

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

Start: 10:20 A. M.

Recess: 12:53 P. M.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - 250 BROADWAY,
16TH FLOOR

B E F O R E: HON. TIFFANY L. CABÁN, CHAIR

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

JAMES F. GENNARO
JENNIFER GUTIÉRREZ
KRISTIN RICHARDSON JORDAN
KEVIN C. RILEY
ALTHEA V. STEVENS

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

JULIE MENIN

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

A P P E A R A N C E S

Dr. Michelle Paige,
Executive Director for the Mayor's Office of
Childcare And Early Childhood Education

Tova Gottesman,
Deputy Director for the Mayor's Office of
Childcare And Early Childhood Education

Aaron Yarborough,
Senior Project Manager For Data Management for
the Mayor's Office of Childcare And Early
Childhood Education

Hannah May-Powers,
Health and Safety Policy Analyst for the Office
of Brooklyn Borough President, Antonio Reynoso

Laura Gomez,
Associate Director of Social Work in the Family
Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services

Rebecca Charles
Policy and Advocacy Associate
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York

Steven Morales,
New York Policy Director at All Our Kin

Paula Inhargue,
Policy Analyst at United Neighborhood Houses

Hannah Tager,
Policy Analyst at Win

Gregory Brender,
Chief Policy and Innovation Officer at Day Care
Council of New York

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY
A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Maria Viera,
Vice President of Community Affairs at RiseBoro
Community Partners

Queen Arsem-O'Malley,
Parent Representing Herself

BETTY BAEZ MELO,
Director of the Early Childhood Education Project
at Advocates for Children of New York

Leurys Nunez
Parent Representing Herself

Musfika Moshahid,
Muslim Women's Program Coordinator at the Muslim
Community Network

Jeremy Kaplan,
Parent Representing Himself

Ethan Heitner
Parent Representing Himself

2 SERGEANT WONG: Today's date is September 21st,
3 2023, being recorded by Danny Wong on the 16th
4 floor hearing room.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, and welcome to
6 the New York City Hybrid Hearing on the Committee on
7 Women and Gender Equity. At this time, please place
8 all electronic devices to silent mode.

9 If you have not filled out a witness slip, please
10 do so at this time.

11 Please do not approach the dais at any time. If
12 you have questions, please raise your hand, and a
13 Sergeant At Arms will gladly assist you.

14 Thank you for your cooperation. Chair, we are
15 ready to begin.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: [GAVEL SOUND] [GAVELING IN]

17 Good morning, welcome, thank you for being here
18 today. My name is Tiffany Cabán, council member in
19 the 22nd, and I am the Chair of the Committee on
20 Women and Gender Equity, and my pronouns are she/her.
21 And we are here today to talk about Council Member
22 Gutiérrez's bill on Universal Child Care.

23 So, we are going to just dig right in. You know,
24 a city without universal child care is a city, in my
25 opinion, that kicks dirt in the faces of its

2 families, children, and parents, especially, mothers.
3 And forcing families to push themselves to the brink
4 of bankruptcy just to obtain child care is
5 outrageous, it's cruel, it's economically idiotic.

6 Think about it, what do parents, particularly
7 moms, do if they cannot afford child care? All too
8 often, the answer is to cut their hours or leave the
9 workforce altogether. And that costs our city over
10 \$2 billion in lost tax revenue every year - not to
11 mention the over \$20 billion in lost economic output.
12 Of course this burden falls especially hard on moms,
13 especially moms of color, so it is not only
14 outrageous, cruel, and economically idiotic, but it's
15 also racist and sexist.

16 So, you know, for us, we think that the choice is
17 simple, does our city stand for chopping its children
18 and families in poverty? Does it stand for
19 undermining future generations? Does it stand for
20 telling parents, especially moms, that they don't
21 matter? Or does it stand for healthy, striving,
22 families? Does it stand for shared economic
23 prosperity? Does it stand for equipping children to
24 lead happy, fulfilling lives? And if the latter,
25 than there's no two ways about it, we need universal

2 child care. So, I am excited to have this bill heard
3 here today. And I want to thank all of the members
4 of my team, my Chief of Staff, Celia Castellan; Jesse
5 Myerson, my Director of Communications, Madhuri
6 Shukla, my Legislative and Budget Director, as well
7 as the committee staff Cristy Dwyer, Sahar Moazami -
8 we have a new member of the team. And, also, just a
9 big thanks to the team of Council Member Gutiérrez,
10 who worked really, really hard for this hearing as
11 well.

12 And I am not going to waste any more time. I
13 will now pass it over to my colleague, Council Member
14 Gutiérrez.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you all for
16 joining us today, and a special thank you to my
17 friend, Chair Cabán, and Speaker Adams for their
18 unwavering support in advancing this historic bill.

19 The truth is we can no longer afford to delay
20 universal child care. The existing system is deeply,
21 deeply flawed. And while the Administration's
22 efforts to represent a step in the right direction,
23 they fall short of the comprehensive transformation
24 that is desperately needed by parents, providers, and
25 our economy of care.

2 This bill is a meticulously crafted plan shaped
3 by the wisdom of advocates and providers who have
4 dedicated decades to this field. But, the reality
5 is, that this isn't just about children and families,
6 it is about the resurgence of our communities and the
7 invigoration of our economy. Without it, our city
8 faces a staggering loss of \$23 billion in economic
9 output and \$2.2 billion in tax revenue annually --
10 figures drawn from The Mayor's own Blueprint on Child
11 Care.

12 Moreover, this bill addresses the longstanding
13 injustices endured by the predominantly Black, Brown,
14 and immigrant women who form the backbone of our
15 child care workforce. It is high time we provide
16 them with their fair wages and benefits that they
17 deserve for their indispensable work they perform in
18 nurturing our children.

19 Rather than simply reiterating what we all
20 recognize to be true, I would like to share some
21 stories that came from New Yorkers United for Child
22 Care:

23 A significant number of parents were forced to
24 make career adjustments. Many transitioning to part
25 time roles or exiting the workforce altogether:

2 Leslie chose not to return to work after having her
3 child, as the cost of child care far exceeded her
4 salary at the time.

5 Jen, employed by New York City's Department of
6 Education was offered a promotion, but had to
7 withdraw from the workforce entirely, because neither
8 position paid enough to cover child care expenses.

9 Maxwell echoed this sentiment, "Between health
10 insurance and child care costs, it makes more sense
11 for one of us to stay home most of the time. Add in
12 housing, and it feels like the City doesn't want us
13 here."

14 Alarmingly, more than half the respondents to a
15 survey about need for child care reported that they
16 have contemplated leaving the City due to the
17 exorbitant costs of child care. This financial
18 burden has broader economic repercussions as families
19 find themselves with less disposable income.

20 Lee wrote, "We definitely have far less money to
21 spend on domestic and personal expenses than we would
22 have otherwise."

23 Kevin further emphasized this point noting, "We
24 have had to postpone our bills and negotiate with our
25 providers."

2 Another parent wrote in, "We have had to dip into
3 our retirement savings to afford child care."

4 All of these accounts come from families with a
5 combined household income of (or exceeding) a
6 \$120,000 per year, residing in one of the world's
7 wealthiest cities.

8 In New York City, the median household income
9 stands at \$67K a year. This glaring disparity is
10 undeniable and the consequences are painfully
11 evident. The idea of a free public K-12 education
12 was one seen as radical, but we now know it to be
13 foundational for the success of our communities and
14 economy. Universal child care is no different, and
15 each day that passes without it harms providers,
16 families, and our economy.

17 I am grateful to Chair Cabán, once again, for
18 elevating this issue, and to my colleagues and
19 cosponsor, Council Member Kevin Riley, for his
20 support in moving the bill forward. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And just a quick announcement,
22 I want to sincerely apologize, at the moment we do
23 not have a Spanish translator in the room. Jen is
24 going to translate this in a moment. But, if you
25

2 need Spanish translation, we are going to make it
3 happen. Just give me... throw your hand up.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: [SPEAKING SPANISH]

5 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And I want to acknowledge that
6 we have been joined by Council Member Riley and
7 Council Member Stevens. And I am now going to pass it
8 over to Council Member Riley for some opening
9 remarks.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you so much, Chair
11 Cabán.

12 Good morning, everyone, thank you so much to
13 Council Member Gutiérrez for cosponsoring this very,
14 very important bill.

15 I am not going to reiterate the points that
16 Council Member Gutiérrez stated. But, I just wanted
17 to reaffirm that this is extremely important for the
18 ecosystem of parents.

19 Being a council member is extremely important to
20 me, but being a dad is even more important. A couple
21 of weeks ago, I had to bring my son to a hearing. I
22 saw comments online that were really nasty and were
23 saying it was unprofessional. But, I am glad that I
24 am a part of a city council, a majority of whom are
25 women, that creates a safe atmosphere for that. But,

2 a lot of the parents out there do not have the luxury
3 of bringing their child to work. A lot of parents
4 out there do not have the luxury to work at all,
5 because child care is extremely important. Parents
6 are paying up to \$20,000 - some even more - for child
7 care per year, and this is unacceptable. And this
8 trickles down to our whole, entire ecosystem. We
9 don't have parents going to work; we have jobs that
10 are available, this affects our transportation
11 system, this affects small businesses. Parents need
12 an out, and we need to become a city where we are
13 actually looking out for working families within the
14 City.

15 So, I just want to echo the sentiments of Council
16 Member Gutiérrez that she stated in her opening
17 statement. We understand that this is going to be
18 extremely expensive, but it is going to be even more
19 expensive if we do not support our parents in the
20 long run.

21 So, thank you so much, Chair Cabán, for holding
22 this hearing. Thank you, Council Member Gutiérrez.
23 I am looking forward to hearing from The
24 Administration.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Thank you, and I will pass it
3 over to committee counsel to administer the oath.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair. Good
5 morning, everyone.

6 As a reminder, today is an in person hearing with
7 the option of virtual testimony for the public. The
8 committee will be accepting registration for
9 testimony throughout the hearing.

10 For those wishing to testify in person, please
11 see the Sergeant At Arms in the back of the hearing
12 room to fill out a testimony card - even if you have
13 registered in advance online.

14 For those testifying via Zoom, your name will be
15 called, and you will prompted to unmute. All those
16 who wish to submit written testimony, you may do so
17 at testimony@council.nyc.gov.

18 We will now hear testimony from members of the
19 administration. Will you please raise your right
20 hand? Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole
21 truth, and nothing but the truth, before this
22 committee, and to respond honestly to council member
23 questions?

24 [ADMINISTRATION AFFIRMS]

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, you may begin when
3 ready.

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Good morning, everyone.
5 Good morning, I am Michelle Paige, I am the Executive
6 Director for The Mayor's Office Of Child care And
7 Early Childhood Education. Thank you to Chair Cabán,
8 Council Member Gutierrez, and the other members of
9 the Committee On Women And Gender Equity, and all
10 council members joining today's hearing. I appreciate
11 the opportunity to share the important work this
12 office is doing in support of New York City's Early
13 Childhood Education System, and to testify about
14 Introduction 941. I am joined by the other two
15 members of the office, Tova Gottesman who is the
16 Deputy Director, and Aaron Yarborough, Senior Project
17 Manager for Data Management.

18 We appreciate the Council's continued commitment
19 to ensuring that New York City has a high quality
20 birth to 5 early education system.

21 In June 2022, Mayor Adams released the Blueprint
22 For Child Care In Early Childhood Education, a plan
23 for creating accessible, equitable, high-quality and
24 affordable child care, and education in New York
25 City. The Blueprint has five ambitious goals:

2 First is to offer an accessible child care
3 experience rooted and equity to New York City for
4 Families; second make child care affordable for
5 families; and number three is increase child care
6 enrollment across the City; the next goal is to
7 ensure child care programs are high-quality and
8 establish systems of support for the early childhood
9 workforce; and number five is to create oversight and
10 accountability structures for child care and early
11 childhood education.

12 Achieving a high-quality, affordable, and
13 accessible early childhood system requires
14 collaboration and partnership across more than a
15 dozen city agencies, as well as our partners at the
16 state, early childhood stakeholders, educators, and
17 parents. We are pleased to share that of the 21
18 strategies laid out in the Blueprint, three-quarters
19 are complete or are on track to meet the goal. Some
20 highlights include: the number of children enrolled
21 in care with an ACS issued low-income voucher has
22 increased nearly 230 percent compared to June 2022;
23 We reduced the average yearly copayment amount of
24 what families must pay per child from \$1300 average
25 yearly copayment in May 2022 to \$170.00. ACS cleared

2 the voucher waitlist offering the families of 35,000
3 children the opportunity to apply for child care
4 assistance. In the first six months of the MyCity
5 Portal, the first online application for child
6 assistance, over 16,700 families have applied for
7 child care; we launched a new child care center
8 property tax abatement and business income tax
9 credit; and launched a \$100 million Child Care
10 Quality and Innovation Initiative with Robin Hood
11 aimed at improving access to high-quality, affordable
12 child care.

13 One of the strategies in the Blueprint calls for
14 the establishment of The Office of Child Care In
15 Early Childhood Education. Officially launched in
16 February 2023, the mission of this office is to
17 ensure that New York City children and their families
18 have equitable access to high-quality, affordable,
19 child care and early childhood education. The Office
20 will lead strategy and coordinate planning among city
21 agencies; foster innovation and partnership with
22 families, providers, experts, and the private sector;
23 promote effective communication, policy, advocacy,
24 and public engagement. We are excited to continue to
25 build on the work that is already underway and chart

2 the course to provide equitable and affordable child
3 care. One of the top priorities for this office is to
4 engage with families and providers so that their
5 voices, feedback, and recommendations are part of the
6 solution to strengthening and supporting our City's
7 early education system. To that end, in April our
8 office held the first ever summit focused on
9 reimagining the Child Care and Early Child Hood
10 Education System. The conference included Council
11 Member Menin, parents, child care, providers,
12 advocates, the private sector, and government
13 agencies to discuss how we can strengthen our early
14 education system. The ideas and feedback generated at
15 the summit inform the next phase of strategic
16 planning that our office will lead.

17 Before diving into the details of Introduction
18 941, I wanted to provide you with a brief overview of
19 the City's child care and early childhood options
20 for families to set the context for the discussion of
21 the bill.

22 There are over 130,000 children birth to five
23 years old enrolled in publicly funded care. New York
24 City is proud to offer free and affordable child care
25 through New York City Public School (NYCPS), Head

2 Start, and Early Head Start, and vouchers that help
3 parents cover the cost of child care.

4 New York City Public Schools offers infant,
5 toddler, 3-K and Pre-K services in a variety of
6 settings including community-based organizations,
7 public schools, homebase settings, and pre-K centers.
8 New York City Public School serves over 100,000
9 children from birth to five. Programs such as 3-K and
10 Pre-K School Day Full Year are free regardless of
11 income or immigration status. Other types of care,
12 including infant, toddler, and 3-K and Pre-K Extended
13 Day, require the family to have an approved reason
14 for care and become income eligible where a child
15 must have a qualified immigration status as defined
16 by federal rules.

17 Early Head Start and Head Start programs are
18 available free for families with low incomes. In
19 addition to low income eligibility, Early Head Start
20 and Head Start programs, whether facilitated by
21 community-based organizations with direct federal
22 contracts, or through NYCPS delegate contracts,
23 supports children in foster care and our newest New
24 Yorkers regardless of immigration status.

2 Earlier this year, ACS launched Promise NYC, a
3 child care assistance program for children whose
4 immigration status disqualifies them for federal or
5 state funded child care assistance. Currently there
6 are approximately 630 children enrolled in child care
7 with the support of the Promise NYC subsidy.

8 New York City also provides vouchers to eligible
9 families to help cover the cost of child care.
10 Families can use their voucher at an approved
11 provider of their choice. To qualify for a voucher
12 the family must have an approved reason for care and
13 be income eligible. The child must have a qualified
14 immigration status as defined by federal rules.
15 Currently there are over 21,000 children under the
16 age of five receiving child care vouchers.
17 Approximately 9,000 vouchers are for children with
18 public assistant cases and over 12,000 or served
19 through an ACS Low Income Voucher.

20 Collectively New York City relies on billions of
21 dollars to fund and maximize capacity of our early
22 childhood system. Those funding streams, many of
23 which are federal and state, require recipients, like
24 New York City, to comply with regulations to receive
25 the funding.

2 It is also important that we spend the funding we
3 have and fill our vacant seats. In May, we held
4 briefings for several members of City Council,
5 including Chair Gutierrez, on the current state of
6 the City's early childhood system in ways Council can
7 help ensure seats are filled. We appreciate the
8 Council's continued partnership on this. Our office
9 will continue to advocate with our city agency
10 partners and early childhood stakeholders to make
11 child care as affordable and available as we can.

12 We are pleased to share that many of the
13 provisions within Introduction 941 are already
14 underway, or will launch later this fall, by our
15 office in partnership with city agencies.

16 New York City agrees that every child under the
17 age of five in need of early childhood care should
18 have access to a seat. The City has made enormous
19 investments in our birth to five system. There are
20 approximately 500,000 children under the age of five
21 in New York City and those over 130,000 are enrolled
22 in a publicly funded child care program. New York
23 City relies on a mix of city, state and federal
24 funding to administer and operate our early childhood
25 system. Offering a seat to every child under the age

2 of 5 requires significant state and federal funding.
3 For universal childcare to work, we must also
4 consider the feasibility of space, add more child
5 care programs, and do more to stabilize and build a
6 sustainable early childhood workforce

7 One of the bills signed into law last fall, Local
8 Law 102, establishes a Child Care Advisory Board,
9 which includes an annual assessment of our progress
10 towards universal child care, including the cost to
11 do so. As the chair of that board, I look forward to
12 meeting with The Executive Committee and starting
13 this work on October 5th.

14 The Advisory Board will include a broader
15 coalition of early child hood advocates, policy,
16 experts, teachers, and families. In addition, Local
17 Law 100, established a Child Care Task Force focused
18 on making recommendations and the associate it costs
19 to make child care, more affordable, ways to support
20 the workforce, and increase the supply of child care
21 programs. Our office will also lead this task force,
22 and we await a final appointee by Council.

23 Intro 941 also seeks to make it easier for
24 families to know about the availability of child care
25 options in the language of their choice. We agree and

2 are pleased to share that the child care application
3 is available in the 11 designated languages,
4 including in the MyCity Portal. Earlier this spring,
5 the City launched a campaign called "It Takes a
6 City", which used a multimedia approach to market the
7 availability of free and affordable child care and
8 early education throughout the City. Social media
9 platforms, print advertisements, and television and
10 radio commercials connected families in multiple
11 languages to inform on how and where to apply for
12 early child hood care by directing them to MyCity to
13 learn more and apply.

14 As required by Local Law 101, the New York City
15 Department of Health updated their Child Care Connect
16 website to include a new map with features of the
17 goal making it easier for families to locate a child
18 care programs in the city in the area of their
19 choosing.

20 We must also ensure that there are enough child
21 care programs to support the unique needs of New York
22 City families; especially those working
23 nontraditional hours. This office agrees that we must
24 do more to support these families and grow the number
25 of providers offering care during nontraditional

2 hours and look forward to incorporating this work
3 into our office.

4 Earlier this month, as part of the Child Care
5 Quality And Innovation Fund, Robin Hood announced it
6 will issue three grants totaling \$3 million to ACS to
7 help expand access to vouchers, help families
8 navigate the City's early childhood system, and fund
9 research to discover the barriers families face to
10 accessing care.

11 New York City is also implementing a 15 percent
12 differential payment to providers serving children
13 during nontraditional hours. To drive supply, New
14 York City launched the Child Care Center Property Tax
15 abatement earlier this year and nearly 2,000 seats
16 have been created. In support of this work and Local
17 Law 105, the New York City Department of Health also
18 launched an FAQ for property owners regarding the
19 facility requirements for child care programs.

20 The administration agrees that continuity of care
21 is important for both the child and the family's
22 well-being. Last year, we successfully advocated to
23 the state to increase the authorization for child
24 care assistance from 12 months to 24 months. We are
25 in the process of working with ACS, NYCPS, The

2 Department Of Social Services, and OTI to implement
3 this change later this year. In addition, we are also
4 in process of adding the recertification application
5 for assistance to the MyCity Portal. This will make
6 it easier for families to submit their
7 recertification packet by reducing the administrative
8 burden of a paper application.

9 We recognize the incredible dedication and work
10 of our child care and early childhood workforce. They
11 have educated hundreds of thousands of children and
12 are the backbone of our City's education system and
13 economy. They kept their doors open during the
14 pandemic, serving first responders, while being a
15 first responders. Families rely on them every day,
16 every hour to not just keep their child safe and
17 healthy, but to promote their social and emotional
18 development and help them prepare for kindergarten
19 and beyond.

20 As stated in the Blueprint, this is
21 administration will continue to focus on both
22 strengthening the business and administrative needs
23 for providers, but also their professional goals.

24 We are excited to begin the work on the three-
25 year child care grant pilot program in accordance

2 with Local Law 104, and look forward to giving the
3 Council an update in the coming weeks.

4 This office is also a member of the Marshall Plan
5 For Moms Task Force, focused on the early childhood
6 ecosystem and the intersection of the caregiver and
7 provider. There's still work to be done as the work
8 for children and families is constant.

9 The Office of Child Care will soon go live with
10 its own website. This will be a user-friendly
11 platform for families, community-based organizations,
12 and anyone who is interested in finding or sharing
13 information for the early childhood sector. The goal
14 of this platform is to provide timely, transparent,
15 and relevant information to the public. We look
16 forward to continuing to discuss the bill with
17 Council.

18 The Blueprint celebrated its one-year anniversary
19 in June, and for this office it is an opportunity to
20 continue engaging our stakeholders. We will continue
21 to assess the progress of the goals of the current
22 blueprint and advance the goals that need further
23 development.

24 All this work sits firmly on the foundation of
25 collaboration and partnership throughout the City. In

2 addition to convening city agencies like NYCPS, ACS,
3 DSS, DOHMH, and more it is imperative that The Office
4 of Child Care continues to approach this work in
5 collaboration with families, educators, community-
6 based organizations, advocacy groups, and the early
7 childhood networks and the private sector throughout
8 the City. Our office looks forward to continued
9 collaboration with City Council. Thank you for your
10 time this morning.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Thank you, I would like to
12 take a moment to acknowledge that we have been joined
13 by Council Member Menin and Council Member Vernikov.

14 Thank you, thank you for your testimony. I just
15 want to start by talking a little bit about, uh,
16 implementation. In February 2023 Mayor Adams
17 announced the creation of The Office for Child Care
18 and Early Childhood Development. How has that office
19 improved access to child care across the City so far?
20 I know that you have talked a little bit... Not a
21 little bit... You talked quite a bit about that in
22 your testimony, but, specifically, I would like to
23 know what communities the office has been most active
24 in? Is there... Do you have the data? You talked
25 about how many families have been served a little

2 bit, but do you have demographics of the population
3 served? Is there data on how many families are being
4 left out?

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure. So, just to
6 reframe, our office does not provide direct service.
7 We are actually a city agency that supports the city
8 agencies that do direct service. Right now our goal
9 is to assist all of the children in all of the
10 districts in all of the boroughs throughout the city.
11 We have taken a targeted approach and worked with ACS
12 and New York City Public Schools in particular with
13 17 identified council districts that needed
14 additional support for recruitment, marketing,
15 advertising, connecting, and assessing. We don't
16 have that data for you in front of us today, but we
17 are happy to get those demographics to you.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: That would be great, I would
19 love to know what those 17 council districts are...

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: or which of those... those
22 are. And you said you don't have any of, like, sort
23 of the other demographic data.

24 What is availability versus demand look from your
25 perspective?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Availability first
3 starts with awareness of the program options that are
4 across the City for families. Awareness for us is
5 the cornerstone and the first step for families to
6 identify what options are available in their school
7 districts, in their communities, in their
8 neighborhoods. Accessibility versus availability is
9 really contingent on the programs that are located in
10 those specific neighborhoods. So, for example, are
11 there enough Early Head Start or Head Start seats
12 versus Pre-kindergarten versus universal, Pre-
13 Kindergarten versus Extended Day extended seats. So,
14 we would really have to look at the ethos of the
15 community that we are specially talking about. For
16 example, a zip code, see how many seats are actually
17 funded for that zip code versus the enrollment and
18 engagement and see what the vacancies are.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: So, I mean, for what I am
20 hearing is that there are multiple different barriers
21 that may come into play for certain folks in child
22 care being readily available for their child. Right?
23 So, it... Taking into account all of those different
24 barriers, would it be fair to say that demand
25 outpaces the practical availability at this moment?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I don't know if it
3 outpaces it. I think there is an opportunity for our
4 office to make stronger connections so that families
5 do see what is available and what is accessible
6 versus the capacity in enrollment in the current
7 neighborhoods.

8 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And in terms of forward
9 looking, right, like, is there an understanding by
10 the Office of what future demand might look like?

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Well, we are assessing
12 that now. We are looking at what is available. We
13 have to look at different demographics like birth
14 records of how many children are born each year that
15 would actually involve and bring out what the
16 capacity needs are for infants and toddlers, three
17 year olds, four year olds; how many families are
18 moving between different districts, different
19 boroughs. So, there is an opportunity for us to
20 start researching that demographic information for
21 sure.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And I want to shift a little
23 bit to specially children who are living in our
24 shelter system.

25 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: You know, universal child
3 care, it requires ensuring that kids living in
4 shelters have access. And, unfortunately, children
5 living in our city shelters disproportionately miss
6 out on child care and early childhood education
7 programs and services, even though families in
8 shelter don't need to meet the usual work
9 requirements in order to be eligible for that
10 subsidized child care. So, obviously it's a plush
11 Right? We are pleased that The Mayor's Blueprint,
12 uh, stated the importance of increasing outreach and
13 enrollment efforts with families in shelter and
14 temporary housing. But, what efforts, if any, has
15 the City taken to let families living in shelter know
16 about the early child care and education programs to
17 support them in applying? Could you tell us about
18 the current efforts and the future plans?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure, so, one of the
20 barriers that we identified was families not knowing
21 which programs they are eligible for and where they
22 were. And that was also supported by the workers,
23 the employers at the temporary housing and shelters
24 actually also learning how to navigate the different
25 options with the system, within the ecosystem. So,

2 our office actually created a manual that outlines
3 all of the eligibility criteria and the program model
4 types that are available across the City, especially
5 for those who are living in shelter or in temporary
6 housing. My colleague, Deputy Director Gottesman was
7 integral in creating that manual. I don't know if
8 you want to speak a little bit more...

9 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Yeah, and specific questions
10 for that is, like, is that manual in every single
11 shelter or temporary housing setting? Are shelter
12 workers being trained in that protocol? Is it part
13 of the intake process? How often is it brought to
14 people?

15 DEPUTY DIRECTOR GOTTESMAN: Sure, Tova Gottesman,
16 Deputy Director for The Mayor's Office Child Care.
17 So, we distributed that guide to DHS and to H+H and
18 to HPD. And those are questions and points, and what
19 we can do is follow up with them to understand how
20 they have been implementing it. We just issued it a
21 few weeks ago to them, and so we wanted to make sure
22 certainly the staff at DHS are socialized with the
23 various income reason for care requirements. But,
24 those are all really good points, and we will be sure
25 to follow up on what implementation looks like.

2 Because I think there is absolutely opportunity to
3 train the workers at the shelters on helping families
4 to navigate the City's child care system.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: All right, thank you.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Our office, to answer
7 in a little bit more detail, the Office also reached
8 out to the Head Start regional office at 26 Federal
9 Plaza, those children in those living parameters are
10 eligible for Early Head Start and Head Start, so we
11 wanted to make sure that the information that we were
12 sharing for training and technical assistance was
13 current, up to date, so it just was another
14 opportunity for our office to show partnership across
15 sectors to make sure that the families to have the
16 information, to make sure the staff does have the
17 information, and make those connections -- and not
18 just hand them a piece of paper, but have the staff
19 really internalize what the process and options are.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And how do you all consider
21 the impending 15 percent PEGs affecting the ability
22 to execute exactly that?

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Right, so, it is a
24 little bit early for us to respond that, because the
25 PEG process is still underway, and we will definitely

2 take into consideration everything in terms of any
3 kind of reductions. But, we don't know what the PEG
4 is going to look like right now.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And I think even thinking
6 about -- and talking to community member, advocates,
7 caretakers, parents, providers, it seems really clear
8 that interagency coordination is going to be super
9 critical to enrolling more children living in
10 shelters and child care and early childhood programs.
11 And, so, I have a direct ask, if The Office of Child
12 Care and Early Childhood Education would commit to
13 holding a meeting next month to bring together the
14 different agencies that operate shelter and the
15 agencies that run early childhood programs to discuss
16 a strategy for increasing access to that care to
17 living in shelters? And then could you report back
18 to us on the outcomes of such a meeting?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Okay, thank you, noted.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: I am asking if you all would
21 commit to doing...

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I'm sorry, I said, yes
23 [INAUDIBLE]... I was writing notes... [CROSS-TALK]

24 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Okay, I love that. Awesome.

25 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Absolutely.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: So, it... In keeping with
3 past practice, New York City Public Schools recently
4 matched every age eligible child living in a DHS
5 shelter with a 3-K or a Pre-K site if they did not
6 yet have a seat, even if the family did not apply.
7 However, we want to understand how many families do
8 not yet know about those offers. So, uh, when we
9 talk about the plan to let those shelters know, I
10 know that you sort of outlined in on a high level,
11 but have you spoken to DHS and NYCPS to develop a
12 specific plan? Like, what are the next steps? How
13 are you viewing the timeline?

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I don't think I
15 understand the question. Connecting?

16 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: So, like, what is the
17 practical plan for making sure that every age
18 eligible child living in a DHS shelter is matched
19 with a 3-K or Pre-K site? Because ,you know, in
20 keeping with pass practice, that was done even if the
21 parent did not proactively apply...

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Mm-hmm

23 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: for such a seat. And, so ,you
24 know, making sure that that continues to happen, is
25 there currently a plan in place?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: So, New York City
3 Public Schools does have targeted recruitment plans
4 for children living in shelter. I could defer back
5 to them and get the specifics of that plan, but that
6 is something that is being implemented.

7 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: That would be great. I have a
8 lot more questions, but I also want to make sure that
9 my colleagues have an opportunity to ask questions.
10 So, I will pass it over to Council Member Gutiérrez.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, and thank
13 you, Michelle. I am certainly encouraged by, uh,
14 hearing all of the things that ,you know, you are
15 looking to accomplish in this Office of Child Care,
16 and thank you for making the distinction about what
17 the role of the Office Child Care is. So, I just
18 would like to ask some followups pertaining to that.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Can you share how The
21 Office of Child Care will support, in this case I
22 believe DOE, in supporting their daycares in
23 retaining staff?

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: So, our office right
25 now we see ourselves as the conveners of several

2 different city agencies including New York City
3 Public Schools. I know that there is a recruitment
4 plan in place for the workforce in general, but we
5 also have an opportunity to work with external
6 partners and convening and connecting entities like
7 the Day Care Council Head Start Sponsoring Board who
8 do have contracts with New York City Public Schools.
9 I think it is an opportunity for us to make sure that
10 everyone is at the table talking together. I know
11 that currently OLR is in conversation with Day Care
12 Council in terms of contract negotiations. So ,you
13 know, in respect for that, I cannot really talk about
14 what that bargaining is looking like right now. But,
15 our office can definitely, from our perspective, at
16 least bring people together to make sure that we are
17 working towards the same goals, which are to retain
18 Early Childhood staff in community organizations.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: I don't know if you got
20 to see the report that the Day Care Council put out
21 this week? There are 30+ pages, really comprehensive,
22 really extensive. But, something that really
23 resonated with me was the realities of these
24 community based providers and the challenges they
25 have in retaining staff, the average staff, there is

2 a turnover within five years. And I can speak to
3 this in my district, these anchor organizations like
4 Los Niños (phonetic) and Bushwick United will have a
5 team of two or three providers who can stay for 10 or
6 15 years, but that is not the reality for everyone
7 else. So, that is a big concern. It is something
8 that in Introduction 941, we were hoping to expand on
9 what the reality is for these day cares and how vital
10 it is to retain that staff. I have also heard from
11 day cares who have said they cannot afford to keep
12 good people. And you mentioned, you highlighted the
13 contract negotiations that the Day Care Council is
14 facing now. Pay parity is huge, it is something that
15 is in the bill as well. How did the Office of Child
16 Care intend on supporting pay parity in a longer...
17 longer term?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I think this office
19 respects, tremendously respects the workforce,
20 especially those in community based organizations
21 that seem to have... not seem to have, that do have
22 the pay disparities. Our office is to support the
23 process. Our office is in a position to continue to
24 advocate from the perspective making sure that the
25 workforce is strengthened and sustained. Our office

2 is in position to be a thought partner with all of
3 the stakeholders to talk about what pay parity looks
4 like and how does it impact community based
5 organizations. We cannot have an early childhood
6 system without all of the stakeholders available,
7 engaged, and compensated correctly. So, we are
8 looking forward to seeing what those contract
9 negotiations look like to see if ,you know, the
10 conversations can continue to support that workforce
11 and the pay parity pathway.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Well, I hope that the
13 Office does take the position of supporting it. I
14 mean, you all know that the majority of the folks
15 filling these positions are women, women of color,
16 that certainly deserve pay parity with their DOE
17 counterparts.

18 On the topic of DOE, how does the Office intend
19 on supporting DOE make onetime payments to providers?

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Well, right now, uh,
21 our office has been inserted into different parts of
22 that process. New York City Public Schools is the
23 gatekeeper for that invoicing payment process.
24 However, we have been available to connect community
25 based organizations that are having particular issues

2 with their invoicing. We have been in conversations
3 and at the table when discussing any kind of
4 processing and processing improvements to make sure
5 that the payments are being sent on time. We have
6 been in conversations with New York City Public
7 Schools and other entities within the city agencies
8 to see if there any technical improvements to help
9 the process. So, we are embedded in conversation,
10 and we are dedicated to making those connections
11 between the CBOs and New York City Public Schools,
12 and we are also deeply in the conversation of holding
13 folks accountable, if you will, to make sure that
14 this process continues to progress and improve.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: What has the feedback
16 been? The Council hosted a hearing last June, I
17 believe, regarding this very same topic with the
18 Education Committee. What has... Can you share any
19 measures of accountability you all are looking into?
20 What has the feedback been?

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: So, our accountability
22 right now is anecdotal. I would have to go back and
23 actually look at hard data to see where the
24 improvements are. Anecdotally we have seen
25 improvements. Anecdotally we have been able to

2 connect community based organizations that were
3 struggling. Part of that narrative is for CBOs to
4 actually understand all of the mechanics that go into
5 the invoicing. Another part of that concertation is
6 having New York City Public Schools understanding
7 some of the difficulties and the barriers on the
8 other side of the conversation. So, we would be able
9 to touch base with New York City Public Schools to
10 see what their invoicing payment rate would be. I
11 don't have that information.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. I wanted to ask
13 questions, so something that you touched upon that
14 I... if you can expand, that would be great,
15 regarding the realities our communities have with day
16 care deserts. Certainly my cosponsor, Council Member
17 Kevin Riley, and I have talked about that at length,
18 in his borough to the Bronx, kind of the realities of
19 where the need is versus where these institutions
20 exist. Can you... And you mentioned that The Office
21 of Day Care has put together some sort of a... or is
22 working on some kind a plan so that they can be
23 easier for folks to access. Is that correct? Did I
24 hear that correct?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Yes, so, accessibility
3 for us, again, started with awareness, and we
4 supported the campaign for It Takes a City. But,
5 access also in terms of the application that lives on
6 MyCity, the thing that is really exciting for us is
7 that we are now going to be able to track data to see
8 who is enrolling in what zip codes, what communities,
9 so that we now have information -- soon -- we will
10 soon have information to say, "You know what?
11 Community District 17 looks like they didn't get too
12 many applications. Do we have to do a more targeted
13 marking plan?" " This district seems to be
14 oversaturated with applications." "How do we work
15 with ACS and New York City Public Schools to really
16 make data informed decisions and help them influence
17 where seats to be and if there is any extra support?"
18 One of the questions that came up recently was about
19 available commercial space that could be converted
20 into child care centers. There is ,you know, we will
21 be able to get that information on vacant spaces, but
22 we also have to couple that with a partnership with
23 The Department of Health to see what is a viable
24 space. So, a storefront might be vacant, but we
25 would have to make sure that it was a safe space.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Right. Does DOB play
3 in a role in this context?

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: They would play a role
5 if they are going to contract with a community based
6 organization to run that. So, Department of Health
7 is really the body that looks at spaces to see if
8 there is a viability for child care centers to run.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: And, Michelle, in the
10 piece of about the data, I think that is great, a
11 vast majority of the bills we pass here at Council is
12 requiring the DOE provide more data. Who is working
13 on all the data that you just touched... that you
14 just mentioned?

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: So, New York City
16 Public Schools definitely is working on their data.
17 Our liaison, Aaron Yarborough, is here. He is our, I
18 call him my data guru, and I don't know if you wanted
19 to speak a little bit about some of the work that you
20 are doing with the data?

21 AARON YARBOROUGH: Hello, Council Members, Arron
22 Yarborough, Senior Project Manager of Data
23 Management, so, yeah, just to build on that, a lot of
24 what our office is doing is getting data. The data
25 comes from other sources, to your point. It comes

2 through, we get ,you know, we try to get DOE data, we
3 try to look at that and compare it with ACS data,
4 with vouchers, we try to look and compare that to
5 DOHMH data as far as some of the buildings that they
6 are inspecting. So, we are gathering data from all
7 of these various agencies, and we are trying to sort
8 of look at correlations between them. Because if you
9 look at just any one of them, it is not going to try
10 to give you the whole picture. So, a lot are
11 challenges, but ,you know, I think we are going to
12 get there. Where we have made some strides is to try
13 to really look at this holistically with these
14 multiple data sources. Because now any one of them
15 is only going to tell a fraction of the story. And
16 part of that as we look through is ,you know,
17 identifying where we need more data.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Are you taking
19 suggestions?

20 AARON YARBOROUGH: I am.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: I will come up with it
22 before the end of the hearing.

23 AARON YARBOROUGH: Okay. I believe you. I think
24 that is a really important part of this process.
25 When we hit the year mark, a lot of it was

2 establishing those protocols -- where does this data
3 reside? And for many of you who have dealt with data
4 before, sometimes it is not as simple as it looks. Is
5 this a distinct individual? Is this a service count?
6 You know we go through all of that. But, I think
7 part of... As this office matures, and as our
8 initiative continues to gain momentum, it is looking
9 at not only enriching the data we have and better
10 understanding it but sort of mapping the correlations
11 between them, but also identifying where more data is
12 necessary.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: And to that point,
15 being able to make intentional decisions and informed
16 decisions, it is not just collecting data for data's
17 sake, but it is, like, what is this information
18 telling us? How do we use it so that we can continue
19 to serve more children and families throughout the
20 City. So, it is not data for data sake, it is really
21 the intention. We are at a really good position to
22 look at this from a bird's-eye view, where, before,
23 the data was important, but it might have been in
24 isolation. We are able to look at in the aggregate,
25 and say, you know what? We need to come up with a

2 strategy for this data set, because it is telling us
3 something. So, we are actually really excited about
4 that.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: So, before I pass it over to
6 my colleague, I actually just want to follow up on a
7 little bit about the data that comes Council Member
8 Gutiérrez was asking about. And you had mentioned
9 ,you know, we are not doing data for data's sake, and
10 so that kind of leads into the followups of what type
11 of... I would love to hear the examples. Like, what
12 type of data are you already currently producing to
13 measure the impact. And how... What is the
14 timeframe? Like, what are the formulas you are
15 using? How often are you accessing the program to
16 look for ways to improve it? Does it happen at
17 specified junctures? Does it happen as you see an
18 outlier or a discrepancy or an issue with the data?
19 And, then, I want to ask you about some of the data
20 points. But, I am curious as to those other points
21 first.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure. So, Arron, keep
23 me honest, but, right now, as mentioned, there are
24 over 16,000 applications for our vouchers on MyCity.
25 What we are able to do now, we are at... We are just

2 now at a point where we have enough data to look at
3 some of the desegregated information. So, who is
4 applying where? We are interested in seeing what zip
5 codes have higher application rates versus others.
6 So, those are some of the things that we are
7 interested in looking at. We are looking at the ages
8 of children who are applying. We are going to start
9 looking at the vouchers. Are they being used in
10 contract care with New York City Public Schools, or
11 are they being used in private ECS Voucher center-
12 based locations? Are they being taken to homebased
13 locations? So, those are the thing that we
14 anticipate being able to look at and access, and,
15 then, turnkey that information and share it amongst
16 our colleagues at the different city agencies to say,
17 ,you know, we are seeing this trend here; we are
18 really excited about trend; we are seeing this trend
19 that we are a little bit concerned about, and we need
20 to do a little bit more work.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And is there data on the
22 average cost of child care in New York City for
23 families broken down by income bracket?

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I am not sure. Do we
25 have that? We are not capturing that yet, no.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Okay, uh, is that something
3 that you plan to try to capture in the future?

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: It is definitely a
5 possibility. We have not really had an internal
6 discussion about that particular data set.

7 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: I mean, at least I think it
8 would make sense in ,you know, figuring out sort of
9 what the need is and what kinds of resources are
10 going to be needed.

11 Do you have statistics on the number of vacant
12 commercial and community spaces in New York City that
13 could potentially be converted into child care
14 facilities?

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I think what we can do
16 is get the number of vacant facilities. The harder
17 number is to ascertain if those are viable spaces,
18 because they would have to go through a rigorous
19 viability assessment in partnership with The
20 Department of Health.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: But, you do think that those
22 are [INAUDIBLE]...

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I do think there are
24 opportunities to look at vacant spaces. Uh, it is
25 tricky because ,you know, some of the spaces are

2 older than others and have... You know, one of the
3 major things is two means of egress. You have to
4 have two places to enter and exit. A lot of
5 commercial spaces don't have that, because they were
6 not built out for that modality of business. So, it
7 would take a lot of coordination with Department of
8 Health, because they issue the licenses, to see if
9 any of those spaces are viable.

10 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And what about locations that
11 have gotten tax breaks for offering community spaces
12 that still hasn't been filled?

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Say the question again?

14 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And what about spaces, right,
15 that.... locations where they were offered tax
16 breaks, right, in development for offering community
17 space, and that still hasn't been filled?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Well, I know that, uh,
19 I think approximately 2,000 seats have been created.
20 Do we... We don't have the demographics on the
21 negative side of that. So, we could probably look
22 into that.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Okay, and it... The last
24 question I am going to ask on this is, uh...

25 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Mm-hmm?

2 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: if you could share with us
3 what the average wait time for families seeking
4 subsidized child care serves are in New York City,
5 and how does it vary by neighborhood?

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure. The average wait
7 time for voucher eligibility and determination is
8 about 34 or 35 days. That has been a little bit of an
9 increase wait time because of the volume of
10 applications that are coming in through MyCity. So,
11 ACS is in the process of assessing what the need
12 would be to actually shrink that down back to 30 days
13 or under.

14 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: So, it... So, the... I mean,
15 it does seem based on that that the demand is
16 increasing, right? You're getting... [CROSS-TALK]

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Correct.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: more applications in?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Correct.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And in order to reduce that
21 wait time, is it fair to say that what you would need
22 is more people kind of thing...

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Staffing and process...

24 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Yes...

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: analysis. Are there
3 any gaps in the current process that could be...

4 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Yes...

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: abbreviated,
6 eliminated, reworked or something to that nature, so
7 I know that ACS is working on it.

8 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Okay, yes, and, again, I mean,
9 like, just, I would imagine that increasing staffing
10 to reduce wait times would be difficult if you
11 agencies were facing 15 percent.

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Correct. Correct.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Yes.

14 I am going to pass it over to Council Member
15 Menin who is the prime sponsor of a resolution that
16 we are hearing today. She can tell you more about
17 it. And, then, I know she has some questions as
18 well.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Great, thank you so much
20 Chair Cabán for holding today's important hearings on
21 child care. And I also wanted to thank my colleague,
22 Council Member Gutiérrez for her great advocacy and
23 leadership on child care and for her bill.

24 So, child care remains obviously a crisis for
25 New Yorkers. Second only to housing cost, child care

2 expenses are one of the biggest concerns to all
3 parents across New York City. As reported in the New
4 York Times last week, a family would need to make a
5 least \$300,000 per year to meet the federal standard
6 for child care affordability for only one child, yet
7 a typical New York City household earns around
8 \$70,000 per year. That is why I was proud to have my
9 Universal Child Act signed into law earlier in 2022.
10 This package of legislation, which includes, as you
11 mentioned, a Child Care Advisory Board; a grant pilot
12 program to benefit providers on the brink of closure;
13 a bill to create a subsidy portal; and a bill to list
14 all of the different child care providers was
15 obviously designed to ensure that child care can be
16 more affordable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

17 Today's hearing on this important topic also
18 includes two resolutions also includes that I am
19 proud to sponsor: Resolution 560 -- which has the
20 support of Chair Cabán, thank you -- calls on the
21 state to remove the minimum wage and hours
22 requirement for applicants of child care. Currently
23 New York State law excludes certain applicants, such
24 as home health aides or gig workers, from being
25 awarded child care subsidies because of the amount of

2 hours worked in a week or due to hourly wage
3 requirements. This law clearly needs to be updated
4 so that all categories of workers could receive child
5 care assistance.

6 In addition, I have Resolution 561, which calls
7 on the state to create a tax credit that incentivizes
8 employers to provide day care for their employees.
9 Investing in child care means investing in working
10 families and the economy, yet a family living in New
11 York City typically spends over a quarter of their
12 income from child care alone, which is completely
13 unacceptable.

14 So, I just wanted to ask, if I could, just a
15 couple of questions. I was going through the Mayor's
16 Management Report yesterday, and it reports that in
17 Fiscal Year 2023 1,900 seats were created by 19
18 eligible property owners taking advantage of this
19 state's tax abatement program. I had a bill earlier
20 that was signed into law that talked about this tax
21 abatement program that was supposed to give guidance
22 to property owners to make sure that they are doing
23 this. The goal in Fiscal Year 2024 is to increase it
24 to 11,000 seats. What else can be done to get to
25 that number?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: We have to continue to
3 work with our advocacy groups and private sector
4 partners to make sure that private building owners
5 are aware of the tax abatement and tax credit and to
6 make sure that our office is centered in part of
7 those conversations. I know that there is an
8 information packet that is available, that why we
9 were able to get to that number. We hope to support
10 the private sector in making them aware of the credit
11 of opening a child care center within their building.
12 So, we are looking at partnership -- advocacy, and
13 marketing are probably the cornerstones of that.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: And one thing I just wanted
15 to note, when I was going through the MMR, it said
16 that 19 eligible property owners created 1,900 seats,
17 which that would be equated to an average of a 100
18 seats per facility. Is that correct?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I would have to go back
20 and doublecheck... [CROSS-TALK]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Because that seemed very
22 high to me. I don't think most facilities have a 100
23 seats, so...

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Yes, I would have to go
25 back and look that up... [CROSS-TALK]

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Okay, if you could
3 please...

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: let us know, that would be
6 very helpful.

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: No problem.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: So, how many child care
9 providers exist currently in New York City?
10 Obviously, we know in recent years under the data,
11 over a 1,000 have closed in recent years. What are
12 the numbers today? We've got child care deserts, as
13 we all know, all over this city. So, I am deeply
14 concerned about the number of providers.

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure. I would have to
16 get back to you. I don't have the number of open
17 early childhood centers right now in front of me.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: And how many are listed in
19 the portal? The portal that has been created, how
20 many providers are listed in the portal?

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure. So, I can reach
22 back to Department of Health who maintains that
23 portal. The idea is to have every licensed, uh,
24 Department of Health licensed center. I know New
25 York City Public Schools also has a map. And home-

2 based child care can be found in the OCFS portal.

3 So, we could get more information about that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Okay. Can you also give us
5 an update on the background checks? There has
6 obviously been a long lag in background checks that
7 know of, up to a year, at The Department of Health.
8 With the unspeakable tragedy that happened in the
9 Bronx, what is happening on background checks? And
10 is there better coordination between the Department
11 of Education and The Department of Health? Because
12 we have found in the past there wasn't that level of
13 coordination that needs to happen.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure...

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: So, could... What is
16 happening on that?

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: So, uh, the
18 comprehensive background clearances shifted in terms
19 of regulations back in 2019 per federal guidelines.
20 It required many more steps to the process that
21 existed for New York City. Months after that was
22 announced, we were in the middle of the pandemic.
23 So, some of the efforts to move towards the automated
24 system were paused. We are happy to say that in May,
25 late May, we have worked very closely with The

2 Department of Health to ensure that this
3 comprehensive background clearance process is now an
4 automated online system -- where both the community
5 based organizations and the potential employee who is
6 trying to get a position at those centers, are
7 working in partnership to make sure all of the
8 paperwork and necessary steps are happening. The
9 process time, we could get for you, but it is not
10 months, it is weeks at this point. And we are
11 approaching 3,000 candidates, if you will, that have
12 applied for a CBC are now cleared to work. And, that
13 is a pretty significant increase. That means that
14 those people are now able to join the workforce. If
15 they are able to join the workforce, that means that
16 we can open classrooms. And if we can open
17 classrooms, we can get more children in.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Right.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: So, that is... That
20 is the cornerstone of the work we kept that front and
21 center in mind. We worked really closely with
22 Department of Health to make sure that the system is
23 as intuitive as possible. We engaged community based
24 organizations that actually have to use this tool to
25 make sure that they have staff that are cleared to

2 work in the centers. So, we are happy to continue
3 that work. And we are working systems improvement.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Last question, if I
5 could...

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: So, in the situation in the
8 Bronx, my understanding is that there are 7,000 at-
9 home child care provide... meaning people operating
10 the child care facility in their own home.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Mm-hmm

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: There are about 7,000 in
13 New York City, is my understanding.

14 So, in that situation in the Bronx, do the
15 inspectors in The Health Department have to check
16 every bedroom in a home facility? Is that one of the
17 required items on the checklist?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I really cannot speak
19 to their specific protocols, we could circle back to
20 The Department of Health and get that. And we are
21 cautioning ,you know, commenting on an open
22 investigation...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Sure, of course.

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: But, I would be happen
25 to find out what their protocol is for visiting...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Yes, I just want to
3 understand...

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: home-based providers.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: If every room... If
6 [INAUDIBLE]...

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Because if... If every
9 room is not required, then that it something we
10 should look at -- expanding that requirement to make
11 sure that every room is being looked at in a home
12 facility. So, yeah, I just want to know if it is on
13 the inspector checklist or not.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Mm-hmm

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Thank you so much. Thank
16 you for the opportunity to ask questions.

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Thank you. Thank you,
18 Council Member.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: I do really appreciate it.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Just a followup on some of the
21 Council Member Menin's questions.

22 I think it would be really good for us to know
23 sort of what the protocol is, what role the Office
24 plays in monitoring and evaluating these facilities,

2 including sort of the specifics of the inspections
3 and evaluations. That would be helpful.

4 I am a little disappointed that you all were not
5 able to provide the number of child care providers
6 currently, uh, selected and licensed in New York
7 City, because I think that is a critical piece of
8 information...

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure.

10 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: in the context or what we are
11 discussing. So, we really would like to make sure
12 that we get that.

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure.

14 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Uh, and, I wanted to touch,
15 uh, and go back to actually another thing that was
16 brought up my Council Member Menin. Could you talk a
17 little bit about the process of opening a child care
18 center? What barriers and challenges do you... do
19 they currently face in doing that?

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure. So, I guess the
21 first question is, our office doesn't have monitoring
22 function, but we are very invested in making sure
23 that early childhood programs across the City reflect
24 high quality health and safety. But, our
25 responsibility in terms of monitoring does not lie

2 within our office. Right now, Department of Health
3 holds the Article in the city, which is the contract
4 or the guideline, if you will, to opening a child...
5 opening and operating. Article 47 highlights several
6 different components from staffing requirements,
7 space requirements, and other important components
8 within that document that regulate. Uh, if you are a
9 community based organization that is also connected,
10 let's say a New York City Public School Early
11 Childhood contract, or if you are direct grantee for
12 Early Head Start or Head Start, you also have to
13 comply with other regulatory requirements within
14 those contracts. And between those two or three or
15 multiple entities, this should support a healthy and
16 viable early childhood environment. There are city
17 agencies that also support the viability of programs
18 including FDNY, they are really very active in making
19 sure, like, fire panels and fire safety is in place,
20 Department of Buildings also is another partner with
21 Department of Health, New York City Housing
22 Authority, if the program is located in one of the
23 New York City Housing Authority communities. So, it
24 really is a collaborative effort, but in terms of

2 compliance and oversight, that does lie within
3 Department of Health.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Okay, uhm, and I know I sound
5 like a broken record on this, but, again, it sounds
6 like it takes a lot manpower and multiple agencies in
7 coordination, and I do not how we accomplish that
8 with 15 percent PEGs.

9 I am going to pass it over, again to Council
10 Member Gutiérrez.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Chair. You
12 share, uh, how big is the Office of Child Care? What
13 are we looking at?

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: It is the three of us.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Oh, the whole office is
16 here today! Wonderful!

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: The whole office is
18 here.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: In touching on Chair
20 Cabán's reference to these harmful, harmful, PEGs,
21 what does that look like for you?

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: We are... [CROSS-TALK]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: What does a five
24 percent reduction in November look like for the
25 Office of Child Care right now?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: For our office? We are
3 part of the Strategic Initiative Portfolio. And I
4 know that we are going to have to work together to
5 see how that PEG is going to be reflected for the
6 portfolio. We are still in the process of making
7 those evaluations, so I really cannot speak to the
8 direct impact to our office. But we are a team of
9 three. We have a very lean budget. It is mostly no
10 OTPS right now. We are really fortunate to have
11 collaboration with a lot of city agencies to get our
12 work done. So, we are really interested in being
13 able to support Strategic Initiative Portfolio, and
14 we will be part of that PEG conversation. But, it is
15 a little bit too early to tell right now.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm. What we... I
17 mean, a number of us are gravely concerned about ,you
18 know, some of our other more traditional agencies and
19 their ability to...

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: keep New Yorkers safe.
22 I mean, it boils down to, like, Department of
23 Buildings not even to retain inspectors. Right? And
24 so that is why I asked about DOB earlier, because I
25 think ,you know, we can feel encouraged, I am glad

2 that the Administration agrees with us with this bill
3 on the points that matter, but when you are proposing
4 PEGs, you are working against all of those goals.
5 And all it does is push this further and further into
6 the future, and I just don't believe that New Yorkers
7 can afford to wait. I don't think their providers
8 can afford to wait. So, we are looking forward to
9 hearing from you all about what this office is going
10 to look like in November for Preliminary and
11 Executive Budgets again.

12 I have some questions or suggestions, if you can
13 answer them about the kind of data...

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: There was something
16 that Chair Cabán touched on with the community
17 facility space, I know you are not prepared to talk
18 about that. But, something that happens especially
19 in, like, rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods, is ,you
20 know, the conversations about redevelopment and these
21 tax subsidies that these developers get.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Mm-hmm.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: You know, I see it in
24 Williamsburg, I see it in [INAUDIBLE], I see it in
25 Bushwick where they are getting these massive tax

2 breaks. Not only are apartments vacant, because no
3 one can afford them, but their facility space that
4 they are required to provide, vacant. And, so, it
5 doesn't designate community facility space for child
6 care centers really, right? So, what is something..
7 or for something for you all to think about in how
8 you all can work with the City to help mandate that?
9 I think that is really important. Often times
10 developers don't go into business with child care
11 providers that are providing subsidies, because,
12 again, it doesn't make fiscal sense to them. But,
13 that has to be the last priority in communities that
14 are gentrifying, that are still very much in need of
15 affordable child care options or in child care
16 deserts. So, we would love for that to ,you know,
17 with your office of three or more, to look in...

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: [INAUDIBLE]...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: No, I know. Something
20 - it's just you, it's you and we will do it.

21 The other play... And that also just ties into
22 the bill which is also seeking for collaboration on
23 planning for facility space designations specifically
24 for day cares. Can you all speak to day care
25 facilities that have been closed in the last year? I

2 mean, around a year ago, I know Sheltering Arms
3 closed a number of locations, one of which was in my
4 district. But, what happens in those instances?
5 What role does your office play in day care centers
6 that are about to shutter their doors. What does a
7 city then do to utilize those spaces afterwards?

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Right. So, again, not
9 providing direct service gives us the opportunity to
10 partner with the funding sources. So, whether it is
11 a direct federal grant of a New York City Public
12 School, or any other kind of funding structure that
13 would impact budgets and contracts, I think we are in
14 a space to offer collaborative conversations. There
15 are many reasons why a program would close, and I
16 don't have the specifics on ,you know, you had
17 mentioned Sheltering Arms, but there are several
18 reasons why any business, including a child care
19 center would close. I think our priority -- from my
20 vantage point, as the Executive Director of this
21 office, is to make sure that families are connected
22 to child care. If a center does have to close, we
23 don't want the continuity of care to get interrupted.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: So, that would be the
3 first priority for us. Fortunately, in our eight
4 months of ,you know, being in office, we have not
5 been directly confronted with a center saying, "We
6 are about to shutter our doors, can you help us?",
7 but we know that there are stories out there. And...
8 [CROSS-TALK]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: But, they are closing.
10 Are they going to DOE for that?

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I would assume. They
12 are not coming directly to our office, so maybe they
13 are going to their funding source, which, in some
14 cases, would be New York City Public Schools. In
15 other cases, it might be Head Start or private
16 entities. But, they have not come specifically to us
17 to say ,you know, "Michelle, we are getting ready to
18 close, what can you do?"

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm.

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: We have been in
21 conversations with several community based
22 organizations and happily have been able to convene
23 and connect on really important conversations to
24 prevent a closing. Not that programs were close to
25 closing, but really trying to help troubleshoot some

2 of these really important budget questions -- and
3 invoicing questions -- and enrollment questions --
4 making sure that the registration opportunities for
5 students are in the right place - category. We have
6 worked with a handful between my Deputy Director and
7 myself just taking phone calls, setting up meetings,
8 and making sure that the community voice is heard,
9 and that they have another consistent and reliable
10 city group directly connected to and have access to
11 New York City Public Schools and really helping those
12 conversations.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Do you all
14 have a sense of how many providers are in need of
15 child care themselves, and whether they, in those
16 instances, would even qualify for child care at the
17 locations that they work at?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Yeah, I don't have that
19 information, but that is definitely something that we
20 could probably work with advocacy groups to try to
21 get that data. I mean, it's an important question,
22 because if we are talking about salary disparities
23 and concerns...

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I am sure that there is
3 additional connections that we could make to the
4 workforce, not just in compensation, but also
5 connecting folks to child care throughout the City.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: I mean, I bring it up,
7 because it is a very real example in my community...

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: of a daycare director
10 that had to leave, because they couldn't qualify.
11 And even if they did qualify there was a waiting list
12 of 300 or so kids that have ,you know, aged out.
13 And, so, that is a reality.

14 Can I ask some more questions?

15 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: You can ask as many questions
16 as you want.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: How often are you all
18 in your office thinking about asking agencies to
19 collect data? And obviously it depends on, like,
20 what is the kind of data? For example...

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: DOHMH for birth
23 trends, but what are you all thinking as far as how
24 often are you all asking them to gather and release
25 this data to integrate that into your planning?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure, so I will also
3 pass the data question over to Aaron in a second.
4 But, in general, since our office is really at the
5 beginning stages of forming these really consistent
6 cadences of meeting with folks, we are probably going
7 to ask for consistent reporting on things like
8 enrollment. We have access to some data and some
9 information, but we will also rely on folks like
10 Department of Health to show us how many applications
11 for the background clearances are in, how many are
12 processed, how many were rejected, things like that.
13 We could ask for regular cadence for that
14 information. We are looking forward to having regular
15 cadence information accessible through MyCity in
16 terms of the voucher applications and acceptances and
17 connecting children to care. So, there are many
18 opportunities for us to either request data
19 quarterly, monthly, or even have access to the data
20 directly so that we don't have to wait for it. So,
21 we are looking forward to putting together a timeline
22 with intentionality. Did you want to add anything?

23 AARON YARBOROUGH: I would just add to that
24 something that I am aware of is that that is right,
25 and we would love it to be apples to apples as much

2 as possible. So, we are really striving to
3 [INAUDIBLE] months [INAUDIBLE] make sense. It really
4 does depend on the data source. Some of those could
5 be real time. We could go into MyCity and ask how
6 many people have applied through MyCity. That is a
7 real time thing. Other times, there is a lag, when
8 you really start trying to get outcomes, like how
9 many applications have been approved for background
10 checks and such. There is often a lag, because there
11 is processing time. So, it is not only coordinating
12 the frequency, which I think is really important, and
13 we like to sort of routinize it as much as possible,
14 but trying to be mindful of the fact that sometimes
15 there is going to be a lag in the data. So, we are
16 more comparing it, just make sure that that is noted,
17 because sometimes you're going to see April data next
18 to May and June because of the data frequency. In my
19 world, I would like to make it as standard as
20 possible, and that should be the goal.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm. Right.

22 AARON YARBOROUGH: And there are things again like
23 census data where you have to wait.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: So, I raise that
25 question because I want to segue way into 3-K. I

2 think for many of us here, we were, and continue to
3 be deeply disappointed by the inability of this
4 administration to believe what we know is true, which
5 is expanding 3-K is vital. And I mean it in the very
6 real way, where I know of families who have opted to
7 say out of the City, because of just hearing these
8 announcements. Right? Just, like, 3-K is not going
9 to be expanding, I can't afford it, so I am
10 definitely not going back. And I think, again, that
11 that is counterintuitive to what this mayor has said.
12 So, what we learned at one of the education hearings
13 was that they what they understood from very
14 preliminary rounds of data collection were that
15 there was some ,you know, misdistribution of
16 enrollment seats where we have certain districts
17 where they were empty versus ones that were in need.
18 What can you tell me about how this data is being
19 collected now? Has the system improved? What can
20 you share about where the need is actually? What has
21 changed from what we knew six months ago?

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I think that is correct
23 to underscore New York City Public Schools is
24 assessing and has made adjustments to some of their
25 seat allocations based on some of the research that

2 they were able to conduct. So, the data is making,
3 uh, is guiding informed decision making. What we
4 would need to do is work in partnership with Public
5 Schools to actually that information on a regular
6 basis. Because it will help continue that narrative
7 of, yes, we are understanding that in this community
8 there is a need, and in this community there are
9 vacancies. And how do we take that information
10 collectively to make intentional decisions? So, I
11 think it would be important for our office. We meet
12 with Public Schools regularly, but to say ,you know,
13 this is an intentional data set that is going to help
14 us make decisions, I think that is a really critical
15 next and continued step.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, and I think...
17 I know parents in my community who could not make a
18 3-K enrollment. Meaning they maxed out, and are
19 hopping on a train 40 minutes away. So, that, to me,
20 is not us meeting that need. That is a parent taking
21 matters into their own hands and ,you know, doing
22 what they need to do. Which is, I think, the
23 opposite of what this administration should do be
24 doing. And certainly the opposite of what this
25 council wants to do.

2 Have you all thought about the role that
3 expanding eligibility for zero to three at this point
4 looks like? I have heard from a lot of folks in my
5 district, it is insanely ex... child care is
6 expensive, right? You know this. Without a subsidy
7 it is almost impossible. What can we do? What does
8 your office looking to do to expand the way that
9 middle income families can become eligible? What are
10 their options?

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Yeah, I think the
12 foundation of our approach is really rooted in
13 advocacy for state and federal partnership. Millions
14 and billions of dollars are going to be needed to
15 expand early childhood in a way that is really needed
16 for the City. And without that advocacy, without
17 that partnership between the federal government and
18 the state government, we will not be able to
19 accomplish all of our goals in a timely fashion. So,
20 we are here to continue to advocate for different
21 components of different statutes and bills and
22 advocacy has to continue in order for us to get the
23 funding that we need to expand.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

2 You said this in your opening remarks, Michelle,
3 it is in our bill, 941, about nonconventional hours.
4 And I had this experience when I was looking for
5 child care for my daughter. I was on a waiting list.
6 I am very grateful. Shout out First Buddies, they
7 are wonderful. Uhm, but the... What I learned in
8 that... And what I... And literally what I was
9 doing was just calling different day cares that I saw
10 online. But, there is no uniformity of hours, which
11 is a problem for someone working conventional hours,
12 but then the reality is for people who don't... who
13 work outside of 9 to 5, we are working weekends, I
14 know the City, there used to be... It was a lot
15 easier to find these day care centers where ,you
16 know, you could do evening and weekend drop off. A
17 lot of those places I think have either closed or
18 stopped providing services at those times. But, it
19 is very real now. Now have a lot more families that
20 are working multiple jobs, multiple people in the
21 household. What is your office doing to help solve
22 or support agencies to help solve for that? How can
23 we ensure that we have these locations in every
24 community district?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: So, I think awareness
3 is where we are in position to make the biggest
4 impact right now.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Do these places exist,
6 though?

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: There are places that
8 have nontraditional hours. There are not a lot of
9 them. There are not lot...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: No, there's... I mean,
11 do you have a sense of what...

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I would have to look up
13 the specific numbers, but it...

14 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Is there a directory
15 specifically [INAUDIBLE]....

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, is there a
17 directory specially?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: There is not a
19 directory for just nontraditional hours.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Or however we want to
21 word them, but hours outside of, yeah, okay.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: So, you, I'm sorry, you
24 would saying?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: No, no, no, so, I think
3 awareness of the differential, I think that if
4 providers have the resources and the understanding of
5 what it would be fiscally to run a nontraditional-
6 hour program, I think we are in a really good
7 position to start convening with especially Early
8 Childhood Advocates, New York City Public Schools, or
9 anyone who holds contracts for child care whether it
10 is center-based or home-based, I think this is an
11 opportunity for us to continue that conversation and
12 come up with intentional pathways for parents to get
13 connected to programs that have nontraditional hours.
14 My children are adults now, but it I... It is very
15 clear and fresh ,you know, the conversation that you
16 are having with us today...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: For sure.

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: about trying to find
19 child care. And ,you know, you don't think
20 nontraditional hours for teachers, but if I have to
21 be in front of my classroom at 8:00 that means I need
22 child care at 7:00. And that falls... That is
23 considered a nontraditional hour. So, I do
24 personally and professionally understand that angst
25 of trying to get connected.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. And I
3 think, I mean, you know, in speaking very preliminary
4 conversations with Labor even, the Nurses' Union and,
5 like, they are very much in support of this bill for
6 these reasons. You know, I have heard from other
7 unions that, they want to be able to attract and
8 retain more women laborers. And this is a key, key,
9 ask of those folks.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: I think the Chair has
11 some more questions. But, I'm not done.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: It's actually Chair
13 Gutiérrez...

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: No...

15 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And, honestly, I am super
16 grateful, and the reason I am saying take up all the
17 space you'd like, is because Council Member Gutiérrez
18 has done so, so much work and has worked so closely
19 with the ecosystem of advocates, organizations,
20 parents, child care providers, there is nobody better
21 to digging on these questions.

22 I did just, before I pass it back over to you, I
23 wanted to ask some questions particularly about, uhm,
24 our undocumented children and families. You know,
25 PromiseNYC is an incredible thing. Many of us fought

2 very, very hard to make sure it happened. I know
3 that you mentioned that basically the, uh, the
4 continuation or the funding for the upcoming fiscal
5 year, uh, that was secured takes the program in its
6 first iteration and serves the same number of
7 children, but at that full 12-month period rather
8 than the six or seven months that was able to be
9 provided the first time around. So, I know that it
10 is like 600+ children currently being serviced by
11 this program. It is an incredible program. But, my
12 question is how many children applied for a
13 PromiseNYC voucher before June 30th? How many
14 children applied after June 30th? And how many
15 unused vouchers? There are no unused vouchers,
16 right? We are like at capacity. But, how many
17 applied before, how many applied after?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I would have to reach
19 back out in partnership with ACS to see if they are
20 able to drill down before and after June 30th
21 enrollment.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Okay. And, uh, you know, I am
23 going to [BACKGROUND NOISE] [INAUDIBLE] for...
24 [CROSS-TALK]

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: [INAUDIBLE] application
3 for enrollment?

4 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Uh, application...

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Applications? Okay.

6 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Yeah, applicants. Because we
7 know how many are enrolled...

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure

9 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And we know how many seats can
10 be supported by the allotment that's been made
11 available. But ,you know, I think about the fact
12 that we had a hearing on... we actually had a couple
13 of hearings addressing this, but the demand far, far
14 outpaces what we are currently providing for folks.
15 And even at the time we first begun talking about it,
16 it was before we saw a really sustained uptick in
17 welcoming new neighbors, undocumented neighbors
18 seeking asylum. And, so, it... A few questions that
19 I have, too, and it all interacts with one another,
20 because now we are hearing that not just single men
21 in shelter settings being booted from our shelter
22 system after 60 days or after 30 days, but that this
23 rule making, this policy making might be extended to
24 families with children being booted from the shelter
25 system. Which, then makes it seem, I mean, cruel,

2 let's just say that up front. But, it then makes it
3 even more critical for those families to be able to
4 have their kids in a child care setting with that
5 kind of housing instability. So, I know that was a
6 little bit of a diatribe, but the question I have is
7 ,you know, what are we doing to make sure that we are
8 reaching and supporting asylum seeker families with
9 children? You know, how are you going to ensure that
10 child care centers are equipped to take the children
11 of asylum seeker families? What is the plan? Have
12 you all been thinking about that? What is the
13 approach?

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Oh, yeah, yes, we...
15 definitely top of mind. Some of the work that we
16 have already mentioned beforehand in terms of
17 supporting shelter staff so that they are aware of
18 the availability and the eligibility requirements.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And that includes respite
20 centers, and some of the [INAUDIBLE] HERCS and...
21 [CROSS-TALK]

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Yes, correct. And I
23 will pass it over to, uh, Deputy Director in a second
24 to talk specifically about the work that we are doing
25 with the HERCS. She has been leading that work in

2 representation of our office. But, the statement,
3 the value statement that our office has is that,
4 children, regardless of immigration status, need to
5 be connected to care. And there are options now that
6 are available. First, and top of mind for us, are
7 the families that are eligible for Early Head Start
8 and Head Start, whether it is a direct grant from the
9 federal government or through the delegate contract
10 with New York City Public Schools. Those families
11 are eligible for Early Head Start and Head Start
12 programs. Public Schools is working together with
13 different city agencies to make sure that children
14 are connected to schools, uh, 3-K and Pre-K school
15 day seats are available for those families. And I
16 will pass it over to Deputy Director Gottesman to
17 talk about the work that she has been doing with the
18 staff, with the HERCS in particular.

19 DEPUTY DIRECTOR GOTTESMAN: So, as Michelle
20 mentioned, uh, in addition to the guide that we have
21 been giving out to all of the CBOs that are
22 affiliated with DYCD, ACS, DOHMH, et cetera, also
23 making sure that H+H, HPD, and DHS also have that
24 same information. But, maybe more importantly, or in
25 addition, we are connecting CBOs on the ground to

2 those shelters and to those HERCS to go meet
3 families, have those warm interactions, so they can
4 share information about their programs that are
5 nearby those HERCS and shelters. In addition, also,
6 I know New York City Public Schools, Division of
7 Early Childhood Education, they have also been at
8 family resource fairs. They have also been tabling,
9 making sure that families know about the availability
10 of Head Start, about the availability 3-K, about Pre-
11 K. I think on the advocacy level, we need to look at
12 the federal government and ask them to waive the
13 qualified immigration status requirement for Child
14 Care Block Grants. That would open up eligibility
15 for vouches. That would open up eligibility for
16 infant/toddler care, 3-K, Pre-K Extended Care, all of
17 the care that is funded by the Child Care Block
18 Grant. And, so, that is on our federal legislative
19 agenda. We know it's part of the advocates' agendas.
20 And, so, welcome to work together in advocacy to the
21 federal government to change that. Because, that
22 would really open the door for a lot more options for
23 families.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Absolutely. Okay, thank you.

25 Jen?

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Michelle, I
3 missed if you mentioned... How are you feeling?
4 It's okay, right? We're doing all right, right?

5 When is the Office's website going to go live?

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: I would say in the next
7 couple of months.

8 DEPUTY DIRECTOR GOTTESMAN: A few weeks.

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: A few weeks.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Who is... Is the
11 website something that you all... Is the Office
12 working inhouse or is OTI doing that?

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: We are working in
14 partnership with OTI.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Just saying, the
16 MyCity Portal is supposed to land in the fall. It
17 launched in March. So, I am excited. I am just ,you
18 know... I don't have high hopes for a... You said
19 in a couple weeks, is what you said?

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Yes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Have you seen it?

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: What is the color
24 scheme? What are we...

25

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2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Oh, we want to surprise
3 you, but it is very... very playful...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, so a couple
5 weeks?

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: So, let's say, like,
8 before Thanksgiving?

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Before Thanksgiving is
10 fair.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And it is going
12 to be up in multiple languages?

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Absolutely.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Can I ask about, I
17 don't know what your role is here, but what... How
18 are you all working, I guess, with Department of
19 Education and supporting providers in ,you know,
20 releasing a new RFP?

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: We have not had
22 conversations with Public Schools right now about the
23 RFP, but we hope to... [CROSS-TALK]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: But you know it's an
25 issue?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Yes.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And have you all
4 thought about how do support DOE in situations where
5 day care centers are not in a space owned by the city
6 of New York? Like, do you all have a sense what that
7 data is for ,you know, day care centers that are in a
8 City owned... [CROSS-TALK]

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: A City owned and City
10 leased... [CROSS-TALK]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: The majority of mine
12 are in privately owned, privately rented.

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Yes, we do have access
14 to get the information about programs that are
15 located in either City owned or City leased buildings
16 and what that impact has on the location.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, wonderful, I
18 would love to see that. I have deep concerns about
19 ,you know, a number of day cares in my district. We
20 had a fight in 2015, we might have to have another
21 fight in another two years. So, that is a reality.
22 It's a reality for... I think citywide, but
23 especially in gentrifying neighborhoods or
24 neighborhoods that are experiencing displacement at
25 the rate that we are. And it is a serious threat to

2 our communities, to the livelihoods for these
3 families. So, it doesn't sound like you know right
4 now, but it is important that you think through how
5 you plan to you support those sites and DOE. Because
6 ,you know, these landlords are getting smarter and
7 smarter. There is a lot more loopholes. There are a
8 lot more money in condos and leasing to the City to
9 operate a day care center. And the City needs to
10 take a stand against real estate and say we need to
11 continue to support these institutions. And, so I
12 would love for the Office to take a stance on that,
13 and work with me in my district particularly, but in
14 any other community that is dealing with that.

15 I think the last questions, if you could answer,
16 like I mentioned before, in the bill we want to focus
17 a good amount on encouraging people to... like,
18 creating a pathway for people to understand how to
19 open up a facility. Do you all have a sense of how
20 many agencies it takes to... How many agencies need
21 to get involved to do that, and roughly how long it
22 could take if...

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure, so...

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: If all goes well.

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Right, again,
3 Department of Health is the lead, because they are
4 the licensing, uhm, body. There is cross
5 collaboration between multiple city agencies that are
6 required to kind of interject and assess space
7 viability including FDNY to check fire and safety
8 regulations and compliance. And, again, Department of
9 Buildings, if there is some building considerations
10 like elevators and things of that nature. Also, New
11 York City Housing Authority is also involved if a
12 program is located in one of the NYCHA communities.
13 This office does not currently participate in any of
14 the licensing requirements or components. Right now
15 it sits, uh, with Department of Health. However, we
16 are happy to discuss any potential collaborations
17 that could help either streamline or convene the
18 multiple city agencies that are required to be part
19 of the licensing process. We are happy to do that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: And do you have a sense
21 of if all of those things are in order?

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Very anecdotal. It
23 takes several months, a couple of months at the
24 least. You know, it's a pretty comprehensive
25 process...[CROSS-TALK]

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah...

3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: we want to make sure
4 the space is viable mostly. It is also contingent if
5 there is a Department of Ed, a Department of New York
6 City School Public Schools contract. There are also
7 contract requirements in tandem with the Department
8 of Health licensing. So, those add another city
9 agency to the mix for that. And, again, if it is a
10 direct federal Head Start program, the regional
11 office is also involved in licensing.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. I think that's
13 it for me. The only thing I would love for you all
14 to -- if you can commit -- to include me in any
15 future summits, especially... [CROSS-TALK]

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: [INAUDIBLE]...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: me and my cosponsor,
18 Keven Riley?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE On record, you're
20 invited.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, include me, thank
22 you so much.

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Thank you. Thanks for
24 your time.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Yes... [CROSS-TALK]

2 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Thank you, uh, I just have a
3 few more questions I promise. I just want to thank
4 you the public for being super, super patient.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, yeah.

6 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: But, I want to ask you
7 specifically, and then we will move to public
8 testimony, about accessibility and disability justice
9 issues. It... Can you talk to me a little bit about
10 ,you know, how the Office is working to ensure that
11 all of these facilities are ADA accessible? I know
12 that we have already kind of gone through sort of
13 some of the challenges with finding spaces generally,
14 but is that amongst the challenges that might...
15 that maybe might not have been mentioned?

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: In terms of the ADA
17 compliance, I would have to refer to colleagues at
18 Department of Health to see if there are any statutes
19 in Article 47 that require that stipulation. I know
20 the goal is to make sure children with a variety of
21 abilities and needs are met. So, whether that is
22 connecting them to programs that do have ADA
23 compliance already built in ,you know, including and
24 not limited to something as simple as elevators to
25 get from one floor to another. So, we will be able

2 to circle back with Department of Health to see what
3 is in the code currently for that.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And, so, obviously, like, a
5 key part of ensuring that we have universal child
6 care in practice is making sure that children with
7 disabilities are receiving their mandated services.

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Sure.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And just to put this question
10 into context a little bit, you know, New York City
11 Public Schools reported that as of April 2023, 10,580
12 preschoolers who were supposed to get speech,
13 physical, or occupational therapy, were not getting
14 it. And another 1,970 preschoolers who were supposed
15 to have a part time special education teacher in
16 their child care or early childhood class, they were
17 not getting that service either. And, obviously, we
18 know that those services are not operational. So,
19 what are the steps that the City is taking to ensure
20 that these children are getting all of their mandated
21 services that the City is legally required to
22 provide?

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Correct. I know that
24 New York City Public Schools added over 700 special
25 education seats to stabilize the existing 6,000

2 children that were already in care. Obviously there
3 is still work do be done. There is a shortage of
4 special education teachers, not just in the City, but
5 nationwide is one of the workforce issues that Early
6 Childhood is facing. But, we plan to be in close
7 conversations, uh, this program year to see that as
8 many children are connected to mandated federal....
9 to the mandated required special education services.

10 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: So, we are not currently
11 meeting the mandate. There is a gap in the number of
12 special education providers to be able to meet the
13 mandate. And the 15 percent PEG program implements a
14 hiring freeze. And, so, with that in mind, I
15 don't... the math ain't mathing. I don't know how
16 we ever meet that need if we are not able to hire.

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Yes. So, I will refer
18 to my colleagues at Public Schools. And I think
19 their Special Education plan has to be articulated
20 through what their approach is. But, we are happy to
21 ,you know, convene and have conversations with them
22 about that.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: And I think there are so many
24 aspects of the Blueprint that sound great, but when
25 connected with a 15 percent PEG, uh, the Blueprint

2 becomes an aspirational memo and not much more than
3 that. And it is a real concern. I don't know how
4 any of those goals are actualized under that
5 environment.

6 But, keeping with making sure that we are
7 providing for our students maybe need Special
8 Education Classes, last December, the Mayor held a
9 press conference and announced that he was
10 guaranteeing that there would be a preschool Special
11 Education Class seat for ever preschooler with a
12 disability who needs one in spring 2023. Again, we
13 did mention that the federal law requires that, but
14 in spring 2023, the Public School Leadership
15 testified that there were still hundreds of children
16 waiting for seats. That was ,you know, I will
17 acknowledge that it was fewer than the year before.
18 I just want... I guess I am asking you the same
19 question twice, I just don't know how we get it done
20 without more folks.

21 I will kind of push ahead again, because I do
22 want to get to public testimony. But, the last story
23 I would love to be able to cover is just language
24 justice. Right, like if a child only speaks
25 Mandarin, but their closest child care center doesn't

2 have a Mandarin speaking staff, is it the City's
3 responsibility to add an extra staff member to that
4 facility, or is the family's responsibility to find a
5 different day care center? You talked about this a
6 little bit using different examples, but are, again,
7 doing what we set out to do if then a parent has to
8 travel an hour out of the way - 45 minutes out of the
9 way - to drop their kid, and the strain that that
10 puts on the family in a lot of different ways.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: One of the things that
12 I think community based organizations in particular
13 do so well is being culturally responsive to the
14 needs of the families that are engaged and enrolled
15 in their centers. And one of those components is
16 language access, and feeling welcomed in a space, and
17 having their children cared for and developed in the
18 language that they understand and are familiar with.
19 Community based organizations are one of the pillars
20 of how they approach the work. So, I am really happy
21 to say that it really is... It is reflected
22 currently in how CBOs approach early childhood work
23 currently.

24 In terms of supporting folks that are coming
25 outside of neighborhoods that may not have that, it

2 is definitely a conversation that we need to explore
3 in partnership with New York City Public Schools,
4 because it is a new need. And when you have a new
5 need, to your point, it's, like, well how are we
6 going to fund support and resource that new need?
7 So, I definitely think it is conversation that is
8 nuanced and needs to be in partnership with Public
9 Schools. And I would suggest looking at CBOs and
10 kind of taking their expertise and approach to the
11 work that they have doing in that respect for so many
12 years, and they do it so well. So, that is my
13 suggestion.

14 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Thank you. Those are my
15 questions. I want to thank you all for coming. I am
16 looking forward to followup on some of the
17 outstanding information. I also just feel the need
18 to say that ,you know, I have mentioned... we have
19 mentioned the PEGs over and over again, but don't
20 want to view that in a vacuum. Right? It is... We
21 are not saying, well, we can't do these things,
22 because of the PEGs, and, so, therefore, we shouldn't
23 do it. But, actually, saying quite the opposite.
24 That this is a new deal moment. And I have said the
25 statistics up top, you have said it as well,

2 universal child care is critical the economic
3 recovery and economic growth of our city. And, it is
4 much, much more likely to have the kinds of effects
5 we need in the City in terms of economics and people
6 being able to provide for themselves and their
7 families. And ,you know, PEGs and austerity is not
8 going to get us there. It is going to put us into a
9 deeper hole. And what is going to is it is going to
10 deteriorate city government infrastructure, Social
11 Service Administration infrastructure, so much that
12 all that is left is the privatization of those
13 services, which we know will then just widen wealth
14 gaps and push more people out of the middle class
15 into poverty. And it is an ongoing cycle. So, we
16 see this as a really critical part of the solution in
17 advancing our city forward and making sure that
18 everybody has the support that they need. And we are
19 looking forward to continuing the collaboration with
20 you all on that, thank you.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Thank you, looking
22 forward to continued collaboration as well, thank you
23 for this morning, thank you to the team, and thank
24 you to the audience. Tova is going to stick around,
25 yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Oh, wonderful, thank you.

3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAIGE: Thank you, thank you,
4 everybody.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: [SPEAKING FOREIGN
6 LANGUAGE]

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair, and thank
8 you very much, members of the Administration.

9 We will now hear testimony from the public. I
10 would like to remind everyone that I will call up
11 individuals in panels, and all testimony will be
12 limited to three minutes.

13 I would like to note that written testimony,
14 which will be reviewed in full by committee staff,
15 may be submitted to the record up to 72 hours after
16 the close of this hearing by emailing into to
17 testimony@council.nyc.gov. And a reminder, again, if
18 you are in person but have not signed up already,
19 please go to the Sergeant At Arms at the back of the
20 room to sign a witness slip, so that we can call you
21 to testify.

22 The first panel, we will actually call up a
23 representative from The Brooklyn Borough President's
24 Office, Hannah May-Powers.

2 HANNAH MAY-POWERS: Good morning, Chair Cabán,
3 thank you for holding this hearing today. My name
4 is Hannah May-Powers, and I am the Health and
5 Safety Policy Analyst at the Office of Brooklyn
6 Borough President Antonio Reynoso. I'm here today
7 because this issue is very important to the Borough
8 President, as it is for the thousands of families
9 with children in our borough. One of Borough
10 President Reynoso's highest priorities for his time
11 in office is the improvement of maternal health in
12 Brooklyn. Today Black mothers are 9.4 times more
13 likely to die during or in the year after
14 childbirth than their white counterparts. A
15 significant contributor to this unacceptable
16 statistic is the lack of access to affordable pre-
17 and post-part of healthcare and mental health care
18 services.

19 So, what does this have to do with child care?
20 Multiple studies have shown that pregnant and
21 postpartum mothers in America are experiencing dire
22 financial stress. This is in part due to the costs
23 associated with prenatal care, delivery, and post-
24 natal care. Pregnant women are also at a higher risk
25 of experiencing domestic violence and homelessness,

2 which can leave them with a few resources following
3 childbirth. Without adequate childcare support, they
4 are unable to secure work that would help bring
5 financial stability and the appropriate perinatal
6 resources. In a study from The University of Michigan
7 in 2021, more than a half of new mothers studied
8 reported experiencing financial stress and having
9 difficulty affording needed child and healthcare.
10 These challenges lead to an unending cycle between
11 financial stress and postpartum mental and physical
12 health issues such as substance use disorders,
13 depression, and hypertension.

14 Mothers' financial stress also affects children
15 and can contribute to malnutrition, poor academic
16 performance, increased anxiety, and behavioral
17 issues. For unborn babies, it may even mean
18 additional health complications. A study from BMC
19 Public Health earlier this year, showed a direct
20 correlation between financial stress of the mother
21 and adverse birth outcomes such as earlier
22 gestational age and low birthweight. Between 2015 and
23 2019 in the United States, at least one-third of
24 mothers had a second birth within 36 months of the
25 first birth. Without adequate childcare during the

2 pivotal moment between the first and second births,
3 many of these families would be left in a more
4 distressed financial state, which in turn affects the
5 health of both children.

6 There's no question that the cost of childcare
7 contributes to financial stress, especially in New
8 York City, where the cost of good quality childcare
9 for infants can exceed \$25,000 per year. This is
10 particularly acute for a new mothers -- according to
11 The Center For American Progress the average cost of
12 center-based childcare in New York is approximately
13 80 percent higher for infants than it is for four-
14 year-old preschoolers.

15 It is no wonder that, according to The City (the
16 publication) in 2021, 41 percent of 25 to 54-year-old
17 women living with children in New York City were not
18 working, compared with just 24 percent of men.

19 I want to acknowledge that we are having
20 difficult financial times, and this will obviously be
21 a costly program. However, or city's own Economic
22 Development Corporation estimated in 2021 [TIMER
23 CHIMES] that "New York City parents were leaving the
24 private workforce or shifting from full-time to part-
25 time would result in a loss of 250,000 person years

2 of employment, \$60 billion in real output, and \$18.5
3 billion in disposable personal income over the next
4 five years." Essentially, we can't afford *not* to do
5 this. And, of course, with the employment concerns,
6 Black and brown mothers are disproportionately
7 affected by this issue.

8 Thank you to Council Member Gutiérrez for putting
9 forward this bold legislation that would bring
10 universal child care to our city, and for also
11 ensuring fair wages for the cities child care
12 workforce are part of this effort. Both policies are
13 long overdue and will be transformative for New
14 Yorkers. Borough President Reynoso is looking forward
15 to continuing work with the Council on behalf of New
16 York City's families and childcare workers to move
17 this proposal forward. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Thank you so much.

20 For the second panel, I will call up Laura Gomez,
21 Rebecca Charles, and Steven Morales. You may begin
22 when ready.

23 LAURA GOMEZ: Good afternoon, my name is Laura
24 Gomez, and I am the Associate Director of Social Work
25 in the Family Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender

2 Services (BDS). Thank you to the Committee on Women
3 and Gender Equity and Chair Caban for holding this
4 important hearing today on free universal childcare.

5 BDS provides criminal defense, family defense,
6 immigration, and civil legal services for
7 approximately 22,000 people every year.

8 Our Family Defense Practice is the primary
9 provider of legal representation for parents in child
10 abuse and negligent cases in Brooklyn. A lack of
11 affordable and accessible child care that is open the
12 hours that parents need to work is a major drive of
13 poor families into the family regulation system.
14 Like the criminal legal system, race and poverty are
15 defining characteristics of the family regulation
16 system. Poor communities and communities of color
17 are disproportionately impacted by the state's family
18 regulation system. Access to free, high quality
19 child care will help families stay together.

20 We represent many parents in Article 10 cases in
21 Family Court where lack child care is at the heart of
22 their cases. I will share just one example: When BDS
23 first began to working with Ms. C, she was facing the
24 removal of her son to the foster system. In spite of
25 ACS' efforts to remove her six-week-old son from her

2 care, Ms. C persisted and fought to keep her son in
3 care. After many months of complying with ACS's
4 supervision over her family and engaging in court
5 ordered classes, Ms. C was able to secure a
6 conditional dismissal of her family court case.

7 Despite ACS's involvement with Ms. C's family for
8 months, Ms. C struggled to secure the affordable and
9 flexible childcare she needed for her family. As a
10 single working mother with a limited family and
11 community support network, ACS sought to remove her
12 son a second time alleging that she was leaving her
13 son with allegedly inappropriate or unapproved care
14 givers. While Ms. C and her legal team were again
15 able to keep her son in her care, ACS continued to
16 delay providing her with a child care voucher. After
17 eight months and an incredible amount advocacy by Ms.
18 C and her legal team, she finally received a day care
19 voucher, but she has still continued to struggle to
20 find an eligible provider.

21 Ms. C's case illustrates that even with ACS and
22 family court involvement, families struggle to access
23 the child care they need, which might have prevented
24 their ACS case in the first place. Low-income
25 families should not have to be under ACS supervision

2 and surveillance to access necessary child care.

3 Currently, low-income and marginalized families are

4 often forced to access childcare through the

5 Administration for Children's Services (ACS).

6 Families experiencing oversurveillance and punishment

7 for family policing systems should be able to access

8 vital resources without fear or interacting with

9 systems that may cause them harm.

10 BDS supports efforts to make child care free for

11 low-income New Yorkers regardless of immigration

12 status. Any program to child care access must

13 include outreach strategies to under resourced

14 communities to ensure that they can access high

15 quality child care [TIMER CHIMES]. It is critical

16 that provisions of child care be available in

17 neighborhoods where low-income people live and work,

18 and be accessible to families who may be juggling

19 many other bureaucratic systems to accessing housing,

20 schooling, insurance and other benefits. Thank you

21 for your time, and I welcome any questions.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Thank you.

23 REBECCA CHARLES: Hello, I am Rebecca Charles from

24 the Citizens' Committee for Children. I would like to

25 thank Chair Cabán and all members of the Committee

2 for holding today's important hearing on improving
3 our city's child care system.

4 We applaud City leaders, like yourselves, for
5 taking a step in the right direction in the most
6 recent budget by baselining \$15 million for Extended
7 Early Childhood Education to convert 3-K school-day,
8 school-year seats to extended-day, extended-year
9 seats, as well as providing \$16 million to continue
10 providing childcare services to undocumented families
11 through Promise NYC. And I know that you two were
12 big champions on that.

13 Unfortunately, the past few years have revealed
14 serious and longstanding problems within the ECE
15 system that have led to service instability and
16 inaccessibility -- and you have touched on some of
17 those today in your questions.

18 CCC in partnership with the Campaign for Children
19 put forth the following policy recommendations to
20 move our city toward system stabilization: Advance
21 the next stage of salary parity for center based
22 workforce; support decentralized enrollment options;
23 build a robust culturally and linguistically
24 supportive education and outreach effort at the
25 community level; offer greater flexibility in center-

2 based and home-based providers' contracts to increase
3 their ability to respond to emerging community needs;
4 and convert school-day, school-year seats to
5 extended-day, year-round options.

6 This brings me to Introduction 941 sponsored by
7 Council Member Gutiérrez. CCC has long been a
8 champion of child care access for all New York
9 children and families, and we look forward to
10 partnering with you and other City leaders to achieve
11 this goal of universal access.

12 The path to universal childcare *must* include an
13 operational approach that will address the many
14 issues that currently exist within the City's ECE
15 system - including delayed payments to providers,
16 unfilled seats, and centralized enrollment.

17 Bringing stability to the system is the first
18 step to building a truly universal system. It is
19 also crucial to secure sustainable funding through a
20 combination of city, state, and federal resources.
21 And an outline of the current funding breakdown for
22 the City ECE system will be provided in my written
23 testimony.

24 CCC stands ready to partner with you, Council
25 Member Gutiérrez, [TIMER CHIMES] in advocating for

2 greater State and Federal investments and city tax
3 levy funding for Early Care and Education to make
4 universal care a reality.

5 And, finally, we want to thank Council Member
6 Menin for filing her resolution to pass Senate Bill
7 4924/Assembly Bill 1303, which we feel will take
8 important steps toward removing bureaucratic hurdles
9 that families face when trying to access care.

10 Thank you for this time to testify.

11 STEVEN MORALES: Chair Cabán -- and Honorary
12 Chair, Gutierrez, my name is Steven Morales, and I am
13 the New York Policy Director at All Our Kin. All Our
14 Kin is a nonprofit organization, that trains,
15 supports, and sustains home-based family child care
16 educators in New York City. We are based in the
17 Bronx, and we work with nearly 300 family child care
18 educators with a capacity to care for over 4,000
19 children citywide.

20 I want to start by extending my appreciation to
21 Council Members Gutierrez and Riley, this entire
22 committee, and all of the cosponsors for your
23 consideration of this bold step for children and
24 families across our City. We are also excited that
25 the Administration is taking the first step called

2 for in this legislation by creating and hiring a
3 Director for the new Mayor's Office of Childcare and
4 Early Education - who we heard from earlier today.
5 We know that there's much to do to make child care
6 access a reality, and we look forward to doing that
7 work together.

8 Along those lines, I also want to give some
9 insight to reality facing children, families, and
10 providers.

11 As part of my job, I spend time talking with
12 family childcare educators who work with All Our Kin.
13 And, consistently, I hear stories from them about
14 families in their programs and communities who are
15 unable to afford childcare out-of-pocket, and who
16 cannot access the child care assistance that they
17 need. I hear about providers who help families in
18 their programs apply for child care vouchers, who
19 then wait months before hearing back from the City
20 about their eligibility. I hear stories about parents
21 who seem to meet every eligibility criteria to
22 receive a voucher that are denied for unclear reasons
23 or are told that they applied to the wrong program
24 and need to start again with a different agency.

2 When are stabilized child care system serves less
3 than 20 percent of eligible children in our city, and
4 parents continue to struggle, we must understand that
5 the system is fundamentally broken. And that's not to
6 mention the thousands of families outside of the
7 subsidy system who struggle to pay for child care. At
8 the end of the day, this leaves children without
9 access to the high quality care they need, and leaves
10 providers without the essential revenue they need to
11 continue serving their communities.

12 That is why this bill and this conversation today
13 are so important. And there are several elements of
14 this bill that I want to highlight, because they are
15 particularly important in acknowledging the full
16 scope of this City's child care needs.

17 First and foremost, we celebrate the bill's call
18 for child care access for all families with children
19 aged six weeks to five years, including specifically
20 those who are undocumented. Child care is necessary
21 for everyone who works a 9 to 5 job -- and for the
22 people who work day and night to keep our city
23 running.

2 We also celebrate this bill's thoughtful
3 inclusion of family child care in building a better
4 system that meets the needs of all families.

5 And critically important is the acknowledgment in
6 this bill that care work is offered by people, people
7 who need to be compensated, who need to be healthy,
8 who need to be able to work each day or night. We
9 applaud this bills requirement [TIMER CHIMES] to pay
10 child care providers based on their real operating
11 costs, not on any arbitrary grants amounts or
12 metrics.

13 And, we also applied this bill's call for
14 healthcare and retirement benefits for educators. And
15 importantly, this includes those who lead and teach
16 in childcare centers, and those who lead and teach in
17 homebase family care.

18 And we also applaud this bill's call for health care
19 and retirement benefits for educators -- And
20 importantly, this includes those who lead and teach in
21 childcare centers and those who lead and teach in
22 homebase family care.

23 I will wrap up in just a second, I promise.

24 Finally, this bill also requires the City to
25 evaluate our child care system consistently, which

2 is so important for being able to improve and build
3 systems that work families.

4 So, we know we need the funding to make this
5 happen. And, so, we are excited to work together,
6 and we hope the Administration and the Council work
7 together to make that funding happen for our city.

8 And, just, again, I want to thank you all, All
9 Our Kin -- our staff, and our team -- are here to
10 help work through details and support in this
11 process. Thank you very much.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much.

14 For our next panel, I will call up Hannah Tager
15 and Paula Inhargue. You may begin when ready.

16 PAULA INHARGUE: Thank you, Chair Cabán and
17 Council Member Gutiérrez, for the opportunity to
18 testify on the child care crisis in New York City
19 today.

20 My name is Paula Inhargue, and I am a Policy
21 Analyst at United Neighborhood Houses. UNH is a
22 policy and social change organization representing
23 neighborhoods settlement houses that reach 770,000
24 New Yorkers from all walks of life and that serves
25 over 12,000 children in their ECE programs.

2 UNH supports the goals of Introduction 941. We
3 recognize the importance of value of Early Childhood
4 Education for both young children and their
5 caregivers. We thank Council Member Gutiérrez for
6 her leadership in developing this legislation in
7 partnership with community stakeholders.

8 We hope that Introduction 941 is the start of a
9 process and conversation for New York City to achieve
10 a universal child care system for children ages zero
11 to five. At the same time, we know that they system
12 needs significant support before expansion can be
13 successfully advanced. If we do not attend to the
14 underlying issues facing the sector, the system's
15 foundation will not stable enough to continue moving
16 forward. Therefore, in addition to Introduction 941,
17 UNH has identified a number of actions the City can
18 take to help reach the shared goal of universal child
19 care:

20 First, ensure that the DOE contracts with and
21 pays early childhood providers in a timely manner.
22 Early childhood education providers who contract with
23 DOE have experienced significantly delayed contract
24 reimbursements for the last two fiscal years. Despite
25 the persistent attention to this issue over the last

2 year, meaningful progress has not been made across
3 the board for CBOs, and providers still report
4 challenges with prompt payment from the DOE. This is
5 unacceptable and is a cycle we must get out if we are
6 going to stabilize the system.

7 Second, complete the path to salary parity for
8 the early childhood education workforce. UNH
9 settlement house members report that the main
10 obstacle for hiring and retaining staff in early
11 childhood education programs is a low salary, which
12 are required due to low contract values. Labor
13 negotiations between the City, DC 37, and the Day
14 Care Council of New York are underway, and we are
15 hopeful that they will result in a contract that
16 compensates CBO staff, including teachers and support
17 staff in the same way as their DOE counterparts. To
18 expand the early childhood education services that
19 New Yorkers need, we need to ensure that all
20 providers are able to offer competitive salaries and
21 wages to their staff - as staff are the underpinning
22 of programs.

23 My written testimony goes into more detail and
24 includes additional recommendations, including to
25 continue and expand the Promise NYC program; expand

2 to extended day/year programming; and ensure 3-K for
3 All continuity amid federal fiscal cliffs.

4 Thank you for your time.

5 HANNAH TAGER: Thank you to Chair Cabán and
6 Council Member Gutiérrez, thanks for having me. I am
7 a policy analyst, I work with Win, we are the
8 City's -- and the country's -- largest provider of
9 shelter and supportive housing for transitional
10 families experiencing homelessness. We have more
11 than 3,600 children in our shelters, and nearly half
12 our families have a child under the age of three. So
13 ,you know, for these families child care is not an
14 secondary issue, it is an instrumental part of their
15 independent living plans; it means that they can
16 work; it means that they can qualify for vouchers and
17 move out of shelter.

18 So, because of our private fundraising, we are
19 able to provide barrier-free onsite child care for
20 200 children annually, which is kind of similar to
21 universal child care model. It doesn't matter your
22 employment status; doesn't matter your documentation
23 status. It is super high quality, and we just
24 received a citywide distinction from The Department
25 of Health and Mental Hygiene, but we can only do this

2 for a fraction of our families. The demand is much
3 higher than the spaces we have, because DHS does not
4 provide funding for child care in shelter, and the
5 rest of families on community based child care. We
6 work with awesome providers, they are excellent, we
7 build relationships with them. And that is not the
8 issue. The issue comes when we have families
9 applying for vouchers, and there are eligibility
10 barriers there and they hard to utilize, and there
11 are delays.

12 So, usually upon arriving at our shelter, thanks
13 to City law, most of our families will be immediately
14 eligible for an HRA voucher, an ACS voucher, or a
15 Promise NYC voucher. For HRA vouchers, though, there
16 is still that income eligibility requirement. And
17 even if a family has a job offer, there is not enough
18 time between when they get that offer letter and when
19 the job starts. So, realistically our families
20 cannot really utilize HRA vouchers without having to
21 ask employers to push the start date, which is not
22 really acceptable.

23 ASH vouchers, for a long time, were a great
24 option, and we are so happy that those are accessible
25 for families regardless of their income if they are

2 living in transitional housing. However, in the last
3 six months, we have faced extremely long wait times.
4 So, just as an example, as of September 13th, one of
5 our families has been waiting July for an ASC voucher
6 -- even though they are deemed eligible and they get
7 that eligibility letter, they don't actually get the
8 voucher for a long time. And from my experience, for
9 many years I have helped families apply for child
10 care, it seems that there is one single staff member
11 at ACS issuing those vouchers -- for all families in
12 transitional housing. She is lovely, but she needs
13 help, right?

14 So, finally, Promise NYC could be a huge benefit
15 for our families. Nearly one third of the families
16 that we serve are immigrants, so we are really
17 excited about this resource, but there are not enough
18 spots. So, there are 600+ spots right now, it seems
19 like [INAUDIBLE] in the City's budget, there is
20 budgeting for 600 spots and no more. So, we, again,
21 have a family, [TIMER CHIMES] we are really excited
22 in July applied, but still waiting as of last week.

23 So, just some solutions we are excited about,
24 yes, to your legislation, we are so excited to work
25 with you on that. We are here if you want to talk

2 about making accommodations for families in
3 transitional housing. Also, we are really excited
4 about the Resolution sponsored by Council Member
5 Julie Menin, because that will mean, again, that we
6 get rid of that income restriction and requirement
7 for families.

8 One other thing as a suggestion, is to
9 automatically screen families for a voucher when they
10 arrive at pass. So, that... That is part of an
11 independent living plan. It is an important as
12 getting mental health care, case management, social
13 work, et cetera. And there is no reason a family
14 needs to wait until they are in shelters. So, we
15 would love to add that to the holistic model at pass.
16 But we are happy to follow up with more suggestions
17 that we have. There are some in my written
18 testimony. And, we just want to say that the child
19 care crisis is part of the homelessness crisis, and
20 not providing affordable child care could be the
21 difference between ,you know, contending with this
22 current crisis we have and ending the generational
23 cycle of homelessness, so this is very important
24 Thank you for your time.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, for the next panel,
3 I will call up Maria Viera and Gregory Brender.

4 GREGORY BENDER: Hi Chair Cabán, Council Member
5 Gutiérrez, thank you so much for holding this
6 important hearing, for your great questions, and all
7 you are doing to advocate for early childhood. I
8 also want to particularly thank Council Member
9 Gutiérrez for not just in this hearing, but ,you
10 know, into the run up to all of this and in the
11 creation of the bill, really engaging early childhood
12 providers. Because, as we move towards universal
13 child care, the people who provide child care are so
14 important to it, so I really want to thank you for
15 being so inclusive of the early childhood community
16 in pulling this together.

17 I just wanted to talk about of the key things
18 that we see as important steps in the road to
19 universal child care. It will probably not surprise
20 you to say the first thing is to continue the
21 unfinished work of salary parity. The teachers,
22 directors, staff, providers who are in community
23 based child care programs are paid significantly less
24 than those in public schools. And it is not a
25 surprise to see things like 90 percent of child care

2 centers in New York State are being short staffed.
3 And there are 776 classrooms throughout the state
4 that are closed, because programs cannot maintain
5 their staff. So, we are urging the City to make the
6 investments to ensure that not only are providers
7 paid a fair and thriving wage, but that they are at
8 parity with their counterparts in the public schools,
9 so that we can invest in the people who are caring
10 for our youngest children at the period of the
11 greatest brain development.

12 We also are urging the City to move towards
13 community based enrollment. Community based
14 organizations have strong and deep connections of the
15 communities that they serve, and a lot of families
16 are finding it difficult to navigate the DOE central
17 enrollment system. And we want to have a hybrid
18 system where families can come to the providers who
19 they know and trust and enroll through them, uh, find
20 those programs that meet their needs.

21 We also hope to see action to move the City to
22 ensure that providers are paid on time and in full.
23 Late payments have been a crisis for the early
24 childhood providers. There are staff members who are
25 not getting paid. They are home-based providers who

2 are scraping by just to keep their doors open. There
3 are centers that are considering, uh, closing, and
4 some that have had to close due to late payments and
5 underpayments from the City. So, on the path to
6 universal childcare, we really need these actions to
7 take place to stabilize the systems as is and grow to
8 the system that we all share the vision of a city
9 where it doesn't matter what your zip code is, uh,
10 what your parents' income is, all children have
11 access to the highest quality early childhood
12 education.

13 Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify
14 and for all that you are doing to fight for child
15 care in New York City.

16 MARIA VIERA: Can you hear me? Excellent. Good
17 morning, my name is Maria Viera, I am Vice President
18 of Community Affairs at RiseBoro Community
19 Partnership. I am going to speak about lived
20 experience -- no stats.

21 Thirty-five years ago, I was forced to leave my
22 job as my child care expenses were higher than my
23 salary at the time. I suffered the detriment of one
24 income for a family of four, soon to be five.

25 Thirty-five years later, I am here to speak about a

1 problem that, 35 years later, still remains unsolved.
2 Families are still forced into having to choose
3 between working or being slighted of an opportunity
4 for economic mobility, because of lack of access to
5 affordable child care. I saw my daughter making a
6 career switch, because she had to find a job that
7 worked in shifts, so that she and her husband could
8 alternative babysitting until their children became
9 of school age. She was lucky, because that is not
10 the case with the majority. I work in an
11 organization that employs over 700 people. The story
12 that I just shared, I hear time and time and time
13 again from my colleagues. My colleague, here, Jasmine
14 (phonetic), she is speaker shy, she is one of those
15 statistics. I have to say that it should not be so
16 hard --it shouldn't be so hard, in the greatest city
17 in the world, to provide access to affordable
18 housing child care to everybody - everyone - with no
19 exclusion.
20

21 And, that, that is my story. Thank you, Chair
22 Cabán, thank you Council Member Riley, Council Member
23 Gutiérrez, my favorite of the two, because she's
24 [INAUDIBLE] no bias, no bias, for championing
25 Introduction 941. This is a critical need. We should

2 not even have this discussion. This should be just
3 signed off on. But, here are today, and I will
4 continue to share my story as often and as loud as
5 necessary. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Thank you, and I also want to
7 thank Jasmine for being here. Thank you for joining
8 us.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much. I also
10 want to acknowledge that we had an advance
11 registration by an individual named Nigel Ellison if
12 they are in the room?

13 Okay, if not, that concludes the in person
14 portion of our public testimony.

15 We will now move to remote testimony. If you are
16 testifying remotely, once your name is called a
17 member of our staff will unmute you, and you may
18 begin once the Sergeant At Arms sets the clock and
19 cues you.

20 The first three people that we will hear from
21 Zoom will include Queen Arsem-O'Malley, Betty Baez,
22 and Leurys Nunez.

23 Queen Arsem-O'Malley, you may unmute.

24 QUEEN ARSEM-O'MALLEY: Hi good morning, good
25 afternoon, can everyone hear me?

2 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Yes.

3 QUEEN ARSEM-O'MALLEY: Okay, great, thank you to
4 the Council for listening to testimony on this issue.
5 My name is Queen Arsem-O'Malley, and I live in
6 Brooklyn, and since I became a mom almost three years
7 ago, the biggest challenge to my family staying in
8 New York has been finding and affording child care.
9 This bill is crucial to finding a way forward for
10 working parents and the underpaid child care
11 providers in New York. The current child care system
12 means that everyone, parents and providers alike, are
13 struggling to make ends meet. And universal child
14 care would alleviate so much of the burden that
15 parents and providers are shouldering, and it would
16 make New York more livable for families. When my
17 daughter was in day care, I borrowed money, spent my
18 savings to afford care, and still had gaps in child
19 care. I cobbled together patchwork systems of
20 friends, family, took time off work, cared for my
21 child while working from home. It was not sustainable
22 for my family, even with a salary above the New York
23 City average and the flexibility that my job offers
24 and all of the other advantages that many of my
25 fellow working parents don't have -- including the

2 ability to testify here today. I know many personally
3 many people who wanted to be able to testify couldn't
4 because they don't have child care and are trying to
5 juggle work and are caring for their children at home
6 right now. And safe and affordable child care is
7 far less attainable for thousands of families across
8 New York.

9 My daughter is now attending a 3-K program, a
10 program that the City successfully created to begin
11 addressing these early child care concerns.

12 Council Member Gutiérrez discussed this earlier
13 in the hearing, but it does bear repeating that if my
14 family had not gotten a spot in 3-K, we would not
15 have been able to afford care, and we would have left
16 the city. It doesn't have to be like this for
17 working parents, and I urge The City Council to do
18 everything in its power, and I thank it for
19 everything it has already doing to work towards
20 universal child care in the City. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Betty Baez, you may begin once
22 you are unmuted and the sergeant cues you.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has started.

24 BETTY BAEZ MELO: Thank you for the opportunity
25 to discuss Introduction 941 and the importance of

2 early childhood education and care in New York City.
3 My name is Betty Baez Melo, and I am an attorney and
4 Director of the Early Childhood Education Project at
5 Advocates for Children of New York (AFC).

6 We believe that every child should have access to
7 high-quality early childhood care and education
8 programs. As such, we support the vision of this
9 bill. In order to create a truly universal child care
10 system, we want to stress the importance of ensuring
11 that any child care plan give significant attention
12 to marginalized populations that are often
13 overlooked, including children with disabilities,
14 children from immigrant families, and children in
15 temporary housing.

16 My written testimony outlines some of the
17 concerns and barriers that these families face. We
18 appreciate that the bill includes several provisions
19 for addressing the disparities faced by these
20 populations. At the same time, given the extent of
21 the barriers, we encourage you to strengthen the bill
22 so that the responsibilities of the office of child
23 care include the following:

24 Ensuring that children with developmental delays
25 or disabilities have access to their mandated Early

2 Intervention and preschool special education services
3 at their child care programs, so that they can
4 participate in inclusive programs with their peers;
5 coordinating with the Department of Education to
6 ensure that there is a preschool special education
7 classroom seat available for every child who needs
8 one so that children with significant disabilities
9 can receive the intensive special education services
10 they need; ensure that children have access to early
11 childhood care and education programs regardless of
12 their immigration status, including all Department of
13 Education Infant and toddler programs, and extended
14 day and year 3-K and Pre-K programs; ensuring that
15 the proposed education and outreach campaign
16 informing city residents about the availability of
17 child care is conducted in multiple languages and
18 across various platforms so that families who speak a
19 language other than English, families who have low
20 literacy, and families who do not have access to
21 online resources can all access information on child
22 care options; conducting an education and outreach
23 campaign specifically targeted at families with young
24 children living in shelters and assisting families
25 living in shelters with the application and

2 enrollment processes; facilitating interagency
3 collaboration and convenings with relevant agencies,
4 including the Department of Education, The Department
5 Of Homeless Services, The Human Resources
6 Administration, And The Administration For Children
7 Services to increase enrollment of children in
8 shelter in child care programs; and providing
9 additional support and funding to child care programs
10 as needed to support children with disabilities and
11 children who speak languages other than English.

12 Based on our experience working directly with
13 families, we believe that these recommendations would
14 help ensure that the expansion of early childhood
15 care and education is more equitable and inclusive of
16 the populations we serve.

17 I also want to flag that we are deeply concerned
18 that the City is currently using hundreds of millions
19 of dollars in temporary federal COVID-19 relief funds
20 to support 3-K and preschool special education – key
21 components of the City’s child care infrastructure.
22 This funding will be expiring next year and there is
23 not yet a plan for sustaining these programs.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

2 BETTY BAEZ MELO: The City Council must ensure
3 continued funding for 3-K, preschool special
4 education, and the wide range of other important
5 education programs funded with temporary federal
6 dollars that will be running dry in June. Thank you,
7 I am available to answer any questions.

8 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Thank you for your testimony,
9 thank you for the suggestions, but also for something
10 that I certainly failed to ask the Administration
11 about was in fact, you know, what was the plan when
12 those dollars, those federal dollars expire. So,
13 thank you for pointing that out.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Leurys Nunez, you
15 may unmute.

16 LEURYS NUNEZ: Good afternoon, my name is Leurys
17 Nunez, and I would like to thank the Council for
18 giving me this opportunity to be able to speak.

19 I am coming more from a standpoint of - my
20 daughter is six years old now, so the struggle of
21 child care was really more when she was younger. Now
22 it is a little bit easier for me, because of the
23 afterschool programs that they have and because my
24 job is or flexible. But, I remember having to call
25 out of work, have to take less time at work, and I

2 was already part-time, to be able to pick up my
3 daughter, because there were no programs or anybody
4 that could help me before she was able to be in the
5 afterschool programs. So, having this funding for
6 child care, especially for young parents, is
7 critical. A lot of these young parents don't have a
8 job to be able to afford the child care. And even
9 with the ACS vouchers, which really helped me a lot,
10 it was difficult for me to pay the \$15 a week and
11 continue to do so while I was just 16 at not having a
12 job. I remember having to save up \$5.00 [BACKGROUND
13 NOISE] [INAUDIBLE] give me to make it. So, I
14 honestly think that by the City doing this, it is
15 going to provide such a big help and relief to
16 parents, especially single parents. Thank you

17 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Thank you so much.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much. The next
19 three on Zoom who will be called to testify are
20 Musfika Moshahid, Jeremy Kaplan, and Ethan Heitner.

21 Musfika Moshahid, you may begin once you are
22 unmuted.

23 MUSFIKA MOSHAHID: Good afternoon Honorable
24 Chairwoman Tiffany Caban, all councilmembers, and
25 everyone present, thank you for the opportunity to

2 testify on such an important issue. My name is
3 Musfika Moshahid, my pronouns are she/her, and I am
4 the Muslim Women's Program Coordinator at the Muslim
5 Community Network (MCN), a nonprofit organization
6 here in New York City working to empower the Muslim
7 community through civic education and community
8 service.

9 Having access to child care can be an incredibly
10 empowering experience for women and individuals with
11 children, and we have seen that firsthand at MCN,
12 through our Muslim Women's Program and other
13 programming. Our Muslim Women's Program serves older
14 Muslim women who are usually mothers, and so we knew
15 it was important for us to provide child care during
16 our programs so that participants could enjoy the
17 program.

18 By providing childcare we have not only supported
19 our program participants, but we are also providing
20 work opportunities to undocumented and immigrant
21 women that we have hired to conduct child care. Many
22 women said it was the first time they saw an
23 organization take care of them in this way. And,
24 thanks to the child care that was available to them,
25 they were able to participate in the program and take

2 part in educational workshops ranging from intro to
3 civic engagement, voting, how to write to and reach
4 out to their councilmembers and representatives,
5 learning about their rights when it comes to hate
6 crime prevention, self-defense and more. Women are
7 also just able to enjoy being in community with other
8 Muslim women, forge friendships with each other, and
9 explore their identities outside of being a parent
10 and caretaker, all while having the ease of knowing
11 that their kids were being taken care of. Our
12 participants expressed that without the child care,
13 they otherwise would not have been able to have
14 participated.

15 We have now made it a priority for us as an
16 organization to provide childcare wherever possible
17 throughout our programming, because we have witnessed
18 firsthand effects it can have on participants and the
19 doors it can open for them.

20 We see there is a strong need for funding with
21 this work, and having access to child care allows
22 women, especially undocumented women, to focus on
23 fueling their studies, finding employment, or taking
24 part in opportunities that further their personal
25 development and joy. Many of our participants are

2 low-income immigrant women, and they have expressed
3 interest in finding employment, but struggle due to a
4 lack of access to child care. Our women are usually
5 Black women and women of color, and many of them are
6 undocumented. And lack of child care access is just
7 one more obstacle in a constantly changing job
8 market, which makes it hard for them to find
9 employment. Every women and parent deserves the
10 space to explore their potential, their interests,
11 and develop themselves while knowing their kids are
12 taken care of.

13 In general, child care, care taking, homemaking,
14 and other forms of domestic labor have long been
15 underappreciated and undervalued within our society.
16 We need to create a world women and parents can feel
17 included and cared for within our societies instead
18 of being treated as an afterthought. It is time we
19 also prioritize this work and move towards a future
20 where we can live in a society where child care and
21 other forms of domestic labor are seen as just as
22 important, necessary, and deserving of as much
23 compensation and investment as any other issue. My
24 hope is that one day we come to a place where child
25 care access and child care centers exist in all parts

2 of society and are the norm, standard, and
3 commonplace [TIMER CHIMES]. The legislation proposed
4 today would be the start of that. There is a dire
5 need for free child care and establishing an office
6 that would oversee free child care services, which
7 would be lifesaving to many. Removing barrier like
8 minimum hours and wage requirements would also open
9 these doors. Not only that but...

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 MUSFIKA MOSHAHID: by providing a business tax
12 credit for employer provided childcare would further
13 incentivize and encourage more employers to take part
14 in creating more accessible workplaces.

15 I urge the City Council to support in providing
16 people with better resources and funding for
17 accessible child care. Thank you ounce again, and MCN
18 commends the Committee on Women and Gender Equity
19 for holding this important hearing. Thank you so
20 much.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Jeremy Kaplan, you
22 may begin once you are unmuted.

23 JEREMY KAPLAN: Thank you for holding this. I am
24 just reporting live from not having child care,
25 taking care of my little one right now. And, uh, I

2 empathize a lot with hearing sort of from even
3 council members saying that bringing their children
4 to hearings and meetings and stuff like that. That
5 is such a common occurrence for so many parents. And
6 I think a lot of people have emphasized the economic
7 impact. I think what is important as a parent, and
8 to hear from so many parents and caregivers, is the
9 social emotional impact that this has on people, not
10 just the caregivers but also the children as well. I
11 have a five-year-old and a one-year-old, and the
12 enrichment and what my five-year-old has gotten from
13 3-K and 4-K, the emotional stability that they have
14 our household is much more stable because of having
15 3-K and 4-K. And, so, I think that's why this bill
16 is so necessary. For far too long, parents have had
17 to sort of just juggle, and juggle, and juggle
18 between work, between kids, and making all of these
19 hard choices that were making it too hard on people.
20 And I think especially this administration, Eric
21 Adams Administration, with this austerity and this
22 notion of cuts instead of investments, it is so
23 wrongheaded, because of the fact that we see that
24 ,you know, investments in child care it pays off not
25 just ,you know, in workforce development, but in

1 children's well-being and in families' well-being ..
2 It kills me to hear people talk about families being
3 broken apart, because basically we don't have child
4 care. We don't have stable child care. And
5 industrialized, well-off country, one of the
6 wealthiest cities in the world, should not be forcing
7 parents to constantly choose between really bad
8 options for what we have for child care to make ends
9 meet. And, so, I just think that it is past time, it
10 is decades and decades, we should have done this a
11 long time ago. And I think, also, I want to
12 emphasize, too, the importance of this program being
13 public, being part of public education, being a right
14 for people and the need for that -- and that this is
15 a universal program, and this all becomes under the
16 Board of Education, so that people see this as a
17 right and not as sort of a privilege or as something
18 that can be taken away. This should be part of ,you
19 know, public school from kindergarten to 12th grade
20 and seen as just a normal right for people, same
21 thing with this. So, I think we need to push this
22 forward. We need to call out the hypocrisy of this
23 administration for not funding this and talking
24 about...[CROSS-TALK]
25

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

3 JEREMY KAPLAN: [INAUDIBLE] austerity issues when
4 this is so shortsighted. Anyway, thank you so much,
5 and I appreciate everyone's other comments, thank
6 you.

7 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

9 Ethan Heitner, you may begin once unmuted.

10 ETHAN HEITNER: Hi, thank you, I'm sorry, I don't
11 have a camera to talk from. My name is Ethan
12 Heitner, thank you so much for giving me the
13 opportunity to testify. This story is not one of
14 desperate need, as we have heard so many times today,
15 because my family has been incredibly fortunate, and
16 we have seen that something other than the current
17 status quo is possible. My wife and I both work
18 fulltime. My son Ozzy (phonetic) was born in March
19 of 2018. In March of 2020, I was the office manager
20 of a community center in my neighborhood, and my wife
21 was an immigration attorney representing low-income
22 New Yorkers facing deportation. We brought Ozzy, at
23 that point, daily to a really lovely family run day
24 care in our neighborhood where he was taken care with
25 love and attention, and we felt grateful that we

2 could afford to pay what we needed to. In March of
3 2020, of course, his day care had to close, and we
4 tried as long as possible to continue to pay the
5 family who ran it, because we felt how unjust it was
6 that they would lose their entire income. I stopped
7 going to work even virtually, because there is not
8 much that an office manager can do over Zoom, and I
9 took care of my son fulltime while my wife continued
10 her very important work. In April, my employer
11 actually became an emergency child care center for
12 essential workers, and they called me to ask if I
13 could return work - so that I could be the onsite
14 staffer to help manage the daily needs of the ECC,
15 the Emergency Child Care Center. I told them that I
16 couldn't, because I had to take care of my son.
17 Fortunately, they told me that as staff member of an
18 ECC, I would qualify as an essential worker and could
19 in fact bring my son to the ECC. This opportunity
20 transformed my families' experience with the pandemic
21 profoundly, and we are still to this day grateful for
22 what we had -- it was a free, professional day care
23 run by qualified staff, with all of the COVID
24 precautions possible, because I could pick and drop
25 off my son, too, whenever I needed to be there for

2 work, no questions asked, with a hot lunch provided
3 every day. We were so lucky compared to the
4 experience of so many other families. And it also
5 showed me that if the City can do this for me, it can
6 do it for everyone. If we could provide this level
7 of service to people in the worst of the pandemic,
8 with very little time to organize logistics, but
9 still managing to pay workers fairly and promptly,
10 letting families attend for free, there is no reason
11 why we cannot do it now. We saw what was possible.
12 The current state of affairs, with families and day
13 care providers both crushed by costs and unable to
14 make ends meet, is not necessary. If we make child
15 care free for everyone, the bewildering and
16 burdensome patchwork of applications, vouchers, means
17 testing, online portals, qualifications,
18 administration that accompanies all of that can
19 vanish. And if it's not necessary to do this, that
20 means we are doing only by choice. So, I am one of
21 many families who is asking our legislators, and our
22 leaders, and those who have the power to change
23 things, to choose differently. Thank you

24 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, noting that we had
3 registration from a Deanna McLafferty and Daniel
4 Valdes for Zoom, if you are online, please raise your
5 hand.

6 And if there is anyone present in the room or on
7 Zoom that hasn't had the opportunity to testify,
8 please raise your hand.

9 Seeing no one else, I would like to note that
10 written testimony, which will be reviewed in full by
11 committee staff, may be submitted to the record for
12 up to 72 hours after the close of this hearing by
13 emailing it to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

14 Chair, we have concluded public testimony for
15 this hearing.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABÁN: Thank you. Thank you to the
17 folks who have been engaged not just in the advocacy
18 but in the hearing here today. I think one thing
19 that is abundantly clear from all of the testimony is
20 that access to universal child care is really
21 critical for a number of different reasons. It is
22 critical for the safety, health, and stability of New
23 York City families'; it is critical for our economy;
24 it is just plain critical. And one thing that we try
25 to do in this committee, as well as when we are

2 pursuing policy in general, when a problem is
3 identified and we are looking and seeking and putting
4 forth proposed solutions, asking the question of,
5 does this proposal leave anyone behind? And I think
6 the beautiful thing about Introduction 941, is that
7 it leaves no one behind. It captures everyone. So,
8 we are just looking forward to working with everyone
9 on making this a reality. And thank you all for
10 being here. And with that, this hearing is
11 concluded.

12 [GAVEL SOUND] [GAVELING OUT]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date October 18, 2023