upload my exemption and get assistance. I called and emailed the DOE, the Chancellor, the Mayor, SOLAS, multiple people at the UFT, all with no help, and no other answer besides "sorry you missed the deadline" or "sorry you can't do anything in the system because you are on a leave." By November 1st we lost our apartment. My husband and I were supposed to be buying a house, getting ready to set up a nursery but instead we were moving into the basement at my in-laws.

Throughout my pregnancy I had many issues, including extreme gestational hypertension which I was hospitalized for numerous times. I do wonder if my pregnancy would have been different had these mandates not been a factor. Flash forward to after my daughter was born my husband and I have once again moved; this time to upstate New York to live with my parents. I am very blessed and thank G*d every day that both my husband and I have families who are willing to help, and keep our family off the street. To recap, these mandates ruined my honeymoon, took away our main source of income, forced us to lose our home, and now put a strong pause on continuing to grow our family. Unfortunately, that's not the worst that these mandates have taken.

I've been with the DOE since 2012, a substitute for years before being hired full time, finding my home away from home and being introduced to people who have changed my life forever (shout out to my amazing 373 family). These mandates have not only taken my income, my home, and the path at which my future was aligned, but these mandates have taken so much more. They have taken my identity, and stripped me of my passion.

In the eyes of the DOE, being unvaccinated means you are considered and treated as if you were a nuclear biohazard. As an unvaccinated employee, I am not even allowed to enter an empty building to pack up my belongings and clear my classroom out for the next teacher moving in. In the eyes of the DOE, being unvaccinated means students, the same ones who sit next to each other day after day, are not allowed to play sports, or take part in certain extra curricular activities all which are vital to keep so many of these students safe, off the street, and provide many skills they can use out in the real world on a daily basis. In the eyes of the DOE, being unvaccinated means as a parent or legal guardian you are not allowed in the building to attend IEP meetings, parent teacher conferences, recitals, chaperone school trips, and worst of all being unvaccinated means you cannot even attend your child's graduation ceremony. Hopefully you have access to working technology, you have working service or wifi and you can just join in remotely.... It's all the same anyway right?

It's funny, the DOE pushes for parent engagement and community outreach yet at the same time it is destroying the many ways this can take place. While studying to become a teacher, we learn in school that parent or guardian involvement is key to the success of a student and that when parents and teachers have open communication and are on the same page, students are more likely to complete their school work, have better grades, improved behavior and get into less trouble. But please, keep telling us this is for the safety of our students.

Speaking of our students safety, let's discuss the extreme staffing shortage throughout the DOE. Due to covid, the DOE allowed unlicensed, untrained, and even some dangerous "workers" to skate through what is usually an extensive process to become a substitute just so they could say they had enough bodies. Side note, they didn't. DOE members throughout the city were anonymously sharing how kids were being vetted out of HS, substitutes were showing up intoxicated, being inappropriate, asked to leave, the list goes on and on. Special needs students were and still are missing their legally mandated services. Services that are so detrimental to these kids' success; all because there are not enough providers. But none of that made the

news. What did make the news was the rapid increase of constant fighting which became more dangerous with each story told.

You see, it is not just us the LWOP and terminated workers who are suffering from these mandates. The staff who are still there suffer, the community we serve suffers, but worst of all it's our kids, the students who suffer.

Perhaps if the DOE did not dismiss administration, teachers, providers and other staff such as paraprofessionals, safety agents and nurses (all which have major staff shortages to begin with).. If they did not dismiss those who were trained and qualified; those who go the extra mile, those who have a rapport and connection with these students. Perhaps if being unvaccinated did not mean losing so many important, hard working staff our students would feel a little safer.

Perhaps if being unvaccinated meant students, many who depend on scholarships, were allowed to take part in sports, or take extra curricular activities where students make lasting friendships, our students would not be outside playing in the streets getting into trouble or becoming victims of crimes.

Perhaps if being unvaccinated meant ALL parents were allowed to go up to the schools and be involved, teachers would be dealing with less behavioral problems, having more positive outcomes. All of this would help students, and the staff, many which are so burnt out from covering the shortages they simply cannot function the best of their abilities. It would help the many staff members who need to cut corners or skip going that extra mile for the students because their already full plates are now over flowing. Maybe it could even help those staff members who are so tired of the nonsense they are choosing to leave the profession. I know lifting the mandates will not completely solve the many problems within our school system but it WILL help.

As teachers, and other influential people in a students life we preach not to discriminate, and to accept everyone for the way they are. We preach that we have a zero tolerance policy for bullying; how words and actions can hurt. We preach that everyone matters, everyone should be included and respected no matter what.... I guess the city does not like to practice what it preaches. I guess the city is quite hypocritical.

Now I'm sure there are many people out there thinking "why can't you just go to another state and teach?" The answer is simple: "It's impossible." You see working as a teacher in the New York City public school system is a gift you can't receive anywhere else. As a NYC Public School teacher we are blessed to work with a diverse group of kids, each with their own story, their own needs, and a way to touch our heart, leaving a lasting impression in our life. Being a NYC Public School teacher changes you and the way you see the world. You see I am just one teacher, one staff member, but these mandates have taken thousands just like me.

- I've heard the joy of students cheering as I've walked into their class.

- I've held students as they cried and told me of the things they have or were going through.
- I've offered food, and warm clothes not just to my students but those in other classes.
- I was honored when a student of mine who was diagnosed as a selective mute felt comfortable enough to begin speaking around me.
- I've had the pleasure of one of my graduate students tracking my contact information down so she can tell me how much she loves her new school and stuck up for someone who was being bullied like I had taught her to do when she herself was being bullied.
- I've gone to the hospital and held my students hand, assuring them that everything will be okay while we waited for a parent to arrive.
- I've thrown birthday parties, and holiday celebrations so students can learn about each other's cultures and traditions.
- I've advocated getting help for multiple students who had suicidal thoughts.
- Together, with my students, we have created dances for recitals, special handshakes, and secret codes for them to tell me something when they don't feel comfortable sharing with the class.
- With permission of the parent, I have purchased a medical bracelet for one of my students so I felt a little more at ease once she graduated.
- I have been blessed to learn so much from my students throughout the years. I've watched my students, my kids, become independent and grow socially, academically, and personally.

These are just a few things these mandates have taken away, not just for me, but for these kids.

A teacher is defined as "one whose occupation it is to instruct" but if we are being honest a teacher wears so many hats who can even count. Taking away my home, my source of income, stopping the growth of my family, ripping me of my passion and purpose in life is not the worst these mandates have taken. It's those extra hats that the students need the most that is by far the worst thing these mandates have taken away. Many of these children do not get their basic needs met at home and rely on school for them. Not having qualified workers, structure for the students, services they require. Not having someone to offer a warm jacket or a snack. Not having that person who can offer a hand to hold, or show someone does actually care can literally change how children grow up, the choices they make, and how their future is shaped. I am just one less but there are thousands like me these kids rely on and need.

After knowing all of this, can you really say these mandates are doing anything positive? I want you to remember this speech the next time you see a child on the street this winter without a warm jacket. I want you to remember this the next time you visit a school and see a child sitting sad and alone. I want you to remember our stories the next time you hear on the news a child has harmed themselves or others. Remember our experiences, remember our pleas and remember you could have helped to make a difference. Remember, I am only one less, but there are thousands out there like me these mandates have taken.

Thank you!

My name is Christine Schneider, I am a Physical Education Teacher at Forest Hills H.S. I was one of the teachers who participated in, in school learning during the pandemic. I have served the students of FHHS as both a teacher, and a Dean of Students. I have enjoyed teaching my students and serving as a mentor for them. On 10/1/2021, at the age of 52, after 28 years, 11 months, and 10 days of unblemished service, I was denied my religious exemption. I am a tier 4 Member, which means I have a 25/55 retirement.

My Religious Documentation included my Baptism Certificate, my Catholic School Diploma, a Letter from my Clergy, and the National Catholic Bioethics Center Vaccine Exemption. There was no Criteria given for the Exemption, but yet I was told that I failed to meet the Criteria. I was also told that I was a direct threat to the health and safety of others!

The CDC has changed its guidance. They now recognize natural immunity as just as durable or better than the vaccine? Why am I not being put back in my classroom.

On 8/22/2021 I applied for a Reasonable Accommodation and again, the same exact denial saying that I did not meet the criteria.

I have been discriminated against by the Mayor who is allowing Athletes and Broadway Actors an exemption. I have paid my Union dues for 29 years, but yet I have been sold out by the Union who is supporting the DOE. They took money out of my paycheck for 29 years, but now they are not representing me.

I am now age 53 and a half years old, I stand to lose 27% of my final average salary if I don't complete my last 12 months and 20 days.

They fired so many teachers for an Unconstitutional denial of a Religious or Medical Exemption. Teachers were also denied due process. They were Just fired because of a Vaccine that does not prevent infection, or the spread of infection.

You are claiming there are vacancies! Many of which are a result of the Unconstitutional firing of City Workers, over an Experimental Vaccine. PUT US ALL, BACK TO WORK! This is the answer to your problem.

Re: T2022-1923

Dear esteemed members of Council,

My name is Diana Haines and I submit this testimony today as a recently terminated City employee with the Department of Buildings, where I served as the Director of Internal Affairs and Discipline. Prior to that, I served as Senior Counsel for Legislative Affairs at the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings.

In December 2021, without any explanation or detail, I was informed that my request for religious exemption from the vaccine mandate had been denied, and in February 2022 I was terminated. My husband, who was a special education paraprofessional with the Department of Education, was also terminated. We have two young children who attend school in Brooklyn, and are responsible for a significant portion of my widowed-mother's mortgage. Due to the overreaching, unnecessary mandates, it was only recently that my husband was able to secure a part-time position that helps with a few of our growing bills. I will soon be unable to support my family, pay for our home, or make my monthly law school loan payments, as our life savings are nearly depleted!

As a City employee, I sacrificed a significant amount of time, money, and energy towards making this City a better place. As a native New Yorker, and first-generation American (on my mother's side), I fully appreciate the value of hard work and recognize how resilient this City has always been - first from the crime and drug-invested days of the 80's, and more recently how beautifully we rebuilt after September 11th. When I began my employment for the City in 2014, I was so grateful to have found an employer with whom I intended to spend my entire career. Having seen both my parents find fulfilling careers with the City - my mother as an high school teacher for over 30 years and my father, before his untimely death caused by the pharmaceutical industry, having found a job with DoITT after 5 long years of unemployment - I believed the City would enable me to cultivate my skills as an attorney while allowing me to raise my family in my hometown. Having endured unfair, hostile work environments in the past, the City's conscious efforts to educate and emphasize the importance of a non-discriminatory, anti-hostile work environment gave me such hope. I now see many people fleeing New York for safer, more lucrative places that value people's personal medical choices and freedoms. When the pandemic began, my faith and good health kept me strong in the face of uncertainty. As Director, my leadership skills were tested like never before. I took on many additional responsibilities and never hesitated to be in the field to keep my staff members as safe as possible, often taking over those tasks of colleagues who were either immunocompromised, pregnant, or just afraid. I was on the receiving end of dozens of complaints by DOB employees who felt they were being unfairly treated during the pandemic, and believe that I had some positive impact just by lending an ear or sharing some words of encouragement.

It seems evident to me that, aside from the unfair termination, retirement, or resignation of so many City employees like myself who were unwilling to submit to experimental vaccines, the morale among those remaining City employees has dropped significantly because of how we were all treated. To terminate so many employees, many of whom held deeply rooted religious convictions, takes a toll on those left behind who are left to pick up the slack of those managers,

subordinates, colleagues, and friends terminated with little to no notice and absolutely no sound reason.

Since my unjust termination, I have spoken with many similarly situated former employees. They are intelligent, good people with strong convictions about their faith and their health. I can tell that they are committed to their professions because they have not fled NYC like so many others, but continue to fight for their jobs. They are teachers, firefighters, and cops with strong ties to this City who are unwilling to just give up on their community. It seems pretty obvious to me that lifting the mandates will reinvigorate the City's workforce, and give us hope for the future. I implore you to be practical, logical, and ethical in your actions and to lift these stifling, overreaching, unnecessary mandates and give us back our jobs so that we can contribute to rebuilding this City.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

My name is Edgar Alfonseca. I am a permanently appointed employee who works at a central office in the NYC Department of Education. I have spent the last 9 years developing deep institutional knowledge and applying it to do work centered on policy and data analyses that support the school system and students.

I really appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony in writing to help enrich the important discussion by the Committee on Civil Service and Labor on how to maintain the municipal workforce this Friday at 1pm. I would offer to present testimony live during the meeting, but I am unable to because of a conflict I have at that time. I am comfortable with this testimony being shared without anonymity. My morale as a municipal employee in NYC is at an all-time low. It has been the case since the DeBlasio administration's return to office mandate last year in 2021.

From March 2020 through September 2021, I along with thousands of other city worker colleagues proved beyond a reasonable doubt that city service can be done effectively by employees whose job responsibilities can be done remotely.

I, and thousands of employees, have consistently pleaded for city government leadership to consider a permanent telework option. Leading up to the return to office mandate in 2021, there were numerous town halls where hundreds of employees expressed a strong interest in permanently maintaining a remote work option. Fast forward to 2022, the Adams administration created the City Staff Ideas Challenge for city employees like me to propose ideas that the city could implement to improve the city for the better. Overwhelmingly I, along with at least hundreds of city employees, voted for ideas that promoted a remote work option.

In addition to not allowing remote work, the Adams administration has refused to allow my agency HR from filling vacancies left behind by staff who left. For many months, my team has been working significantly understaffed. My team works on producing mandated state and federal reporting that impacts hundreds of millions of dollars in school funding. Without the appropriate staffing in my team, the NYC Department of Education is at risk of losing millions of dollars because of data quality issues that will emerge.

A lack of a remote work option, a rise in understaffed teams, along with a lack of pay increases commensurate with the sharp increase in the cost of living in NYC have all factored into the city workforce 'brain drain' I have observed since last year.

In the short-term, each of those items can be addressed immediately by offering an equitable and easily accessible remote work option, demanding the Adams administration lift the hiring freeze and increase the salaries of city workers retroactively and in the future.

However, in the long-term, these conversations must center on the hiring process itself. The civil service hiring system is a broken system. The system does not align to the evolving needs city agencies have when looking for talent. Civil service titles established decades ago do not reflect the needs city agencies have to tackle 21st century problems. There are also systemic barriers within city agencies that prevent many managers from using tools commonly available in the private sector to retain talent (e.g. bonuses, salary increases, promotions).

Recently, I became a father for the first time. I feel that I am unable to continue working for the city of New York because I am forced to choose between being more present for my family and working in a cubicle. I am exploring other career opportunities that offer more flexibility, pay, and workplace resources.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and I hope it helps spark some action to correct this crisis in the municipal workforce.

September 9, 2022

Hi, my name is Gabriel Dalmau. I worked for DSNY for about five years. I remember feeling proud when I first got the job. Welding on garbage trucks is not glamorous, but in a small way I felt like I was doing my part to help keep our city clean. I never realized how much trash gets collected in the city in order to keep it running well and avoid a public health crisis.

I also gained a newfound appreciation for other city workers, Firefighters, EMT's, Police, Nurses, Teachers, the people who we call on when we're in need, who take care of our children. All of the people who show up everyday and dedicate their lives to the service of our great city, even during a pandemic.

I was one of those people, until February of this year when I was terminated because of the mandates.

I went to work everyday during the pandemic, like so many others. We had no idea if we would contract the virus and possibly bring it home to our families, yet still we answered the call and showed up, with minimal, if any, PPE.

My mother Cynthia passed away in April of 2020 from Covid, and my family was devastated. We weren't allowed to visit her in the hospital, or even touch her hand in her final moments, we said goodbye on a FaceTime call. I can't even begin to describe how horrible that whole situation was. I never imagined a scenario where I would call funeral homes, that's homes, plural, and get only busy signals, that's how bad it was. We couldn't find one in the city, so we drove two hours away in New Jersey so she could have a service and we could pay our respects.

I took my four days of bereavement and went back to work, not because I'm such an outstanding employee, but because it was my job and it gave me purpose. Most of my co workers were surprised I would even show up, but staying busy was good for me, it helped to keep my mind off of the pain and hurt involved when you lose a loved one, especially a parent, especially during those unprecedented times.

There is no doubt we were all affected by the pandemic, most of us continue to be affected in one way or another. For the first time that I can recall in history, everyone on this planet had a shared experience, a shared trauma.

But now it's 2022, and thank God we are in a better situation, Covid- wise. Less death, less infection, less of a threat. Even the CDC has revised its guidelines, and we now know that vaccinated or not, you can still catch and transmit Covid. We also know more about natural immunity in regards to Covid, and how it provides the same if not better protection to someone who has already been infected, such as myself and many others.

We're all looking to get past the pain and difficulty of the last couple of years, trying to get back to normal.

But what of the thousands of city workers who answered the call of duty, only to be tossed aside like yesterday's newspaper? We were good enough then, why not now? How could the city be concerned with it's citizens during a public health crisis and yet terminate employment and health insurance of some of our most dedicated and qualified professionals with countless years of experience among them, even denying us unemployment benefits?

I'm trying to get back to normal as best I can, but without a career, a job, a steady paycheck as I once had, I'm finding it harder and harder to adjust.

I also find it hard to get over the fact that the process for applying for and receiving a Religious Exemption is completely arbitrary and capricious. There is no rhyme or reason for approval or denial. The reason I

know this to be a fact is because my partner at work, the same individual that I have worked side by side with for the past several years, applied for a Religious Exemption, and got approved. My Religious Exemption was denied. I am happy that his exemption was approved, that he was able to be reasonably accommodated, that his rights and religious freedoms were not violated, that is the right thing.

Unfortunately for many of us, our exemptions were denied and therefore our Civil Rights and religious freedoms have been violated , effectively treating us as second class citizens, in New York City, the place of my birth, the place where the Statue of Liberty resides and reminds us what this country is supposed to be all about: freedom, inclusion, the right to pursue life, liberty, and happiness, free from oppression or discrimination of any kind.

Please end all of the mandates. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Dalmau

NYC Council,

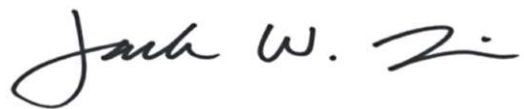
My name is Jack W. Lin. I've been an EMT since August 2005 and was employed with FDNY EMS for over 14 years from 4/7/08 to 6/10/22. After graduating from EMS Academy in July 2008, I was assigned to Division 4 Queens Astoria Station 49. I worked on units 45 Adam and 49 Henry. After about a year on the job, I got trained as a Hazardous Materials Technician Level II.

I was injured on the job and was unable to return to work full duty starting in November 2009. While off duty and coming home from church in December 2009, I came across a man lying on the street in cardiac arrest. Despite my wrist injury, I was able to call 911 and start CPR until the first due fire engine arrived with an AED. We shocked the man and was able to achieve ROSC (Return of Spontaneous Circulation). The man was able to make a full recovery and I got to meet him and his family at a celebrated press conference held right before Christmas 2009. The former Queens Borough President Melinda Katz even called me "an angel of Queens" in her inauguration speech.

I was transferred to the FDNY Office of Medical Affairs in the Prison Health Screening Unit. I spent over 8 years doing medical and mental health screening for prisoners awaiting arraignment. I left the unit and transferred to FDNY headquarters in 2019. I worked briefly in the Human Resource Department and then transferred to the Fire Department Operations Command. When the pandemic hit in early 2020, the EMS side of Operations was moved to the Staten Island Satellite location and we switched to 12 hour shifts. I never got to work remote from the safety of my home. I went in day in and day out working 48-60 hour weeks on top of a 4 hour commute per workday. I faithfully executed my duties and upheld the oath I took as an EMT.

Then on October 21st 2021, the COVID 19 vaccine mandate for city workers was instituted by the Dr. Chokshi of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. I had caught COVID a month prior in September 2021 and recovered after 5 weeks off. I developed natural antibodies against COVID. I was also medically exempt from the vaccine mandate for at least 90 days. However, my sincerely held religious beliefs precluded me from taking the COVID vaccine for a plethora of valid reasons. I put in both a religious and medical exemption on October 26th 2022. I found out both were denied by the FDNY EEO office in February 2022. I requested an appeal and then the NYC Vax Appeal Board denied my exemptions in April 2022. I was on unpaid leave since April 12th 2022 until I was terminated on June 10th 2022.

It's mind-boggling and surreal to me as I reflect on how I, and others similarly situated, have been treated in the last year. I was an exemplary employee and even cited for my heroism. A true COVID hero to COVID zero. I attest that everything I wrote is true and I am asking that those who read this testimony reflect on the facts of my case. How is this right? End the employee mandate immediately and reinstate me and the other former city workers similarly situated. Do the right thing while it's in your power to make a difference. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack W. Lin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Jack W. Lin

9/12/2022

September 12, 2022

Via electronic submittal

The Honorable Gale A. Brewer
Councilmember of New York City, District 6
Chair, Committee on Oversight and Investigations
563 Columbus Avenue
New York, NY 10007

Re: Testimony for City Council Hearing: Oversight - Maintaining New York City's Municipal Workforce

Dear Councilmember Brewer and the Committee on Oversight and Investigations,

Thank you and our other Councilmembers for their service and commitment to the people of New York City. As a government employee, I am proud to work in public service and to use my time, talents, and technical expertise at the Department of Parks and Recreation, working to improve parks and open space for all New Yorkers.

NYC's parks and natural areas are critical areas for gathering, recreation, and respite during the CoVID-19 pandemic.^{1,2,3} Other City agencies such as NYC Health & Hospitals, the Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Environmental Protection, Small Business Services, and Youth and Community Development, have provided equally, if not more, critical services. However, Mayor Eric Adams has continued Mayor Bill deBlasio's archaic and inequitable mandate to require 100% office occupancy for the municipal workforce. As a result of this and other policies, NYC's municipal-worker vacancy rate is 7.7%, more than five times higher than it was pre-pandemic.^{4,5} This deficit does not capture the undetermined number of current employees that are contemplating leaving City government for more attractive jobs in the private and public sectors.

In my situation, I suffered a severe case of benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) at the end of August, such that I remain unable to drive or take the subway independently. Five days later, after recovering to the point I felt ready to begin work at a computer, I filed a request for

¹ Bitá Alizadehtazi, Korin Tangtrakul, Sloane Woerdeman, Anna Gussenhoven, Nariman Mostafavi and Franco A. Montalto. 2021. Journal of Extreme Events, vol. 7, no. 4, 2150008. Published online 2021 Apr 21. doi: [10.1142/S2345737621500081](https://doi.org/10.1142/S2345737621500081)

² Bianca Lopez, Christopher Kennedy, Christopher Field, and Timon McPherson. 2021. Who benefits from urban green spaces during times of crisis? Perception and use of urban green spaces in New York City during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Urban for Urban Green*, 65:127354. Published online 2021 Sep 22. doi: [10.1016/j.ufug.2021.127354](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2021.127354)

³ Ellena Dickerson. 2022. Locked Inside: The Importance of New York City's Parks in the Wake of COVID-19. Student Theses 2015-Present. 129. https://research.library.fordham.edu/environ_2015/129

⁴ Jumaane Williams. August 3, 2022. [Let NYC municipal workers do their jobs at home](https://www.nydailynews.com/ny-politics/let-nyc-municipal-workers-do-their-jobs-at-home-article-ab3g-nyl.html). New York Daily News. Accessed 2022 September 12.

⁵ James Barron. July 14, 2022. [Municipal workers have joined the Great Resignation](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/14/nyregion/municipal-workers-great-resignation.html). New York Times. Accessed 2022 September 12.

reasonable accommodations to work from home, with the requested documentation from my physician. To date, I have not received a decision on my request, and have been on sick leave. During this time, when I could have been working effectively at home, I have instead had to transfer my work responsibilities to my supervisor and my staff. There are now at least three people taking on my tasks in addition to their current workload, with greater inefficiency due to their lack of familiarity with my projects. By a rough, conservative estimate, this shift results in nearly \$500/day⁶ of lost productivity due to my inability to work from home. While this may seem like a small sum compared to the full City budget, \$500 per day multiplied by the number of people seeking accommodations would be significant indeed.

I urge the City Council to make every effort to pressure Mayor Adams to allow a hybrid work schedule for municipal workers, in line with the expectations of the private sector and the Federal government.⁷ Currently, office occupancy remains under 50% nationwide, and is only 35% in New York.⁸ Municipal workers have been back in the office since September 2021, but overall office occupancy remains low. Even within New York service businesses, remote work is 'sticking', where many businesses, such as Capital One Bank, have adopted a hybrid model that "provides associates with meaningful time working from home and scales virtual work across the company in an efficient way", while it also "concentrates the time when we are in the office in order to maximize collaborations and human connections".⁹

A hybrid work schedule is clearly an industry standard and provides proven benefits in worker happiness and productivity, in some cases as much as 20%.¹⁰ New York City's workers, government, and residents would benefit greatly from implementation of a hybrid work schedule. I respectfully submit my testimony and request implementation of remote work options for appropriate municipal personnel.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Jamie Ong

⁶ \$127,500 average salary of my co-workers who are assisting in my work, including fringe, plus a 20% inefficiency rate.

⁷ Reimagining our work. United States Office of Personnel Management. <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/future-of-work/>. Accessed 2022 September 12.

⁸ James Barron. September 6, 2022. [Will Return to Office Get Serious in September?](#) New York Times. Accessed 2022 September 12.

⁹ James T. Madore. September 6, 2022. [Poll: Remote work is largely 'sticking' at service firms in NY area.](#) Newsday. Accessed 2022 September 12.

¹⁰ Bryan Robinson. May 5, 2022. [Remote Work Increases Employee Happiness By 20%. New Study Finds.](#) Forbes. Accessed 2022 September 12.

To Committee Service on Civil Labor,

My name is Jessica Fitzpatrick. I am/was a teacher for the New York City Department of Education. I started working there in Fall of 2019 as an Early Childhood Educator. When the pandemic hit and schools were closed, I continued to teach remotely, and I worked hard to stay engaged with my students because that is what they needed. We returned to in-person learning with a blended schedule and I remained in-person. Over time, when many teachers took accommodations for various reasons I stayed in-person despite the fact that I would have qualified for remote work due to my BMI at the time. Why? Because no matter what happens life needs to move on. I took what was deemed a risk at the time because I knew my students needed in-person instruction. I did what was necessary for my school because I value education and teamwork. I was moved around from classroom to classroom and did what was asked for me because it was the right thing to do. I try my very best to do what is right, we all should. When the testing option was taken away for members of the school community and the vaccine mandate was imposed for city workers, I was heartbroken. I knew my job was in jeopardy because our city continued to live in fear. Living in fear of a virus that we have been lied to about from the beginning. This vaccine is authorized under emergency use. It does not prevent transmission of this virus. This virus is not even 3 years old; how could we possibly know the long-term side effects? Especially one that is a new type of vaccine, the mRNA. Since the beginning of vaccinations, research and trials took many years. We can not say in good faith that we know the side effects of this. My parents vaccinated me when I was younger, I am not anti-vaccination, but I do have my concerns over the speedy development and implementation of this vaccine. There has been a great deal of misinformation, censorship and money to be

made regarding this matter, because of this how could anyone possibly make an informed decision?

I caught and recovered from the virus in March of 2021 and experienced mild symptoms. I do not need this vaccine as it does not provide herd immunity and the only person that I would be putting at risk is myself. The potential and unknown risk of this vaccine greatly outweighs the risk of catching covid again. This is my body, and it should be my choice. This is New York City after all, let's not be hypocrites. I did not apply for an exemption because my reason is not religious or medical and lying to get an exemption would be wrong as well. I am a relatively healthy adult, and I am not religious, but my heart knows that this is wrong. I will not be forced to take this experimental vaccine for job security. That is coercion and it is wrong. It was only a few years ago that the phrase "coercion is not consent", please lets continue to live by these values. It is time that we stop doing things that we know are wrong because we are scared or because someone else told us too. I am a good teacher and I adore my students, but I cannot in good conscious do something that I know is wrong and then have the nerve to expect my students to do what is right. All the while athletes and entertainers are exempt from this mandate. How is this fair? How can you force people to do this? Just like everyone else I put up with a lot during this pandemic, but I have to draw the line in the sand somewhere. We are going down a dark path and I fear for our future. It is scary that this happened, but I find it even more scary that no one seems to care. I am unable to work in the city I live in because of this mandate. This is discrimination. History doesn't repeat, it spirals. We must stop ourselves from opening this once closed door. We must stop living in fear. The CDC has updated their guidelines and there is no longer a difference in protocols over what vaccinated and un-

vaccinated people need to do/be treated. Please update yours. There is still time to right this wrong, please, then we can close this ugly chapter in our city's history. There is a teacher shortage, please do not get rid of us because we refuse to do something that we know in our hearts is wrong. I thank you for the privilege of your time.

- Jessica Fitzpatrick

Testimony for home care rally

Good afternoon! My name is Jessica Tambor and I have had a disability my entire life. Without home care I would not be able to live at home because there is no way my dad would be able to care for me all by himself 24/7. It is because of all the homecare that I have had my whole life that I have been able to live with my dad at home and be a very active member of my community for my whole life. If homecare hours were cut then it would be harder to find home health aides that would want to do the job because they wouldn't make enough money working so little hours. It is already very hard to find people who want to do this job.

Eliminating live in care would affect people with disabilities of all ages especially senior citizens like my grandma who have live in care. Without live in care they will wind up in nursing homes. If homecare hours are limited then we would need even more staff per person and there is not that many home health aides to go around for all of us to require so many different staff to fill all the hours in the week that all of us need. This is another way we would be forced into nursing homes.

There must be a better solution.

TALKING POINTS by John D. Macari

My name is John D. Macari. I am 42 years old. I am married with two children one of whom is legally blind. Up until the end of last February I had been a NYC Resident my entire life. I lived in both Bensonhurst, Brooklyn & then the Dongan Hills section of Staten Island up until I was forced to take an early retirement from the NYPD and move out of state to seek employment to keep food & shelter for my family. I am a product of NYC public schools, as are my children also attended until recently. I was denied a religious exemption for my sincerely held religious beliefs as well as a medical exemption for the Anti-Bodies I have received from the covid-19 pneumonia infection I contracted in the line of duty while serving on the NYPD. I still having scarring on my lungs & diminished lung function from this incident, that was ignored by the NYPD. Prior to my forced retirement I was an NYPD Lieutenant. I had served just shy of 18 years. I have personally affected 145 arrests and have assisted & supervised 1000's without incident. I have never been the subject of disciplinary action. I have always been a highly rated employee and have held many coveted assignments. You would be hard pressed to find any supervisor, peer or subordinate that worked with me to say anything negative about my character, work ethic or deny my Love for every community in NYC. I have never been interviewed, nor charged with anything other than an ultimatum to take a COVID-19 vaccine or be terminated. NYC has failed to tell the unvaccinated who now at this point are the most marginalized community in NYC history what undue hardship we are causing NYC that those who were able to be vaccinated are not. This marginalized community along with our children have been segregated forced to be masked and tested when others were not, not allowed to eat in restaurants, partake in society, play sports, attend after school events and eventually forced from employment without the ability to collect unemployment. There are individuals accused of crimes DWI, Domestic Abuse, Child abuse and everything else under the sun who are currently afforded due process and a trial before facing such consequences, many continue working even after they are found guilty and if they are eventually terminated they are still eligible for unemployment. This has caused irreparable harm to our mental, physical & financial health as well as strain on all of our relationships. All I am asking is for NYC to be true to what it said on paper, be true that you respect religious liberty & equal protection under the law, be true that you respect medical freedom and truly believe the words "MY Body My Choice", be true that you respect others philosophical opinions and want to give everyone a voice at the table, Be true to the United States Constitution, The New York State Constitution, The Human Rights Act of NYS, The Civil rights act of 1964, Federal, State & City OEEEO law as well as the OEEEO policy of every NYC agency who enforces this mandate all of which clearly define that that the mandates are Illegal. BE TRUE TO WHAT YOU SAY ON TWITTER. #ENDTHEMANDATES. I thank you all for your time.

Dear New York City Council Members,

I will like to address some staffing issues hindering the city's ability to provide adequate services for its citizens. A major factor is the city's continual decision to enforce the vaccine mandate. Due to terminations and leaves without pay, the city deepens and has widened its staffing gap, increased the need for overtime, lost hundreds of years of experience and incurred an emotional toll of its workers.

Considering that the city is facing staffing and recruitment issues, the decision to terminate experienced workers seems at odds with our current predicament. For example, the city is facing record crime, can it and the people afford to lose more police officers? Even if the city recruits enough new workers, it can never make up the time and experience that senior employees are taking with them.

During the council meeting, it was asked why sanitation's overtime is so high. With more people being terminated, other workers have to pick up their load. For the whole time I have been on leave without pay, someone else has to work overtime for what have been my regular scheduled shifts. This is a poor budgetary decision. Also a factor that training new workers is a hefty investment. The city has already made that investment in the very workers they are terminating. Bringing these people back costs a lot less than training new recruits as well as bringing years of invaluable experience.

Considering the mental toll that this mandate has caused, I have not worked since 11/01/21, as anyone can imagine, this last year has been trying. Being put in a situation where you have to choose between the job you love and being forced to do something that does not make sense to you, makes you feel powerless. This hopelessness puts you in some dark places and gives you some dark thoughts. The only thing that keeps you going is thinking about all the people you would leave behind and let down.

I believe this mandate is nonsensical, not to belittle the situation we have been working through the last two years or to the people that have lost close ones, but because the original purpose of this mandate no longer holds true. We were told we needed take this vaccine because we it was our duty to protect the public from the virus. The city has constantly said they based their policies on the science. The science changed, and has for some time. We see that anyone can be infected and transmit the virus. The CDC has changed its guidelines and in simple terms suggests that guidelines be similarly applied to all regardless of vaccination status. From the CDC:

COVID-19 prevention recommendations no longer differentiate based on a person's vaccination status because breakthrough infections occur ... and persons who have had COVID-19, but are not vaccinated, have some degree of protection against severe illness from their previous infection.

With all that mind, this mandate seems arbitrarily enforced.

Couple that with the fact that Mayor has lifted the mandate for the privileged class of athletes and performers, and has gone on the record to say that private sector mandate is barely enforced. In regard to other medical procedures, the mayor says that medical decisions should be left up to the individual and their doctor, and not the place for the government to make that decision for them. I understand the world is nuance, but to say that, while mandating a medical treatment is hypocritical. I believe these decisions have hurt the moral of a lot of workers and feels like a slap in the face.

I understand that there are a lot of other factors that are contribution to staffing issues such as remote work, salaries, and long spanning application processes. But the fact that the city is terminating willing and experience workers in such a time and with an inconsistent enforcement of its policies, is an insult to injury.

I beg you to reconsider this mandate, and help heal the people that have suffered so much because they stood up for what they believe in.

I would like to thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jude Pierre

Kerry McGovern Duffy
Holloway Drive
Liberty Township, OH 45044

September 9, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

I, Kerry McGovern Duffy, do hereby testify that I was employed at Northwell Health located at 1991 Marcus Avenue, New Hyde Park, NY 11040, since February 2012, and was illegally terminated in November 2021 for not submitting to the mandated COVID vaccine. I submitted my Religious Exemption Petition but was denied my legal Civil Rights under Title VII of *The Civil Rights Act* by Monique Schomburg-Friday, my supervisor, when she tried to persuade me to take the vaccine as they did not want to lose me as an employee. She then proceeded to inform me that it was my choice that was forcing the decision to terminate my employment with Northwell. I informed Monique that it was NOT A CHOICE BUT AN ULTIMATUM.

I am a practicing Roman Catholic and adhere to the governance of the Church prior to Vatican II, which directs me not to take part in anything that would jeopardize my health and my ability to have children. This is in accordance with my Faith, which also prohibits me from accepting any vaccine produced from the stem cells of aborted babies.

My termination had an incalculably detrimental effect on my family. As we relied on the combined salaries of myself and my husband to be able to afford housing and the cost of living in New York City, we were forced to relocate out of state to take up residence with my aunt in Ohio. In doing so, my husband was forced to leave his job as a driver for Northwell and find new employment, causing severe financial loss to us and our two children (with another on the way). Fortunately, my aunt took us in with no rent or utilities to pay until we could find an apartment of our own a new job for my husband that could sustain our growing family.

There are many stories like mine and I hope that there will be just recompense for OUR RIGHTS BEING SO BLATANTLY VIOLATED.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerry McGovern Duffy
[Signature available upon request]

City Council Labor Committee Testimony 9/9/2022

My name is Kim Modzelewski and I am a NYC DOE Secretary who has been on Leave Without Pay since October 2021 for choosing religious and medical freedom over complying with the Covid 19 vaccine mandate. I have been an active member of my school community from holding the position of President of the PTA to being a member of school leadership teams when my sons were students. I believed in the public school system.

When my sons were older I began working for the DOE first as a sub school aide, then as a paraprofessional and currently as a secretary. I have an unblemished work record for all of the time and titles I have held while volunteering at and being employed by the DOE.

Last school year I applied for a Religious Exemption accommodation and was denied without the opportunity of an appeal process.

This school year I applied again and was denied without the opportunity of an appeal process. I face termination any day. I have asked the for explanations of the determination letter denial with no response from the DOE or the UFT. I was told I didn't meet the criteria for a Religious accommodation and I asked what the exact criteria it was that I didn't meet. It is my understanding that the only criteria I need to meet to receive a religious based accommodation is my sacred, sincerely held religious beliefs which are between me and God. These rights are God given and are protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act as well as New York State and New York City Human Rights Laws.

I also asked for clarification for the following that was in my Determination denial letter:

“unvaccinated employees cannot work in a Department of Education (DOE) school setting or other site where they would have in-person contact with students, families or members of the public. We cannot offer another worksite as an accommodation as that would impose an undue hardship (i.e. more than a minimal burden) on the DOE and its operations.”

My response to the DOE was “ **there is absolutely no undue hardship reason why my accommodation request for my title of secretary could not be approved especially since I worked fully remote from home (no in-person contact with students, families or members of the public) during the time period of March 2020-June 2020 without any issues. Furthermore, I am entitled to a reasonable accommodation under the protections of both federal and state law.**” I also asked the DOE to **provide me with financial records to support their claim of undue hardship. I still have not received a response to either of these questions.**

I was at the City Council meeting on 9/9/22 and heard the council ask about hybrid work days or remote options for employees to solve the staffing shortages at city and private agencies.

I do not pose any threat to the school community by being unvaccinated. The children are not mandated to be vaccinated and those who are unvaccinated are not deemed as a threat and have been in school, unmasked, since last school year. How can it be acceptable for unvaccinated children to be in school but not unvaccinated adults? I also would like it to be noted that DOE employees have not been mandated to receive the booster even though it is now proven by the CDC and other world health organizations that the vaccine’s efficacy wanes after just a few months.

Therefore, it stands to reason why the CDC no longer distinguishes between vaccinated and unvaccinated people for purposes of COVID 19 protocols. The same should be followed by the City with regards to their workers and the NYC DOE on behalf of all of their employees and school community instead of the discriminatory practices that they have been waging against its unvaccinated employees and parents since the beginning of the pandemic.

I worked the entire 2020-2021 school year in person when there wasn't a vaccine available even if I wanted it while other people were working from home on "accommodations"

I thank the City Council members who realize how harmful this mandate is to its citizens, students and employees. We stand ready, willing and able to return to our jobs. Any action to not allow me to fulfill my job duties will be solely initiated by the NYC DOE because of their unconstitutional and discriminatory policies against their employees.

Please let Mayor Adams know the caliber of employees the city is losing due to these outdated, discriminatory and unconstitutional mandates.

Sincerely,

Kim Modzelewski
NYC DOE Secretary

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Krista O'Dea and I am a former FDNY Rescue Paramedic. I was employed with the FDNY since 2005. I began as an EMT and upon completion of TOP Class, was sent to Station 38 in Brooklyn where I worked for 3 years before being accepted into medic school. I attended Paramedic Basic 9 at the EMS Academy and graduated in the top 5 of my class. I worked as a Paramedic at Station 58 in Brooklyn for 5 years and during this time I attended training to become a Hazardous Materials Technician before transferring to Staten Island. In 2015, I was asked to take an off-line role as ALS Coordinator for Division 5 which includes Staten Island and South Brooklyn. In 2017, I was accepted into the Rescue Medic Basic Training class and was working as a Rescue Paramedic until I was terminated on March 15, 2022.

In addition to my work on an ambulance, I was a Mentor in the FDNY Explorer Program since 2014. I was also trained in the Dignitary Protection Unit, Counter-Terrorism Task Force, as an EEO Counselor and Liaison for Division 5 and assisted as an Alternate Liaison to the Commissioner. In 2009 and 2021 I received a Pre-Hospital Save Commendation and in 2015 I received Paramedic of the Year award. I also published a Call Review Article in FDNY EMS PRO magazine in the June/July issue of 2016, recorded a podcast with now Chief of Staff Elizabeth Cascio for FDNY EMS PRO in March of 2018 and was interviewed in April 2020 for an insight into Covid-19 Emergency Responders.

I have poured my heart and soul into my career with the FDNY and have shown exemplary dedication to my profession. Being a frontline emergency healthcare provider was a calling since childhood. Working in this field not only allowed me to fulfill my passion but has brought about significance and purpose in my life. I truly enjoy being a Paramedic and providing care for my community. I had every intention of serving the City in which I was born and raised in, where my immigrant father worked to support his family and my immigrant great-grandmother worked to support hers. I looked forward to many more years as an employee of the FDNY and as a resource to the community in which I serve.

When the vaccine mandates rolled out for first responders in October of 2021, I immediately filed a religious exemption to the Covid-19 vaccination mandate with the FDNY in a timely fashion, even though we were only given a week's notice. In December, I received a denial letter from the FDNY to my religious exemption. I appealed this decision. On February 20, 2022, I received an email from The City of NY Employee Vaccine Appeals Panel stating that my appeal has been denied. I was placed on Leave Without Pay (LWOP) which began on February 23, 2022 and on March 15, 2022 I was terminated. My years of service and dedication simply disregarded. My sincerely held religious beliefs simply ignored and denied without reason.

In March of 2020, two years earlier, I was working 18 hour shifts to service my community. I was going into work when most others stayed in the comforts of their homes. I was walking into people's houses who were very sick and helping them, when most others would be too scared to do so. I was picking up shifts for members who were sick and couldn't work. I was watching my peers fall ill, some extremely ill and who I feared may not survive. My partner became ill and so did I. I recuperated and returned to work, as did many others. How could this be, that 2 full years later, I am losing my job? How am I an enemy when all I did was serve my community during one of the most challenging moments in our history?

I cannot describe the months of anxiety, worry and stress this has caused me and my family. I would sob on a daily basis. I would have palpitations that would be consistent throughout the day and wake me at night. Most nights I couldn't sleep. I worried about my marriage. I worried how we would pay the bills, especially since my job sustained our household. I could not fathom how this was happening.

To make matters worse, I was denied unemployment. Not only were my religious beliefs disrespected, I was now being punished because of them. I was told I was terminated from employment due to "misconduct." Meanwhile, I have never had any disciplinary infractions. I was a stellar employee and my termination was not due to suspension, insubordination, lateness, AWOL, illegal activities, poor work ethic or any other unsatisfactory work experience. In fact, every single one of my yearly evaluation reports ranked Very Good and Excellent. I challenged the denial of my unemployment and failed with each attempt. I was left

unemployed and without any assistance. How can this happen in the most diverse, accepting and tolerant City in the world?

I hope this letter can put into perspective how the Covid-19 vaccine mandates destroyed the core of this City, the frontline workers. What's being done to the hard-working people of New York City is absolutely criminal. I never thought that the City that raised me could treat me this way. The City who I served for all of my adult life. I feel so betrayed and hurt. The damage done, however, can be repaired. There is always time to change, to enact a different policy and to hire back all those who have lost their careers and livelihoods. I hope the Council can be the force of change needed to restore the City and it's people.

Sincerely,

Krista O'Dea

Laura Hofmann
Dupont St
Brooklyn, NY 11222
laura.a.hofmann@gmail.com

9/9/2022

Testimony regarding Fired and Banned Workers

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to testify about a topic that cuts into the core of who I am as a person. In January 2022 I was fired from my job following an unpaid, involuntary leave of absence. I was fired because of the NYC Covid vaccine mandates and my firmly held religious beliefs. I absolutely will never willingly take a vaccine that contains or was developed using fetal cells or any part of dna, or other substances that will taint my body.

Because of those beliefs, I've been tossed aside like human garbage negating the years of community work that I have done in the Greenpoint community on multiple environmental, waterfront, parks and housing issues. I've testified many, many times for NYC Council regarding those issues. Never would I ever have thought that I'd be testifying about my right to work and to have control over what is put in my body. But here I am.

Defending my religious and human rights has cost me income and if I allowed, my dignity. What hurts the most is that I truly loved my job, my coworkers and my clients. I'm still friends with many of my former coworkers and many clients have sought me out even on social media. I worked as a housing counselor in a respected community organization. As an "essential" worker I worked both in the office and remotely serving clients during the heart of the pandemic. I made wellness calls to seniors in an effort to prevent them from feeling isolated. The same organization that did this work is the same one that fired me for who I am and isolated me, a senior with multiple medical issues.

And it was needless. Early on in the pandemic March 2020 my husband and I were sick with Covid and have since had a robust amount of antibodies. Over 2 ½ years! Given my community based knowledge about environmentally linked diseases and my knowledge about my own autoimmune diseases, I knew it was a strong possibility that those antibodies would serve to protect me in the future. And now the CDC is finally acknowledging what many people already knew. If I knew, the CDC knew. Those are words I've testified about before for environmental reasons.

The mandates have hurt me, my coworkers, my clients and even how I interact with my community. I used to fully support my community. I used to go out to eat regularly with my husband. These days, I will not patronize any restaurants that didn't object to the mandates. I save my money and spend it elsewhere when away from NYC. I'm also not active with community organizations that treated me differently as a result of the unfair and needless mandates. And even after dedicating many years of community activism to Greenpoint where I've lived all my life, I'm strongly considering leaving the state. I even changed my political party as a direct result of how I've been treated. And I'm not the only person who is doing this. I know many less politically active community folks doing the same.

Laura Hofmann
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I can't even imagine how the nurses, police, firefighters and other front line workers feel that were fired and otherwise discriminated against. I can only hope that the Mayors office will do the right thing and reverse the mandates and put good people back to work and start the process of healing from the discriminatory practice.

Sincerely

Laura Hofmann

New York City Council Hearing Testimony
Maintaining New York City's Municipal Workforce
September 9, 2022

Yesterday I submitted my resignation to the Department of Education and will serve my last day working for the city later this month. I am writing to explain why I resigned and my recommendations for what we should expect from our city agencies. The choice to resign was not at all an easy one for me. I am leaving because I no longer feel my work has impact and I am unclear how my work fits into a collective mission, and therefore I don't feel I can provide my best for children in this environment.

By way of background, I moved to New York City fourteen years ago. A believer in public education, the moment I arrived my goal was to obtain a position working for the New York City Department of Education. I secured a position teaching in a prekindergarten classroom at a community-based organization in Brooklyn. I went back to school to receive a second master's degree in early childhood leadership and began coaching in Pre-K- and 3-K-for-All classrooms, supporting classroom instruction. It has been my great honor to have coached in classrooms in every borough, and many, many neighborhoods across our great city. The experience learning alongside our city's amazing early childhood teaching team members has humbled me and taught me that there are many ways to reach the same goal of providing exceptional care to our children.

I eventually obtained a position for the New York City Department of Education serving as an Education Administrator for the Division of Early Childhood Education in 2019. The moment I arrived I was impressed by the buzzing energy in the Division. I met countless coworkers that were deeply passionate about serving children, families, and early childhood educators. I felt I had found my dream job. I was working in a role where my goals and tasks were clearly defined, and I felt that I had impact. While serving on my team, a team that managed professional learning for our city's early childhood educators, we provided almost half a million credit hours to educators in our system, hours that educators must obtain to maintain their teaching certificates.

Although my colleagues and I had frequent debates and disagreements, it was all part of a healthy discourse. There was never a question that we were all on the same team, with leadership guiding us all toward the same goal. Now, under the current leadership, we are demoralized and directionless.

The issues with the new administration started early. For instance, Chancellor Banks held a video meeting with Central Office staff shortly after he started. During the meeting, Chancellor Banks implied that he believes many Central Office employees perform unnecessary work, and that the Department's work should focus on children and teachers. This glib attitude ignores the enormous amount of work it takes to get a classroom up and running, and to ensure that every child, and every teacher, has the resources and support they deserve. That work does not happen on its own—it requires funding, people, and strategic leadership.

The Division of Early Childhood Education is emblematic of the Chancellor's apparent goal of stripping the Department down to its base functions. To begin, our Deputy Chancellor has not had a single Division-wide meeting with her employees since she joined the Division in January 2022. It is my understanding that in the nearly nine months since that time, about 200 employees have either resigned or secured transfers out of our Division. This has been extremely destabilizing and upsetting. With each person's exit, institutional knowledge has been lost, and a once-sustainable structure of workflow is now crumbling. To my knowledge, no effort has been made to assess why people are leaving, or what changes are needed to retain these valuable public servants—in fact, the Division is currently planning to transfer even more employees out of their current roles within the Division.

The swift reduction of staff is also troubling given that our Division's current leadership lacks systems-level experience, which is essential when serving thousands of children and teachers. Even worse, knowledgeable employees are often excluded from leadership's decision-making if they raise issues or views that diverge from leadership's agenda. We are responsible for serving thousands of children—decisions cannot be made by a handful of individuals in leadership, without input from staff members who have expertise in the issues being decided.

I am deeply concerned by the current environment I am working in and have been driven to resign from. I worry that the damage done to our early childhood system over the past nine months will take years to repair. **To retain city workers, we need strong leaders.** This city should expect that its leaders collaboratively develop strategic plans, which include the perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders and the staff that will be tasked to implement the work. And this must be done in a transparent process, so everyone has time to consider the impact of any possible shifts in policy and align to the new goals.

I urge the City Council to provide more oversight regarding the selection of new leaders for the Department of Education. I also urge the City Council to mandate a minimum level of programming continuity during DOE leadership transitions so that the uncertainty, frustration, and inefficiencies we have experienced over the past nine months are not repeated for thousands of additional children, family members, and city employees.

Lillian Fincher

From: Lynette Wright <lynette.wright.ches@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 9, 2022 7:31 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony on Worker Retention

Good Day to the esteemed member of the committee,

My name is Lynette Wright and I am a current city worker at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. I have worked in the city since 2016, and thought of myself as a person who would retire with the city. Similar to many New Yorkers, I was told that the city was a "good job" meaning it promised job and financial security, fairness in cost of living salary increases (not raises because it is not based upon merit), and sound benefits. However, the past 3 years have shown me that this is absolutely untrue and nothing more than a fantasy.

I worked for DOHMH for 2 year and decided to transfer to NYC Health + Hospitals for a significant salary increase. Unfortunately, I did not enjoy the work that I was doing and decided to transfer back to DOHMH. During this time, the salary ranges had decreased \$5000 from previous minimums and I was forced to take a \$6000 decrease in salary because I was considered to be a new applicant, not a city worker as I was not under the OMB. I also later learned that the former mayor would be mandating us back to the office, even in the face of an uncontrolled pandemic. Upon the transfer of power, this was pushed even more. Not because of poor city services, not because of reduction in productivity, but because we needed to "support the ecosystem". Instead of common sense solutions of providing flexibility to office workers, we have been and continue to be used as political pawns. That isn't our job.

If the city wants to recruit and maintain the best, then it needs to do better. Under excruciating situations, office employees have done their jobs, been activated for other jobs, and have also done the jobs of those who have left their positions. We have received nothing for it. No additional compensation, no flexibility in work, no additional benefits. It is somehow expected that city workers become sacrificial lambs for city initiatives. The DOHMH now has a 19% vacancy rate as a result of that thinking.

Getting the city back to stable conditions means that it needs to be competitive or people will continue to leave. The following can and should be done:

1. Allow office workers to work from home part-time or full time if their job allows them to do so. Many of my colleagues became parents during the pandemic and the ability to see their children grow up and spend time nurturing them has been invaluable and increased satisfaction. We've also been able to spend money and improve the economic and societal conditions of our neighborhoods by not having to have a Manhattan centric perspective. I live in the Bronx and my commute is anywhere from 2.5-3.5 hours a day without stops; 1 bus and 2 trains each way to get to Queens. This is no longer acceptable or sustainable.

2. Improve Tier 6 retirement and retirement medical benefits. Tier 6 is essentially indentured servitude for us. To work for 20 years to get 35% of my salary, knowing that I can't get salary increases in any regular pattern, is unfair. The city, therefore, limits out earning potential and how much we're able to save, in addition making it impossible to save for the future. Tier 6 prepares city workers for poverty in old age. Additionally, the medical

benefits of retirees needs to be improved. The recent Medicare Advantage passage, although cheap (literally) is a plan that will only reduce city workers from getting the health care they actually need. The city should not pit current and retired workers against each other with ridiculous, poor coverage medical plans.

3. Salary increase consistent with inflation. City workers cant afford to live in this city. Many of us are mandated to live here due to the requirements of the job, but cant afford to live here. Affordable housing is among term solution, but it doesnt matter if our salaries dont increase. We cant spend money in this city ad the mayor would like us to do if our salaried are only able to barely cover rent, commute, and food. We need salaries that are consistent with inflation instead of low percentage wages that are based on collective bargaining.

4. Free educational opportunities. I saw that DCAS pushed their educational skill based services that they offer. Leta be clear that these still cost us \$100+ of the salaries that we can barely manage on to have. The city needs to pay for our educational advancement if you want people to stay and have a workforce that is prepared of what the city needs to do.

Thank you for the opportunity. I hope that the are seriously taken under consideration if not fully implemennted. The city is at a tipping point and late to do anything about it.

With regard,

Lynette Wright

September 10, 2022

RE: My Testimony

My name is Margherita DeBonis I was a full time PreK teacher working for New York City Department of Education since March 2004. I was terminated on February 18, 2022 without a chance for a 3020a. My union did not represent unvaccinated members. They didn't communicate with me unless I contacted them. They did not help any unvaccinated members through out this whole ordeal. I was charged with misconduct for not being vaccinated.

Since last year I I endured many hardships . I lost my job, my father died, my friends and some family members stopped talking to me as if I was never a member of their family. I wasn't allowed to see my great nephew nor attend any family gatherings. My mother and father were the only ones who spoke to me. This is all because I didn't want to get the vaccine.

I never had covid but my family who have been vaccinated three times had covid three times during last winter and this spring since being vaccinated. Go figure I would think I would be the one getting covid. I was never a threat to my students. I never had a virus, cold nor flu. What I do have is an healthy immune system that works for me against viruses, colds, ear infections and the flu.

CDC has finally admitted being vaccinated stop transmission of the virus. Also, that natural immunity does protect us from covid 19. I have 2000 peer reviewed articles on what this vaccine can do to your body and all the people who have suddenly died. Every day there are more and more people dying for no reason other then getting vaccinated.

On October 2,2021 I was told by my principal if I decided not to be vaccinated he is going to give my position to another teacher in the school. He had already spoken to her. On Monday, October 4,2021 a coworker called me and said your belongings are all in the hallway I was told to bring them outside. She waited for me to pick up my things. I was in disbelief being I was always fond of my principal.

I was an excellent pre k teacher always scored highly effective on my observations.

scored the highest in my district on ECERS-R. This is an evaluation that you are observed by someone from ECERS-R for 5 hours. I consider myself a great asset to this school. I was put on involuntary leave on October 4, 2021. I haven't received a pay check for 11 months. I am living with my mother cause I cant pay rent nor pay bills. I was denied a religious exemption three times. So basically I was fired because of my sincerely held beliefs.

Margherita DeBonis
psis226

Written Testimony
Sept 12th 2022

During the past year, I have heard some say that “jobs are not earned but are a privilege”. But for public servants like myself, our careers are certainly both. One cannot forget about how my career was earned as it was not simply a job that I submitted an application for, was interviewed, selected, and then went through a brief training in order to fulfill my day to day responsibilities. Civil servants like myself have gone through that same process, in addition to enduring and completing an academy program that was months long, as well as completing multiple exams (for some physical, mental, and educational) along the way in order to make it to Graduation Day. Which, too, was followed by months of hands on training. I would say my career was diligently earned.

My name is Michelle Lee. And I was terminated from the City of New York Fire Department on July 6th 2022 due to the COVID-19 vaccination mandate. Prior to my termination, I was a Fire Protection Inspector with the City of New York Fire Department. I graduated top of my graduating class in the academy as Valedictorian. Which goes to show how serious I took my career from the start. I cannot begin to speak about the negative effects that the NYC COVID-19 vaccination mandate has had on my life without first speaking about the the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Department's gross mishandling of its members during this crucial time for which I am hoping they will one day be held accountable for. At the beginning and the HEIGHT of the pandemic, there are several documents, which I still have, that were issued to Department members differentiating employees who provide essential services versus those employees who provide non-essential services. Since I was a field worker, I was considered essential and was not afforded the luxury to work from home like those who did not provide essential services. I was required to report to work. This is amidst the time that the department had informed its members that COVID-19 was not an imminent threat and that it was optional to wear a mask and that anything over your mouth and nose (including a scarf) would suffice.

Throughout these months, I reported to duty. Because I was essential. As time went on and the pandemic progressed, the department began to provide us with the basics - 5 masks (1 per day), a few pairs of gloves, and some sanitizer. If I were to fast forward regarding the sanitizers, on October 6th 2021, the sanitizers that was provided to the Department's membership, Art Natural Hand Sanitizers, were reported on Channel 12 News due to a recall because of the product containing cancer-causing agents. The same day I learned of this report, I informed my Chief via an email containing the news report, which he had forwarded up the chain to his superiors. It was said that they would look into the issue and would get back to us, but to my knowledge, they never did. To this day, there are still members in possession of and is utilizing this product as the Department did not take any precaution or interest in warning its members of the potential dangers of the product that they have provided to them in the name of “safety”.

Returning to during the height of the pandemic, Fire Inspectors were still required to go into the field to conduct inspections in buildings and businesses where most or all of the staff were not present as they were all either working from home or were shut down. We were still required to put ourselves at risk, for the sake of fulfilling essential duties to the public, and ride the trains which were FULL of homeless individuals, their belongings, and their bodily secretions every day to go to empty building after empty building. If we did gain access to a building, we were met with much disdain and disgust from disgruntled and unsatisfied individuals who were very upset at the fact that the city would still require inspectors to travel to their buildings at such a time. Many of whom had actually called into my office to complain to my supervisors.

Even worse, the Department broke the protocol for inspectors to sign out at the end of their shift in the name of “keeping Fire Fighters safe”. When we would normally end our day by reporting to our local fire house to sign out in their book, for MONTHS we were not to report to the firehouses to sign out but instead had to call in to the office for a supervisor to sign us out via phone. This was due to the idea that inspectors could bring the virus into the fire houses when signing out, a 2 minute or less action. Needless to say, if inspectors needed to use a restroom, it was very difficult to do so, especially for female inspectors, as buildings were rarely open, and if they were, they did not want us using their restrooms, and neither did our very own firehouses! If we did get access to a restroom, most of the conditions were deplorable at best (of which I have dated pictures to prove). What were we to do during times like this!? Let alone dealing with the issue of completing paperwork. There is a lot of paperwork required to conduct inspections, even when one doesn’t gain access to a building. We would normally be afforded a place to complete paperwork within the building we inspected, but under those conditions, the authorized person in charge would want us out of their building as quick as possible which means that we would be forced to have to finish paperwork either at home (off hours) or in the office the next day, which was generally not allowed until later on in the pandemic.

As a female inspector, this was not proper circumstances to work under and it had really taken an immense toll on my body physically, mentally, and hormonally. And I knew it because my body clearly told me in more ways than one. My husband and I after trying unsuccessfully to conceive for a few months following the beginning of the pandemic, saw a fertility specialist who confirmed hormonal imbalances. I accepted this as a deeply unfortunate obstacle that I and my husband must now face and conquer and we are still struggling to do so until this day, because as we all know. Things continued to get worse.

But before it got worse, it did get a little better for me, since in May of 2020, I was afforded the prime opportunity to make a lateral transfer as a Chief’s Aide on the District Office Headquarter’s Executive Staff. In this role, my primary title was still that of a Fire Protection Inspector, however I was now able to conduct administrative work in the office and only went into the field to conduct specialty inspections along with a colleague, traveling in a Department vehicle, which was technically not required and

only occurred about 1% of the time. So I was now officially in a role that allowed me to work out of a secluded cubicle and was not public-facing. Before I became apart of the Executive Staff, the 6 members of whom it was comprised were allotted the opportunity to work from home and operate on compressed schedules during the beginning of the pandemic. By the time I took this role, however, telework was no longer required for this staff unless one was either sick with or exposed to COVID. Reasonable and understandable.

The turn of events obviously came once the City of New York put the COVID-19 vaccination mandate into effect on October 20th, 2021, for its employees. I immediately began to comprise my religious exemption which included a written and signed letter from the Senior Elder of my Place of Worship and I ensured its thorough and timely submission. On December 30th 2021, my religious exemption was wrongfully denied with the reason of "the asserted religious basis for the accommodation is insufficient to grant the requested accommodation in light of the POTENTIAL undue hardship to the Department". This potential undue hardship was never explained. So I submitted my appeal within the required amount of time to a 3 persons city panel, of whom the names and credentials are unknown, to later be denied on June 6th 2022, with the reason of "does not meet criteria", although I provided everything that was asked for. What criteria did I not meet?? It is not reasonable nor fair for me and others like me to have been required to spill our souls on paper to strangers to give us all THE SAME blanket denial. So unlike the lie that the "circle back" DCAS representative stated on September 9th 2022 at the press conference, reasonable accommodations are absolutely NOT individualized and are very much so blanketed.

In 2021, I had paid for and passed the DCAS promotional Associate Fire Protection Inspector exam. DCAS had taken my money for that exam, but will be apart of the unfortunate process of not allowing my money and my efforts to be fruitful by keeping me in the career that I have earned and love to get the opportunity to further it. Because of this unreasonable and unfair process, I have regressed from an independent tax paying member of society at the pinnacle of my working career, to a dependent member of society who must hope (FOR WEEKS with no income) for the approval of benefits such as unemployment insurance. All of this for a vaccination that by definition is supposed to either prevent, treat, and/or cure a disease. We have seen and have been told by accredited health authorities that the COVID-19 vaccination does not prevent COVID or its spread, does not treat COVID once contracted, and certainly does not cure COVID. Why are these mandates still in effect and causing productive members of society who are ready, willing, and able to work to lose everything that they have earned and dash any hopes that they have had for a viable future??

I would like to add that in my role as a Chief's Aide, there were several occasions when the Department allowed me to work from home for weeks while being sick with or exposed to COVID. But somehow that option is not viable anymore simply because they said so. I also worked in a vicinity where there are at least 3 vacant offices that

have been collecting dust for at least a year that I could easily work out of while being even further away from my coworkers than I already am if the Department deemed me to be such a danger to the health of others.

Additionally, the circumstances under which I was terminated was very wrongful and unjust as well. The same day my religious exemption appeal was denied, was the same day that I had tested positive for COVID. HR and EEO did not have communications with one another and had mishandled my situation. I had informed HR that I was choosing to follow the guidelines from the CDC at the time and was not going to consider taking the vaccination until 90 days post infection. They told me that this was not city policy and that I had to take the shot or be terminated in a few days. They told me that FDNY EMT personnel, where they conducted weekly testing, would give me the vaccine once I was out of isolation. The EMT's told me that they would not give me the shot since I still had a cough and that it was too soon post infection. Pharmacies administering the vaccine also informed me that I had to wait 90 days post infection before they would administer the shot to someone like me. So here we have a scenario in which the FDNY EEO Department was forcing me into what health professionals deemed to be a potentially dangerous health situation.

A few days following this, the FDNY EEO Department had placed my Chief in a very precarious and uncomfortable situation where they told him via phone while I was in front of him that he were to ensure that I should not be in the building and that I am in LWOP status. This had caused me to call my union office who confirmed with the time and leave unit that I was in fact still Active Duty (which I have documents to prove). As a result, I continued to work for days until I officially received a termination letter certified mail and was locked out of the City Time log in system. This created a scenario that seemed as though the FDNY EEO Department was trying to create a situation where supervisors would do their "dirty work" in forcing unvaccinated members off of the premises prematurely. With all of this happening, all members post termination are still in the Employee Self Service (ESS) system where on our profiles indicate that our employer is The Office of the Mayor, with an agency start date of the current date that we log in. Very strange and still unexplainable.

This unfathomable circumstance that I and my family are enduring has forced my husband into a situation that opens the door for potentially declined physical and mental health, mood instability and emotional downturns, by way of him having to work insurmountable hours to make up for a lost income that I am very capable of earning. And a situation where the most valuable commodity of all, that cannot be replaced, is being stolen from us...

Time.

How does an institution discriminate against people based on a medical decision linked to sincerely held religious beliefs when human beings will fight for animal rights? There is no clear reason as to why my employer denied my religious exemption. I was terminated at no fault of my own. This mandate is baseless and needs to be overruled and lifted immediately. Because of an ineffective product such as this vaccination, I am

being held ransom with my livelihood. This entire nightmare has been going on for 985 days! And leaders of this city are allowing it.

So I will end with this, we have all seen the headlines about maternal mortality. Hence, Mayor Eric Adams' new doula initiative that provides approaches to expand doula access for black expectant mothers in New York City. With my endeavors to one day become a mother while I am still within childbearing age in addition to the very well known disparities for birthing black women in America, I am most certainly experiencing irreparable harm. Time. Valuable time, that cannot be given back to me with reinstatement and backpay.

Without my job, benefits, and adequate income, I cannot afford proper insurance to ensure a better opportunity for my reproductive health or the safety of childbirth, labor, and delivery as the statistics show that "if you have private insurance and are white, you have a physician who is on call for you, while the CLINIC population by and large tend to be black and brown women who have Medicaid (which due to the issue of mandates I am currently on) are treated by resident learners"...These are places that because of lack of finances, these women are being practiced on! (there are modules written about the things done to black women as a result of poor health care)".

Midwives have said that the most important gift for anyone to give an expectant mother is time. Time is being taken from me every single day that I am not allowed to earn an income. Time is of the utmost importance. Sitting at home is causing me to pause family planning that I was on track with and literally watch valuable time get away from me that I cannot get back. Irreparable harm.

I am trying to be one less family impacted by this crisis. My career is a huge part of that.

This has become a country, and a city, that despite the headlines, does not see me or value me.

All of this, and everything that trickles down from it, is becoming a human rights issue. It should be a fundamental human right for someone to be able to work to earn a living, start and raise a family in this country, feed that family, and live to raise their children.

Please end these harsh and unreasonable mandates!
Humanity depends upon it.

City Hall
New York, NY 10007
Committee on Civil Service and Labor
Committee on Oversight and Investigations

9/09/2022

Submitted via Testimony@council.nyc.gov

Dear Chair De La Rosa and Chair Brewer,

Thank you, Chairs and committee members, for holding this vital hearing on “Oversight - Maintaining New York City’s Municipal Workforce”. My name is Nicolas Shearman. I am a New York City Parks Capital Division employee and a proud member of DC37. I testify today as a worker and NYC resident deeply concerned about the rapid attrition taking place at City agencies.

I strongly recommend the City Council, working with the State legislature, if necessary, pass a law to offer City workers whose jobs can be done via telework as proven during the pandemic, the option to telework two days a week for non-compressed schedules and one day a week for compressed schedules. I also urge the City Council to advocate for substantial raises for all City workers, and to urge to Mayor to start negotiations with DC37 to replace the contract which expired last year.

It is an honor to be a municipal employee and serving the people of this great City. However, the private sector has job openings that offer people flexibility and higher salaries. This has attracted thousands of City employees to leave, as people need reduced commuting time before and after work to help take care of their own personal, healthcare, child and elder care needs. This makes sense to me, especially in a state where more universal childcare and paid leave has only recently been introduced, and where universal healthcare and elder care is still not a reality, even in a deadly pandemic. Also, less commuting time made possible by teleworking allows people to have more leisure time to de-stress from the demands of life and work, which has been especially stressful during a global pandemic and all the associated complications that came with it. People realized in this pandemic that life is short. When they could be working a job that allows them to work one or two days from home and pays a more livable wage in the face of inflation, people don’t want to spend two or three hours a day taking the train or driving to a job they’re getting underpaid at when they could have more favorable living conditions working in the private sector.

To right this imbalance, the City needs to get smart and create a flexible and common sense telework policy fit for the twenty-first century, and it needs to increase its workers wages to help them afford life’s skyrocketing expenses and reward them for the amazing work they did to get this City of 8 million plus through the worst pandemic in 100 years. If the City fails to do so, it will continue to have a brain drain, institutional knowledge will be lost, project management of projects will be impacted, and city services will be delayed or cut. The City wants to get stuff done, but that’s impossible without a strong municipal workforce. At Parks Capital Division, it appears we lost over 50 staff since the start of the pandemic out of a staff of around 450, and we have 125 vacant budgeted positions. With an active staff of 394 and 125 vacancies, there is a vacancy rate of around 24%. This is detrimental, as we are the division responsible for building the green and public spaces people use to survive pandemics and enjoy city life.

However hard it tries, the City cannot convince the private sector to ignore reality and our current technologies and force all private sector workers to return to Manhattan offices. Those days are over, and the City needs to adapt if its to continue to have a robust economy and population. In addition to solidifying its workforce, the City and MTA should adapt to this new reality and start doing the urban planning work needed to adapt its office districts into more economically resilient mixed use neighborhoods.

I understand that some workers are not able to telework based on their job descriptions, but I don't find it unjust that office workers would be authorized to telework. There are significant equity concerns if the City fails to uphold adequate levels of service and the speed/scale of its capital programs, and the working people of this City stand to lose out if the City doesn't do what's needed to compete with the private sector to retain its professional office workforce. We're seeing in Jackson, Mississippi and other places across the country when infrastructure is not maintained, and we saw that in NYC in the 1970s and 80s. We do not want to be in that situation again in our beloved City.

Thank you for considering my testimony and I hope to see urgent and timely action by the City Council and Mayor on this issue.

Sincerely,
Nicolas Shearman

NYC Parks Employee, Capital Division, Olmsted Center
DC37 Local 371 Member
Astoria, Queens Resident
Lifelong New York State resident

I have been a city employee for 9 years. Even though I like my job and am committed to my agency, I've seen a lot of very talented, hardworking colleagues leave for better pay, a more flexible telework policy, and more opportunities for growth and promotion. I've also noticed that day-to-day tasks have become more challenging and time consuming: our June invoices were issued in September because our Purchasing Division is short-staffed, it took almost a year before my computer was upgraded to Windows 10 because our IT department is short-staffed, getting contracts signed for grants and other projects takes longer because our Legal department is short-staffed, it took 2 weeks after a job posting closed before I was able to review resumes because our Personnel department is short-staffed, and so on. Staff in these departments – Purchasing, IT, Legal, Personnel – and likely many others have plenty of options outside of working for the City, and as long as we have salaries that don't keep up with the high cost of living in city (especially because there's a residency requirement for City workers) and an inflexible telework policy, we will keep losing talent to other organizations that value their employees more. We, City workers, are getting stuff done despite all these challenges because we care about public service. It's time for the Mayor's Office to show that they value us.

N. Auyeung

Jessie Murphy

9/10/22

I am an NYPD attorney who has been impacted by the vaccine mandate. Without resorting to litigation, I would have been among the thousands who have resigned or retired after their reasonable accommodations were denied. As an attorney, I have insight into the way the NYPD is handling reasonable accommodations and I knew, despite my religious objection being sincere, that my request would be denied. So I hired an attorney months before the final decision. As expected, my accommodation was denied at the end of June 2022. When my attorney gave notice to the City that we would be filing an Article 78 proceeding, the City backed down. They offered to grant my reasonable accommodation if I agreed not to bring suit. This tells me 2 things: 1. My reasonable accommodation was unlawfully denied; and 2. The City knows it.

I cannot exactly describe the how the months of anxiety, anger, fear and turmoil has changed me and my family. Every day that my request was pending could have been the day I was denied, triggering my termination. Working and living under that cloud was, at times, agony. The job insecurity created by the mandate effected my daily decisions. How can you make any plans when your career can either be ended tomorrow or will last another decade and you have no idea which one? How can you answer questions about your children's future when you may be on the brink of financial ruin? And how do you think that insecurity affects your relationship with your spouse? The City has completely disregarded its Reasonable Accommodation Procedural Guidelines which give definite time frames for deciding these applications. I also believe that the City has disregarded the substantive law on reasonable accommodations which is the NYC Human Rights Law. My settlement with the City confirms my belief.

I continue to see my friends and colleagues get denied and face the impossible choice between violating their religious convictions and providing for their families. The 7 day window between the final denial and LWOP, which is arbitrarily imposed by the City, makes it enormously hard for most people to retain an attorney. The expense of litigation for someone who is about to lose their income is another obstacle to obtaining legal relief. The City has decided every aspect of the timing of this process and they have designed it to apply maximum pressure to us and allow minimum ability to challenge them. In short, this process is rigged.

The financial impact on those affected by the mandate is not the only damage. The idea that someone who does not know you and is unfamiliar, or even hostile, to your religious beliefs could be judging the validity of your inmost convictions is horrifying, humiliating, and infuriating. Anonymous bureaucrats are deeming some unworthy to work without any obligation to disclose their reasons or defend their decision. The injustice is staggering.

Through the grace of God and with the help of a courageous attorney, I can tell my children that it is still possible to be faithful to God without being disqualified from your employment. What are my colleagues saying their children? If they are being honest, I imagine it goes something like this: “Daddy isn’t working anymore because being a faithful Christian/Jew/Muslim means you can’t be a cop.” This is the reality for thousands in the NYPD.

I'm writing to submit written testimony for the important discussion by the Committee on Civil Service and Labor on how to maintain the municipal workforce on September 9, 2022. I am a longtime public servant who has worked in a managerial capacity across 4 agencies and three mayoral administrations during a myriad of local and national crises, and I have never witnessed the staggering loss of talent in our ranks as what I've experienced this last year.

The pandemic has been undoubtedly hard for everyone in NYC. As public servants, we were called to action to go above and beyond our normal duties during this City's time of incredible need, many of my colleagues took on added roles responding to food insecurity, mask distribution, census outreach, and later staffing vaccination sites or processing emergency housing assistance as we worked to steadily help NYC climb out of the pandemic. Many of us who fall into the knowledge or information workers category worked from home, around the clock, ceasing to have any boundaries between homelife and work life. We were exhausted and burned out, but proud to be able to help our beloved city in our capacity as public servants.

Late last summer, Mayor De Blasio made a sudden announcement that all municipal employees would return back to the office full-time, and on the first day of school. As a single parent, the Mayor's abrupt announcement that we would be going back into our unhealthy, poorly ventilated, physical offices at full capacity with less than two weeks' notice was profoundly disrespectful, and required us to take needless risks as Delta was on the rise and at a time when many of us were just trying to get by until our young kids were eligible to be vaccinated. Around this time is when we started to see the steady exodus of exhausted, burned out, talented colleagues.

As capable coworkers left, our voluminous workloads became evermore unmanageable, which became a vicious cycle that caused more and more coworkers to leave. The brain drain was upon us and accelerating. It takes mere days or weeks to resign or retire, but over half a year to hire an employee, 6 months-1 year to train them and years more to build expertise (which is needed in such a complex environment like NYC).

Many coworkers hung on, waiting to see if perhaps the new incoming Adams Administration would be more flexible, and offer a hybrid alternative to employees. When Adams took office, during the initial wave of Omicron, the policy remained unchanged while a new more contagious variant was circulating as teams sat in open plan seating, without enforcement of mask wearing. Colleagues who had taken the "wait and see" approach steadily began to make alternative plans, and we began to see another accelerating wave of resignations that is still ongoing.

In my agency, HPD, we have lost a staggering amount of talent and institutional knowledge in the last year. We have many teams with vacancies ranging from 25%-75%. There is no question that this is impacting our agency's service delivery, I communicate with frustrated external parties on a daily basis. In February of this year, the New York Housing Conference (an industry group) wrote a [policy brief](#) imploring the

Adams Administration to address the growing staffing crisis at our agency. We have had an incredibly hard time attracting talent given current employment market conditions, our lower compensation rates and lack of flexibility. The public service hiring process is broken (though this is not unique to the current Administration) and requires such a long and tedious process that we are losing the rare, good candidates in the process due to wait times.

As I've worked to try and nurture the next generation of leaders within my agency, I have been consistently running into young capable staff that are telling me they don't want to be considered for promotions because they've grown too disillusioned with working for the City and are now contemplating other options. This has been an especially clear pattern with parents of young children. They see and know that there's a world of work out there that could give them greater work-life balance and flexibility to meet their needs, and they know it's possible because it's what we did for 18 months.

In the spring of 2021 [a petition](#) was circulated advocating for the City to come up with a more evolved telework policy looking beyond the pandemic. It had over 10,000 signatures (and was not organized or circulated by the unions, so there are likely many more workers who would agree). Pandemic and unsafe/unhealthy buildings aside, the world of information workers has changed during the pandemic and most employers have adopted hybrid work, permanently. If NYC aims to compete to retain existing talent and be able to attract new talent, it must evolve and adapt to the changing world of work.

While I'm certain not all types of work were conducive to remote work, and that some areas had performance issues, many agencies and teams exceeded their performance and with reduced staff while working remotely without much support. In fact, our agency received two agency-wide emails on the eve of our return to the office in 2021, one from our Commissioner and one from our Deputy Mayor commending our exemplary service and performance during the 18 months we worked remotely (contrary to Mayor De Blasio's insulting assertions at the time that remote work caused poor performance in the public sector).

Our city is facing a municipal workforce crisis that will only worsen over time without the City adapting to the changing world of work. There are many additional benefits to allowing municipal workers to work more flexibly aside from just workforce retention: ease congestion on roads and bridges, reduce carbon emissions associated with needless commutes, ease congestion on mass transit, reimagine land use for our core commercial/business districts, support a more diverse workforce and be more inclusive and sensitive to the needs of caretakers with dependents, support small businesses and local economies in the outer boroughs (where most municipal workers live) are just some of the many added benefits. If we allow ourselves the flexibility and creativity to reimagine how and where we work, I'm sure the opportunities for NYC are endless.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.

Ruth Vishlitzky

September 9, 2023

Dear Council Members,

I thank you profusely for the opportunity to participate in this hearing and share with you the impact the vaccine mandates has had on my physical, emotional, and financial well-being.

Prior to the vaccine mandates going into effect on October 4, 2021 for DOE employees, applied for a Restoration of Health Leave due to several health conditions. I received confirmation that my application was received and within one month after tense negotiations with the Union to represent me, it was approved. However, DOE placed me on the non-compliant list, and refused to take me off stating I had to be vaccinated. For a long time, I was not paid for my 103 days and was unable to extend my leave according to contractual agreement. It has taken 11 months to get the DOE to investigate my case and to acknowledge their error. The DOE still has yet to pay me in full.

During that time, I was unable to afford out-of-pocket medical expenses; my condition worsened. My physician has now recommended that I stay on Restoration of Health Leave for further treatment. I suffered severe distress and anxiety. As a result my hair fell out. I have pictures as evidence. I also tested high on a PTSD test. I received notice that I was going to be evicted; my credit score got lowered because automatic deductions were not made to pay loans I had. For a period of time, the DOE instructed the retirement fund to freeze my personal deferred tax annuity and was not able to make decisions about my financial investments. I could not protect my own money. I lived on my credit card in order to eat and buy necessities. I maxed out these cards.

I note that the UFT had confirmed during a Town hall meeting that the vaccine mandate did not apply to teachers on a Restoration of Health until they returned to work. Yet, the DOE persisted with its negligent actions against me denying me an opportunity for adequate healthcare. My attorney wrote and sent notices via certified mail and very little was done to rectify the situation. I believe the DOE either acted intentionally negligent or is extremely careless in its operation.

The DOE has an obligation not to cause harm to innocent people when it enacts unlawful policies. The Mayor has taken an oath to act within the law and has not done so.

The Mayor and the DOE breached contractual agreements causing me financial ruined, physical and emotional harm. Even if or when the vaccine mandates are repelled, I cannot get my original job back as my Principal made it clear if I did not get the shot and returned to work this school year, I would never be allowed back in the building. I must respect her wishes as the Mayor's policy is disruptive. But that leaves me without a position. This situation was created by the negligence of the DOE and City.

Mayor Adams and the DOE violated my rights to convalesce without interference. Mayor Adams need to repel his mandates as they violate the following US Codes:

1. 18 US Code Section 2331 and subsection 802;

1. 21 Code of Federal Regulation & Section 50.33 & 23

These two codes along with six more forbid coercion of individuals as condition of employment and a coercion of a population is a felony with a prison sentence of 99 years and/or a fine of \$100,000,000 if the violator is an institution. They violated several US Codes.

I urge you to notify the Mayor of his unlawful actions by continuing to honor these mandates which violates so many US Codes. I for one was not supposed to be a party of his unlawful acts.

Again, I thank you for your time and the work you are doing to bring me and many City-workers justice. We all feel emotionally raped and it will take considerable amount of time to heal. We can begin that healing once the violation stops. These mandates need to be lifted as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Stella Preston
District 28 Sent from my iPhone

Councilmembers,

I am currently a resident of District 11 and a civil servant working for DSS. I am writing this to urge you to implement a generous and robust telework policy for city employees.

The city is currently hemorrhaging employees and nowhere is this more felt than in our knowledge workers. When the mayor and his office suggest that there has been no impact to city operations due to attrition, they are objectively, factually incorrect. We have already experienced catastrophic losses amongst our software developers, engineers, database administrators, lawyers and similar staff. The losses we have experienced so far have already lead to a dearth of employees with inside knowledge of how our information systems work. As employees continue to leave, this technical debt will only increase. As these employees leave, those that remain face increased workloads to pick up the slack.

What do these jobs have in common? They are most easily converted to full-time remote work. Historically, civil servants have foregone higher salaries in exchange for superior benefits and desire to serve the public. However, the immediate and dramatic improvement in quality of life that comes from remote work has changed the calculus. The increased flexibility and decreased stress are that much of a game changer.

I can personally vouch for the decreased quality of life that comes from losing over two hours of my day to the commute. What galls me the most about it though is that my commute is entirely unnecessary. For most of the pandemic I worked for NYC Parks on their Data Analytics team. While fully remote my teammates and I managed to handle our existing workload while also playing a crucial role in transitioning the rest of the agency's remote-capable jobs to a fully remote posture. We continued to do so for the entirety of the time we were remote. In her farewell email to city workers, Deputy Mayor Been made an explicit point to thank remote city workers for their excellent work over the course the pandemic. To say remote work is less effective, as the mayor and his predecessor do, is not only categorically false, it is an insult to the dedicated workers who helped keep this city running.

Thank you for your consideration.

Stephen Visovsky

My name is Taras and I reside in zip code 10018. Erik Bottcher is ‘my’ Councilmember but he has been ignoring my outreach to him for three weeks on the issue of the NYC Worker Mandate. Absolutely shameful.

A couple of weeks ago, a good friend of mine was given an ultimatum by a NYC employer: Get the Covid jab, or you’re fired. Violate your medical and bodily autonomy with experimental injections, or you cannot earn a living.

This is sick. And it resonates in a terrible human history. *It doesn’t matter that Mayor Adams doesn’t enforce the mandate. Reputable employers will never knowingly violate standing law, therefore, the cruelty and human rights violations remain exactly the same.* Why is the Worker Mandate still on the books if it’s not even enforced and there is no emergency? The only possible answer is an insatiable obsession with power and submission through cruelty.

You are politicians. You don’t medically treat me. You don’t treat my friend. You don’t treat any New Yorker. And even if you did, the Nuremberg Code is unambiguous: *we still get to make those decisions.*

Imagine if your ability to earn a living were suddenly ripped away from you if you didn’t submit to a medical intervention that you do not want. That you know can be medically dangerous to you. That you do not need because you already had the disease. That is documented to cause heart problems and strokes and blood clots and suppresses immunity. That does not achieve its stated purposes of preventing infection and transmission. That is by definition experimental because there is no long-term safety data. That we know has been lied about for over two years by politicians, public health officials, the media, and people who call themselves scientists and physicians.

The only alternative you have is to exercise your rights under the Nuremberg Code and choose not to violate your body and your medical rights. The consequence of making this choice is that you will be unable to pay your rent, to buy food for yourself, to buy food for your children, to pay your bills, to buy gas for your car.

What I’ve described is pure cruelty, and I would go so far as to call it pure evil.

The Nuremberg Code expressly prohibits governments from leveraging coercion in forcing unwanted medical interventions. It prohibits the fraud, the duress, the overreaching. The Nuremberg Code was established in prosecuting the heinous, murderous atrocities of Nazi Germany. The Code is clear:

“The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential.” “This means that the person involved ... should be so situated as to be able to exercise free power of choice, without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, overreaching, or other ulterior form of constraint or coercion; and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved as to enable him to make an understanding and enlightened decision.”

I must put the Mayor's Covid hypocrisy on the official record. Barely a day goes by without pictures of Mayor Eric Adams plastered in dense crowds all over social media. No masks anywhere, no social distancing, packed events every single day. Further, Mayor Adams is fully injected, he is fully boosted, and he still got Covid.

The continuation of this useless, cruel, and medically dangerous mandate when it is so obviously wrong is a crime against humanity, perpetuated by Mayor Adams and by all of you who sit silent or in support of this.

End the NYC Worker Mandate.

To Whom It May Concern,

I have been a teacher in NYC for 16 years. In the 2020-2021 school year, I was at the school every day to be there for my students while the majority of my school was working from their homes remotely. I was thanked by the parents for willing to risk getting sick to be there for their children. Fast forward to 2021-2022 school year when we were deemed not safe to be in a school because we didn't want to take an experimental shot! I was one of the few, fortunate people who received a medical exemption so I was able to keep my job in some capacity. However, with that being said, I am still being discriminated against and segregated.

My school is located in the Bronx. Last school year, after not being allowed to go back to the school building, I was teaching remotely from home. Then in February, I was forced to drive to lower Manhattan to teach remotely. This caused a severe hardship to my family; physically, mentally and financially. My commute was 2+ hours each way. My gas credit card bill had never been so high, which continued to rise as the price of gas rose. It cost me thousands of dollars to make that commute from February to June; money that I don't have. The cheapest parking I could find was \$125 a week! I could not afford the extra added expense, so I was left no choice than to teach from my car. Not only was this completely inappropriate, but also dangerous for me. I was sitting in my car in the street with a laptop in the wide open.

Now, with the updated CDC guidelines, there is absolutely no reason why we cannot return to work in a normal capacity. There are shortages in all areas of the city. The fact that the only place that still has this unfounded mandate in place is NYC, proves that there is something else going on. This mandate has ruined countless lives for no reason. Forcing people to put something in their bodies that they do not want is unconstitutional! They say "we are following the Science", well the science has proven the vaccine does not stop the spread or contraction of the virus. In fact, there is an astounding amount of evidence that this vaccine causes harm in many ways. Young children are having heart attacks, people are developing various cancers at an alarming rate, pregnant women who are healthy are having miscarriages; just to name a couple.

At the end of the day, we just want to be able to do what we love! It is unjust and unconstitutional to discriminate against people who make choices for their own

bodies. It is unjust and unconstitutional to segregate people for not complying with an experimental drug that has since proven to be harmful to those who take it.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Victoria Daly

Testimonial:

I have been an employee of the Department of Education for over a decade of service and in this time, I have accumulated over seventy-five sick days. These days, used for my own illness or personal business, etc. However, it was not until late 2021 where my family was faced with the unfortunate circumstance of my toddler son being diagnosed with a rare auto-inflammatory condition called PFAPA. (periodic fever, aphthous stomatitis, pharyngitis, adenitis). In this condition, he will experience high fevers of 104-106 degrees every twenty to twenty-five days that last about two to three days. These fever spells leave him bed ridden at times, or he is fine and his happy-go-lucky self but needs to be monitored for febrile seizures.

When finally given a treatment plan of steroids, his specialists gave us the firm guidelines of keeping him under close watch of reactions for 48 hours. During these times, I have been forced to use my own days from a job that I can be fully remote. I have not had one in-person meeting in over a year at my position. All of my duties and responsibilities are done from a computer and telephone. In addition, his condition does not fall under the qualifications for FMLA; leaving me the choice to either suffer financially or use the days in my bank. So as the time goes on, I will have to continue to burn through my hard-earned vacation and sick time any time my boy is experiencing a flare up with his condition when I could be working with fidelity from home; a work product I was proven to do so when my children fell ill with COVID and I was subject to quarantine. A work from home option for my role is not unreasonable, it is merely a power move by city officials ensuring that we are being watched. Who will watch my son trusting that he will not have an adverse reaction to strong steroids? Or a seizure from a high fever? His father could be working from a home office doing just that if given the approval, not abusing the system.

During snow days and matters of emergency weather, we are given the opportunity to find an alternative location closer to home, not a remote option as Mayor Banks does for students. He would prefer us risk poor conditions and go to an unfamiliar location rather than work in comfortable conditions to produce a full day's worth, to be what? Watched? Micromanaged? It's time to change

In closing, in the Spring of 2022, I was a candidate to be an organ donor for a close family member. After going through the process and finding out I was a match and could proceed with the next steps; I was struck with the news that the Department of Education does not have an organ donation policy and I would have to use all of my time and go on an unpaid leave of absence with no option to work remotely during recovery while my immune system recuperates. This option was something the doctors at Columbia-Presbyterian

told me to consider rather than use my time. Considering my options as a father of four, another family member stepped in as the donor and I did not have to exhaust my time. However, this was a horrifying reality.

Remote work is not about theft of service, it is about options and flexibility for families, for safety during inclement weather. It's time for the city of New York to wake up and look at the private sector's success rates as well as other states policies for telework. You're losing thousands of employees. How much more are you willing to lose before it's too late?

At the beginning of the pandemic; I was working 8 part time jobs. I lost all of these jobs and was out of work for all of 2020. In 2021, I was hopeful when I was able to work 2 of those aforementioned jobs. When Kathy Hochul took over; all hope was lost! I was suddenly fired from both of these jobs, one of which was my beloved Yankee Stadium.

I worked at Yankee Stadium for 16 years and it was my favorite job! But now because of these Draconian mandates; I am unable to work there anymore. I am the single parent of an Autistic 16 year old. Currently I am on Welfare and starvation is the norm. Eviction and homelessness is imminent and I fear that I will break. And I know that my son will not be able to handle it as well.

I have lost everything and the only thing keeping me going is my son. We have no resources and I am losing hope everyday. There are many days when I cannot get out of the bed due to the overwhelming despair that I feel.

Being unvaccinated in NYC is like being an untouchable in India! We are maligned and demonized for no other reason than we are declaring "my body, my choice!" No one has the right to dictate that I must inject myself with an experimental drug! These vaccines have not been tested and the long term effects include myocarditis, blood clots and death.

I will continue to stand on my square and say no to these vaccines! I fight for all of the workers who were fired. Because we all know that the panacea for this virus is not found in a needle. But mostly, I fight for all of those people that committed suicide from sheer loneliness and isolation! I have a donation page setup for my son and I. If anyone feels compelled to help us in our time of need; we express gratitude! [Givesendgo.com/standwithVirginia](https://givesendgo.com/standwithVirginia)

City Workers from across all agencies have sounded the alarm about the continual decline in services if a telework policy is not immediately adopted.

The municipal workforce of NYC continues to experience alarming rates of attrition. This lost talent not only impacts city employees, but *all* residents of NYC as our ability to provide services is severely compromised. The ability to keep the City safe is compromised. This has been highlighted by numerous press outlets in only the past two months, including [City and State](#) and City Limits ([in March](#) and then again [in April](#)). NY1 this past weekend.

Outdated, inflexible work policies inflict an outsize burden on women, disabled, caregivers, and people of color, but flexible work can alleviate this impact on individuals who are disproportionately leaving the workforce.

A telework option would increase diversity and inclusion in the city workforce, increase employee productivity, promote employee retention, and maintain competitiveness and equity with other government entities and the private sector.

City workers (by virtue of our employment) live in New York and directly contribute to our local economies when working from home.

Telework in our local communities does not impact the tax revenue of the City. The Comptroller reports of 2020 and 2021 both illustrated this reality. In fact, telework grew local communities of New York City.

City workers patronize our local restaurants and our local stores in OUR communities. Communities that are part of NYC! Communities in Queens, Brooklyn, Bronx, State Island and Neighborhoods of Manhattan.

We send our children to local public schools. Public schools that have seen alarming rates of decline in population over the past two years. Public schools that need active caregiving bodies and the support of local communities to continue to flourish.

This antiquated workplace model is forcing more employees to leave the municipal workforce and take their families, including their children, with them to other states.

Mayor Adams campaigned on being the outer borough Mayor, but with the mandated return to office, City Workers now leave our local communities to sit at desks and patronize chain businesses over local businesses in our communities.

City Workers are now forced to make a conscious choice to spend less and less since the mandated RTO. This is directly impacting spending in OUR local communities.

City workers have worked harder than ever in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts to serve our communities since the start of the pandemic. In the past year, thousands of colleagues representing [multiple agencies](#) have written amazing open letters highlighting the shortfalls of our current policies, which are unsafe, unequal, and unnecessary. Others have joined us at [rallies](#), [shared testimonies online](#), penned [op-eds](#), or spoken to reporters about [leaving NYC employment](#) and [navigating complicated reasonable accommodation processes](#).

Since the full-time return to office, the city workforce has experienced ongoing preventable covid outbreaks, unrelenting caregiving challenges, increasing resignations, inability to fill empty positions, as well as declines in productivity due to outdated technology, hazardous commutes, unsafe and distracting working conditions, and the sheer overwork that stems from our constantly shrinking teams.

In his campaign, [Mayor Adams made clear](#):



Adams

: Party Primary Candid

Accessible Caregiving

This pandemic has exacerbated the big holes in our caregiving systems, including childcare and long-term care. How do you propose addressing these issues and creating a fair and equitable system both for families and the caregiving workforce?



Caregiving is easier when places of employment give flexibility to the work day. COVID has shown us that we do not all need to be at a desk in an office building to be productive. This is why I will encourage more flexible work options and remote work across the City so that caregivers can continue to care for their families while maintaining employment.

“Caregiving is ever when places of employment give flexibility to the workday.”

“Covid has shown that we do not all need to be at a desk in an office building to be productive.”

Mayor Adams promised (if elected) “this is why I will encourage more flexible work options and remote work across the city so that caregivers can continue to care for their families while maintaining employment.”

However, despite the promises, [and the advocacy from unions](#), nothing has come to fruition and in the interim, the workforce has been decimated to the detriment of New Yorkers.

Since the pandemic, City Workers have been writing and calling on elected leaders to help form a new reality for the workforce in line with our counterparts in state and federal agencies who have telework and hybrid work models on a permanent basis.

The continuation to force an antiquated workplace model upon City agencies will not help with the recovery, but rather set New York City back for years (if not decades) to come.

We have been pleading for assistance. Hear our cries. The time is now for the City Council to step in and act. City Workers and our families are your constituents and need your help.

From: Anonymous Testimony
Sent: Friday, September 9, 2022 12:29 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Testimony - Oversight - Maintaining New York City's Municipal Workforce

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Anonymous Testimony**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2022 at 12:27 PM
Subject: Testimony - Oversight - Maintaining New York City's Municipal Workforce
To:

Hello,

Thank you for accepting my testimony and thank you for convening this important meeting.

I am a former City employee that left the City this year after 10+ years of service. Once I became disabled I encountered constant issues with the reasonable accommodation process despite having multiple disabilities and letters from multiple doctors I had to continually resubmit accommodation requests which exacerbated my conditions and adversely impacted my recovery. The accommodation requests were reviewed and changed based on arbitrary decision-making influenced by the Mayor's harmful stance on remote work. EEO offices are being compelled to deny and randomly modify requests as a result of the Mayor's toxic position on remote work after explicitly telling New Yorkers that he supported it during his campaigns.

City workers should not be subjected to harmful and toxic work environments and work cultures shaped by the lack of compassion, empathy, and poor leadership of one person. A person with outdated ways of thinking that negatively impacts the very people who keep the city running.

People with qualifying disabilities under the ADA are being denied reasonable accommodations because city agencies are under pressure from City Hall to force people back into the office. Remote work, works for everyone -- parents with childcare needs, single mothers who need to take care of children with illnesses, caregivers who are caring for ill relatives and aging parents, people with disabilities and long Covid, people who are experiencing burnout, etc.

I ask that, City Council uses every tool in its arsenal to ensure that the city makes remote work a permanent policy and practice. Even as state legislation is pending votes the city can employ a temporary policy or pilot remote work strategies.

I also ask that, City Council works with the Comptroller and DCAS to require that city agencies begin maintaining and reporting anonymous aggregated data for reasonable accommodation requests. This data should be reported to and reviewed by City Council, DCAS and the Comptroller's office on a quarterly basis.

City agencies should be held accountable for ADA compliance and monitoring the number, status, and approval/disapproval outcomes with investigations when necessary for denied requests.

COVID-19 isn't going away and won't be the last public health crisis and mass disabling event that New Yorkers will face. Now is the time to make the workplace more accessible and flexible so that City employees can continue to serve the city and care for themselves and their families. They have sacrificed and lost enough!! City workers deserve better.

Thank You

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

I am a NYCDOE speech therapist who is facing termination due to the nonsensical and unlawful mandates. I feel like I am staring down the barrel of a gun because by the end of this year, I will be FORCED TO DECIDE between keeping my livelihood that provides for my two small children and standing up for medical, bodily, and religious freedom. Freedoms that I want my children to know and experience in this country. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that such CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY would be allowed to occur once more in our society, this time in America.

Everyday I wake up to a mental, emotional and psychological prison as I try to imagine what I can do to work and continue to raise my family in this state. The anguish and stress that this has cause my family is impossible to describe to anyone who supports these mandates and not necessary to describe to anyone who has held the line for over a year now.

MY religious exemption was flagrantly denied with a broad sweeping brush, along with countless others by a government that has tyrannically deemed itself to divinely determine the personally held beliefs of another. Truly knowing the mind and heart of a man is a task that is reserved for God and God alone. Therefore, everyone who submitted religious exemptions should have been unilaterally approved, case closed!

During the course of these years my daughter who should have been enjoying her first preschool and kindergarten years in the classroom was mostly caged up in a virtual prison. She was robbed of being able to breathe fresh air. She was forced to hid her smile under a piece o cloth and was instructed not to share hugs with her teachers/friends. When she was in a classroom, she was not permitted to play with anything or touch items around her classroom. Classroom toys and objects were placed in Ziploc bags for the class to touch. My daughter along with every child forced to endure these socially damaging times was made to feel like A GERM HERSELF, being told to “lift up her mask”, sometimes yelled at repeatedly by adults, if it fell even a half inch below her nose. Sometimes the skin on her face broke out in an uncomfortable and a wildly irritating rash from earing these bacteria laden ‘face diapers’ for over 6 hours at a time.

As a society now, those who speak about COVID deaths must being to include the many children and adults who committed suicide, those who died at the hands of an abuser and the otherwise ailing patients who were denied life saving treatment, because COVID superseded ever other disease. My beloved cousin Rosanne, who was like a mother to me, was one of these people. Diagnosed with cancer in June 2020, she barely saw a doctor. Almost every appointment was via telemedicine. By April 2021, it was clear the doctors never sought to really treat her and she died that month. To me, her death was not strictly from cancer, it was from MEDICAL MALFEASANCE.

If the world ever speaks of COVID deaths honestly it will start to include the thousands of lives who could have been saved if access to NOBEL PRIZE winning drugs such as Ivermectin and Hydroxychloroquine was permitted. Finally, when and if the world ever

speaks of COVID deaths honestly, it will start to include those who have been killed by this myocarditis, blood clot, sudden death shot, because it surely is not worthy to be called a vaccine. This shot can neither prevent one from getting the virus or transmitting the virus. In truth, this shot HAS NOT BEEN PROVEN TO prevent the severity of symptoms, the admittance to a hospital or even decrease the likelihood of death. Simply stated it HAS NOT BEEN PROVEN TO be either safe or effective. Rather, all the evidence is proving to be quite the opposite.

If ever this honest talk is achieved maybe those who have been disgustingly censored and made nameless, for daring to speak out and testify that the shot killed their mother, father, sister, brother, friend and/or most egregiously their child will finally be heard recognized, rather than vilified, ridiculed and shamed.

So tomorrow when I wake up and stare down that same barrel of a gun for yet another day and wonder if by the end of this school year I ought to play Russian Roulette with my health, I want you all to hear this testimony and the many others you've heard today and know now who is holding that gun to my head. It is the ones who have weaponized medicine and science for political gain and greed, and sadly the many men/women like yourselves, who have been complicit to let it happen. Never let us forget, that evil triumphs when good men and women do nothing.

So tomorrow, when I stare down another day with this barrel of a gun pointed at me, I will think of the many others who have already played MEDICAL RUSSIAN ROULETTE and recognize that they never should have been lied to and coerced into playing such a POTENTIALLY PERILOUS GAME!

In closing, I don't know what the future will bring. But for today, I will hold the line for one more day, because that game, is a game I never want my children to play.

I was a member of the FDNY and was terminated February 11 for not taking the covid 19 vaccine. In December 2020 after my annual medical it was documented that I had been exposed to covid 19. The last time I felt sick with what I believed to be covid was in March of 2020. So either I was showing a natural immunity 9 months later or I was exposed again a second time and didn't even know as I did not take any extensive time off for covid infection during from what I believed was my initial infection, until I was terminated. If this doesn't demonstrate natural immunity I don't know what would. Initially in November of 2021 while on Lwop I was told on a union zoom meeting that the FDNY may not pay out my comp and annual time accrued. I had

accumulated approximately 700 hours of time and was being threatened that it would be stolen from me. I was also told that I would not be able to receive unemployment and if I attempted to find another job that may result in charges which could then decrease the time I had accrued...yes the same time I was also being told I may not receive. I attempted to gain unemployment benefits in January. I was denied, appealed and denied again. All the while I've been accruing debt. The bullying and intimidation tactics do not sit well with me and has left me with a less than favorable opinion on the department as well as this city. This does not include the members that I worked side by side with. This opinion is strictly towards the leadership. I hold many members in high

regard including those at station 26. We shared a tragic moment in history that bonded us closer together and it's a bond I will not soon forget. I feel as though these tactics were done in order to make me suffer enough that I would be willing to get the vaccine. I've been a New Yorker all 44 years of my life but it seems my future may no longer be here. Unfortunately I'm unable to become a paramedic outside of New York as I am not nationally registered. The paramedic course that FDNY provides was not accredited for national registry at the time I attended making my efforts to become nationally registered even harder. It saddens me but I may never be a medic again. In June of 2022 FDNY finally decided to pay out my comp time and annual leave. Though this wasn't enough

to cover all the debt I accrued it did help from me going into default. They also put out a notice saying those that were terminated can come back to work if they take the vaccine. My response is I said no the first time. No matter what I go through, I'm not changing my mind. My life is like a book that I'm writing and no one else decides what goes into these chapters but me. Currently I have 3 bad teeth that are constantly in pain. 2 are discolored, one has a broken piece that came out and I'm not sure what's wrong with the other one, other than pain. I have no insurance anymore so I just have to deal with it as I have no money to fix it. No matter what I stand by my conviction. I am now new in a new industry and while construction is probably not something most would start

at 44 years of age I have to push forward as people are counting on me. Also I'm accruing debt at a slower pace now so I have to be thankful for the little things. Thousands of people have left New York in the last 2 years. I'm telling you more of them left due to the covid policy rather than covid itself. Just look at the states everyone ran to. Pay attention to the signs and I urge you to fix what's wrong with this city.

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Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I currently serve as a social worker with the Office of Chief Medical Examiner where I work with families bereaved by a fatal overdose loss. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our office saw overdose deaths spike across the city. I have had a front-row seat to this crisis, and for the past two years, every fatal OD in New York City has come across my desk.

My work supporting next of kin is exclusively phone-based. I started my job during the height of the pandemic when our work was completely remote. Working from home during these months reduced my risk of contracting and spreading COVID, but it also granted me so much more. Having the flexibility to work from home gave me more time to look after myself so I could better support the people I serve. It's becoming increasingly difficult to look after my mental health and provide quality services as I struggle to maintain a work-life balance commuting to the office every day. I've been advocating for a telework policy since we came back to the office full-time last September. I remain hopeful, but eventually I (like so many other city workers), will leave for a job that allows for more flexibility.

Thousands of city workers stepped up during the pandemic to keep the city running during a time of crisis. How does the city honor its dedicated and talented workforce? By stagnating wages and forcing workers back to offices where it has not been proven they do their best work. Sadly, it's New Yorkers who will bear the brunt of these poor decisions. It doesn't have to be this way. The city *must* recognize that the world of work has changed since COVID-19. Insisting that city workers commute into the office everyday to earn less than their private-sector counterparts is a sure-fire way to increase burn out, sow discontent, and gut a workforce.

How the Covid Mandate Wrongfully Affect My Life

I joined FDNY after the events of September 11, 2001. I was proud to go through the best emergency training in the city. As FDNY EMT I proudly and safely served during the 2003 NYC Blackout, Sandy 2012 Storm, many 911 computer system crashes as a 911 Dispatcher, and most recently, the 2020 COVID 19 pandemic. Due to my FDNY EMS Training; I understood and followed my Body Substance Isolation protocols.

I wear a mask. I practice social distance. I never showed up to work with flu-like symptoms. I COVID tested once a week. I followed all of FDNY COVID19 reasonable accommodations. In between this time I was sick to the stomach and nauseous. I went into work with a knot in my stomach wondering if this is the day I will be sent home. For two years I kept a reasonable caution lifestyle for living during COVID PANDEMIC. My only fear was with the unreasonable unjust policy of New York City. Never, in all my years (2001 to 2022) did I ever think FDNY would not allow me to practice my religion. Never in all of my life, did I ever think that I would have to prove my religion to my employment.

Due to New York City of New York Covid Mandate; I was required to submit my body to the Covid-19 Vaccine and allow myself to go against my sincere personal belief (religious) NOT TO PUT ANY HARMFUL KNOW/UNKNOWN, POSSIBLY HARMFUL SUBSTANCE INTO MY BODY. I was also required to allow myself to undergo INVASIVE, EXCESSIVE NEEDLESSLY PAINFUL PCR COVID-19 TEST (nasopharyngeal) testing whereas USE of effective saliva test(NAAT) SALIVA NUCLEIC AMPLIFICATION covid-19 test is painless, simpler, EFFECTIVE AS PCR.

I requested Reasonable Accommodation that I feel would resolve the conflict between my religious practices such as: COVID 19 TESTING OPTIONS, SELF EVALUATION.QUESTIONNAIRE, TEMPERATURE TAKING, MASK WEARING, SOCIAL DISTANCING, FREQUENT HAND WASHING, NOT REPORTING TO WORK WITH FLU LIKE SYMPTOMS.

My faith, My creed, My moral conscious based belief to live as a Muslim was discriminated and violated. Experimentation is not permitted on a human being. Harm to an individual is a sin. I DO NOT ACCEPT THE PREMISE OF QUESTION comparing LONG STANDING VACCINE & NEW CLINICAL TRIAL EXPERIMENTAL TYPE VACCINE.

I am responsible for MY life and My charge. As I am responsible for my conscience; My faith commands. DO NO HARM TO MYSELF. THIS COVID VACCINE MANDATE was put upon employees of The New York City Fire Department (FDNY) under duress. I respectfully and humbly requested UNDER PROTEST AGAINST BEING FORCED OUT OF MY EMPLOYMENT.

It goes against my conscious and religious beliefs TO DO HARM TO MYSELF. I REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE OR VOLUNTEER IN MEDICAL PROCEDURE AS THERE IS NO INFORMED DECISION. I CANNOT GIVE FULL CONSENT.

Religious discrimination in the work place. I experience this in my higher education and in my community. I have never thought I would have to prove my religion to continue working for FDNY. I am a practicing Muslim and I effectively worked for FDNY. My religion never stopped me from performing my duties. However, FDNY mandates me to inject unknown, possibly harmful substances into my body. FDNY offers no liability for injuries.

I worked with FDNY serving populations with HIV, HEPATITIS, TUBERCULOSIS, EBOLA, MENINGITIS, CHICKEN POX, MEASLES, and also during the COVID PANDEMIC. I performed my job safely and effectively because we do proper body substance isolation practices. We are informed of symptoms, we do assessments and we are informed when not to enter the home. During any contact that we have in a professional capacity, we are instructed to wear a face mask at all times. We are also instructed to keep a safe distance from those whom we interact with in a professional capacity.

I feel that I am a valued, long time, experienced employee working with the New York City Fire Department (FDNY). I was wrongfully and punitively terminated.

My COVID Testimony – A Nurse's Perspective

I am a New York City nurse. I've been a nurse for 6 years now. I am also a native New Yorker.

2020 changed our lives forever. I remember hearing the news stories on COVID back to back wondering what this thing was and what it was doing to people. I remember the terror, the feelings of the unknown. Then we found out COVID was in our city.

New York City quickly became the epicenter for the most dangerous disease in recent history.

As a nurse, I reported for duty, just like every other first responder and essential worker at the time (including my husband who is a New York City Police Officer). We showed up to save lives though these were dangerous times.

We worked with subpar safety equipment and staff shortages. I, along with countless other healthcare workers, were at the bedside of hundreds of COVID positive patients day after day while others were told to stay safe at home.

We said goodbye to our families, not knowing what this thing would bring, as we prepared to face COVID first hand.

We were called heroes then. People on the streets clapped for us every night.

Now 2 years later we are being treated as zeroes. 2 years later we are being forced to choose between the job and our jobs. This is a disgrace.

As a nurse I am obligated to respect my patient's rights to medical freedom. I have to explain what medication I am giving, explaining its purpose and side effects. I have to give my patients a choice whether to take the drug or not. But we as nurses are not given the same rights. Our jobs have been taken away because we are practicing medical freedom in the United States of America.

Our choice to decline vaccination is part of our American freedom. Even today the CDC recognizes that there is no difference between the vaccinated and unvaccinated. Mask mandates are being lifted all over the country. Even professional athletes, which can be argued are non-essential workers, are exempt from mandates.

We are merely asking that the mandates be lifted. This is no way to treat New York's finest, bravest, and strongest after everything we've done. We are some of the most experienced and skilled workers. If we go, I can guarantee that New York City's safety will be compromised. Please help us in this fight for freedom. We are first responders. We fought and beat COVID. We don't need a vaccine.

Thank you for your support.

As a New Yorker and a municipal worker, I would like to go on record today concerning the issue of Maintaining New York City's Municipal Workforce.

Currently, working for the city is nothing short of nightmarish. First there is the issue of pay. I have seen experts improperly compensated for their hard work, knowledge, and dedication to civil service. The low starting salaries, lack of opportunity for growth, and no raises has created a work force that can hardly afford to live in this increasingly expensive city, let alone serve it well.

Second, the lack of flexibility and understanding from the current administration has been directly responsible for staff leaving city service en masse. Not being able to work from home, even for at the bare minimum one day a week, enforces racist, classist, and sexist policy. It is much more than just an inconvenience to commute again, rather it is a policy that has done damage in many areas, such as; seriously impacted city workers finances, having to now again spend money on a failing MTA, organize childcare needs and costs the city does not provide, putting our physical health at risk, and harming our mental health irreparably. The mayor bringing city workers back to the office has felt like a slap in the face showing his complete lack of trust in his overcapable staff and his hatred of the outer boroughs as he focuses all economic recovery on only Manhattan, an area many city workers can hardly afford due to the aforementioned pitiful salaries we are paid.

Finally, there are two intertwined issues which are key in maintaining the municipal workforce and where it feels New York is racing to the bottom. With poor salaries and lack of flexibility, staff are leaving in droves to better jobs in private sectors or different cities where their value as civil service agents will not go underappreciated. Salaries, lack of flexibility, and high turnover are creating a toxic environment of extremely low morale. I have not talked to a single worker in the last 3 months who is happy at work and not completely burnt out. Most of us are running on skeleton crews, two people doing the job of four, being unfairly compensated in salary and title, and being expected to perform at over 100% regardless. It is the most toxic work environment I have seen in my two decades as a professional and if things fail to change I can only imagine this scenario getting better not worse.

NYC is a place that has always wanted to attract and be the best. Right now as far as municipal workers are concerned we are doing neither. We will not attract new valuable talent to the city and we are losing the amazing talent we already had. We cannot and should not treat those who service these beautiful five boroughs so horribly. If you want to maintain a thriving workforce we must have better pay and work from home flexibility and an administration who values us instead of treats us with distrust and contempt.

I would like to thank The Council for holding this hearing and for advocating for city workers and I hope they continue to as we are essential to New York. Many of us love and want to continue loving our jobs, but we cannot if we are burnt out beyond our limits. I hope The Council will help bring about changes and I thank them for reading this.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daniel Grenier

Address: New York, New York

I represent: Citizen

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9th of September

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joy Amanda

Address: New York

I represent: We The People

Address: New York

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/2021

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Brendan Fogarty

Address: _____

I represent: Self

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/2022

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Catherine Jean

Address: _____

I represent: self

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 09/9/2022

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cely Batista Decolongon

Address: _____

I represent: New York City Police Department

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Margaret Chv

Address: _____

I represent: Self

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/2022

Name: Lauren O'Rourke (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: Myself & Anonymous NYPD officer

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Ingrid Romero (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: Teachers S. Choice

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/2022

Name: Raul RIVERA (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Taras Czebiniak

Address: W 39th St

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nwakaego Nwanjiokwu

Address: 8th Ave NYC NY 10039

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9-9-22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: BRIAN AYLVA

Address: W MADISON AVE REMOVED STOPS

I represent: MYSELF

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christina Failla

Address: Wheeler Rd, FL, NY, 10921

I represent: Self - Teacher

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rachel Mariscalco

Address: Gower St. S.I. NY. 10314

I represent: Myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: George Gutierrez

Address: Harman Street

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: C Smith

Address: Remond 66

I represent: CITY WORKER'S

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eve Shire

Address: 217 57 Street

I represent: QV, NY 11427

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bonnie Skala Kiladitis

Address: 14th Avenue Whitestone NY 11357

I represent: Teachers for Choice

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Billy Kozis

Address: 5th Street

I represent: myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/2022

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mawuli Olivierre

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/1

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PATRICIA PERLO

Address: LA WTHORNE

I represent: ME

Address: BROOKLYN NY

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARJEL KOLA

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John Matland

Address: Ocean Rd.

I represent: myself - Healthcare Workers

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JAMES Hogue

Address: MARLBOROUGH ROAD, Valley Stream, NY

I represent: New York Teachers for Choice

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 09/Sept 2022

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ALICE WONG
Address: 42 BROADWAY SUITE 1945 NYC NY 10004
I represent: NYC MEA
Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/2022

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DARRELL L. SIMS
Address: WEST 114TH ST. NYC 10026
I represent: NYC MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES ASSOC.
Address: 42 Broadway Suite 1945 NYC NY 10004

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/2022

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marianna Preziosa
Address: P.O. Box 260153 Bellerose NY
I represent: NYC ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE
Address: Retires.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Catherine Dian

Address: East 234th St 3A

I represent: myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/5/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kenneth Gordin

Address: _____

I represent: OMB

Address: 255 Greenwich St.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daniel Pollak

Address: 22 Cortlandt street

I represent: NYC Office of Labor Relations

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Barbara Dannenberg

Address: DCAB

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ROBERT BANONG

Address: AMBOY ROAD, SE NY 10307

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cely Batista Decolangan

Address: _____

I represent: Will be on Zoom

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CASSANDRA McADDEN

Address: PROSPER PL

I represent: TEACHERS (FIRED)

Address: 1083X

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daniel Hukawar

Address: 435 24th St NY, NY 10011

I represent: myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: TIM HEATON

Address: W 77th St

I represent: BRASSER La Cho. Co

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: IMOYA MONROQUE

Address: W 38 Street

I represent: Screen Actors Guild Members - Artists

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mayumi Iijima

Address: Thompson St NYC 100k

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9-9-22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: BERNADETTE MEJIA

Address: PENNYFIELD AVE

I represent: F.D.N.Y.

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Audrey Dennis

Address: 195th Street Queens

I represent: myself & those terminated NYCS

Address: because of the vaccine mandate

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rashard Taylor

Address: c/o Lake Road, New Windsor, NY

I represent: Bravest For Choice

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 9-9-22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Monica NYFR

Address: 10028

I represent: myself

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 09/09/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GABRIEL DALTRY

Address: 52ND ST

I represent: GABRIEL DALTRY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mandel Pinsky

Address: Van Buren Street

I represent: DSNY

Address: Van Buren Street

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Aaila Norris

Address: 821 Holiday St BLK N

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/9/2022

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sophy Melder

Address: 14th St Brooklyn NY 11215

I represent: myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9-9-22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Thomas Olsen

Address: 14th street Brooklyn N.Y. 11215

I represent: myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Paul Schmitt

Address: _____

I represent: Self

Address: _____

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