



New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations
Committee on Immigration

Oversight Hearing: Arts and Cultural Organizations' Outreach into New York City Communities

December 13, 2023, 1:00PM – Council Chambers, City Hall

Testimony Presented by New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Deputy Commissioner Alton Murray

Good afternoon, Chair Ossé, and members of the committee. I am Alton Murray, Deputy Commissioner for the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, I am here to testify regarding today's topic: Arts and Cultural Organizations' Outreach into New York City Communities. I am joined by DCLA's general counsel, Lance Polivy, and our Assistant Commissioner for Program Services, Andrea Louie.

In New York City, art and culture are deeply woven into our communities. The energy, identity, and vibrancy of our neighborhoods are inseparable from the creative expression and cultural activity of the residents who live and work here. That's why DCLA support for New York's cultural community is grounded in a commitment to local programming and public engagement. We see the impact in our institutions opening their doors wide and actively engaging diverse audiences, and in organizations working in communities across the city, meeting New Yorkers where they are.

One of the primary ways that the agency supports NYC's vast cultural community is through The Cultural Development Fund, which provides funding to over 1,000 nonprofits each year. Administered through a peer-panel review process, the CDF centers public service in its guidelines. In fact, it's the single most important criteria for applications. Panelists are explicitly asked to weigh whether organizations provide programming "with consideration toward accessibility, affordability, and equity." Applications may demonstrate this in one or more of the following ways:

1. Explicit efforts to engage diverse audiences, such as programming a cross-cultural or culturally responsive project, or empowering historically underserved neighborhoods with resources.
2. Increased affordability through discount programs, scholarships, sliding scale prices, or other subsidies.
3. Integrating or implementing community input, a representative advisory committee, or other methods for community self-determination.
4. Expanded accessibility such as providing reasonable accommodations, producing multilingual programs or materials, offering transportation or mobile projects, or providing other methods of equitable access.

Through CDF, we also maintain close partnerships with the borough arts councils to help ensure that City funding reaches artists, collectives, and small organizations in every borough. In FY23, DCLA provided nearly

\$3 million for the five borough-specific arts funds, supporting hundreds of individual artists, collectives, and smaller nonprofits doing public-oriented arts programming across the city. We've seen Chair Ossé at a number of these celebrations marking this important investment in working artists, so we know that you've seen the vast diversity of programming that this critical source of funding supports.

As a result, the CDF invests in cultural programs across all artistic disciplines, fostering programs that, at their core promote, public engagement in every corner of New York City. Efforts to bring arts and culture to every community have been further advanced by our reforms to the CDF process which prioritize greater equity and increased investment in historically marginalized communities. Reforms included increasing minimum grant awards and expanding eligibility for multi-year awards to all grantees regardless of budget size. We also cast a wider net for panelists to include a broader range of cultural workers, board members, and artists.

Many members of the Council helped distribute our call for panelists among their constituents. Nobody knows your districts better than you, and we're grateful for your partnership. 47% of panelists were first timers this year, a sign that we're succeeding in attracting new talent into the process. CDF panel service is among the most critical ways for New Yorkers to help inform and shape our city's support for its cultural community. We look forward to your ongoing support and collaboration in this effort.

Through these reforms, last year we had a record number of applications - around 1,400 – and a record number of grantees: 1,070, including 125 new organizations. Reforms particularly benefitted smaller organizations and those led by or serving people of color.

Examples of cultural programs that received CDF support in the latest round of funding include:

- The Create Change Artist Development Program, which fosters connections between communities and artists, is the flagship initiative of Brooklyn's The Laundromat Project.
- Theatre Development Fund's Accessibility Programs make live theater accessible to guests with disabilities. They deliver open captioning and audio description for performances on and off Broadway and provide accessible seating, including accommodations for service animals. They also offer Autism Friendly Performances of Broadway shows. TAP for Students reaches K-12 students with vision/hearing loss through workshops in NYC schools and an accessible Broadway performance.
- At Universal Temple of the Arts' Staten Island JAZZ Festival, students, community members, and world-renowned artists participate in concerts and artist-led workshops to galvanize community participation in the festival. UTA also offers free jazz music assembly programs to schools across Staten Island.
- Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center in the Bronx provides low-cost classes in music and dance for students ages 3-24. They also offer public performances such as their Open House Street Festival, which brings the community together and features performances and classes by guest artists.
- The Asian American Arts Alliance has monthly Town Halls, which are a cornerstone for the Asian American creative community to promote creative projects, share resources, and find collaborators.

- Since 1965, the New York Philharmonic has presented free, outdoor performances featuring the full orchestra and a roster of world-class guest artists in parks in each borough. Concerts also showcase local talent with an emphasis placed on student composers, participating in the Philharmonic's educational programs.
- Van Cortlandt Park's programming serves its diverse Bronx community. In FY23, we supported the park's Barefoot Dancing series, featuring Bachata, Merengue, West African Drumming, Southwest Asian, and Mediterranean performances. They also served Bronx teens with their Urban Ecology Teen Internship.
- The Lewis Latimer House in Queens operates the LatimerNOW project, a community outreach and research project, connecting with community residents, schools, and organizational partners through memoir workshops and STEAM workshops for families and students, and bilingual tours of the house in English, Cantonese, and Mandarin.
- Cumbe in Brooklyn champions African and Diaspora culture as a vibrant legacy for people of African descent. Community engagement programming includes donation-based weekly classes for adults and creative movement classes for children. They develop and lead workshops, programs and performances in local schools, senior centers, and community-based organizations.

DCLA supports cultural and community engagement across all its funds and programs. We have worked with the 34 members of the Cultural Institutions Group for years as part of our far-reaching DEI efforts, partnering with institutions to foster a cultural workforce that better reflects NYC's diversity. A more diverse workforce, in turn, creates programming that better connects with audiences in our diverse city. The CreateNYC cultural plan further centered this work by requiring DEI plans for members of the CIG – making them among the first cultural institutions to adopt such plans in the country.

Public programming is central to the city's relationship with the 34 members of the Cultural Institutions Group. For example:

- Eight of the CIG members - including zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, natural history, and science museums - partner with the City Council and Department of Education on Urban Advantage, a tremendously impactful science education initiative that reaches tens of thousands of middle school students each year.
- At Snug Harbor Cultural Center, the New York Chinese Scholar's Garden hosts a series of seasonal festivals and experiential workshops that activate the Garden as a hub for intersectional cultural participation in Chinese and Chinese American traditions. Programs include the Autumn Moon Festival, Lunar New Year celebrations, brush and ink workshops, lantern-making workshops, tours, lectures, and other family activities.
- Carnegie Hall partners with NeON Arts, a program of the New York City Department of Probation, to integrate arts programming for young people into seven community-based probation centers located throughout the city.

- Through their Public Works program, the Public Theater works with partner organizations in all five boroughs and invites community members to take classes, participate in programming, attend performances, and join in the creation of ambitious works of participatory theater. Public Works deliberately blurs the line between professional artists and community members, creating theater that is of, by, and for the people.
- Through BAM's senior cinema, senior socials, and other dedicated programming, the organization works to make their campus as welcoming and accessible for older New Yorkers as possible.
- Queens Theatre's far-reaching Theatre for All initiative commits to more to fully reach artists and audience members with disabilities from within Queens and throughout New York City.
- Fostered through MoMA PS1's Homeroom – their dedicated exhibition space for activations by community partners – the institution presented an intergenerational storytelling project with Malikah, a global feminist grassroots collective committed to building safety and power through healing justice, self-defense, and financial literacy.
- The New York Botanical Garden's Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month celebration offered on-site and virtual programs to spotlight the important contributions and histories of the plants and people making up this diverse community—with educators, gardeners, and community partners.

DCLA's capital program supports new constructions, and equipment purchases for organizations of all shapes and sizes, ensuring that our city's cultural facilities remain world-class and accessible to all New Yorkers. In FY24, the city's capital program contributed over \$222 million to nearly 80 cultural capital projects across the five boroughs, including \$117 million from the mayor, \$79.3 million from the City Council, and \$26.5 million from the five borough presidents.

Our Materials for the Arts program is another major way that DCLA supports nonprofits, educators, and city agencies with public programming to engage New Yorkers across the city. MFTA's 4,700 members make up a huge community of public service providers rooted in cultural programming. MFTA collected 1.5 million pounds of donated material valued at over \$10 million and distributed it to members last year – free of charge, as always - making a real difference in the bottom line and programming possibilities for these organizations. In addition to serving thousands of people each year from its warehouse in Long Island City, MFTA has been making efforts to meet even more New Yorkers where they are. Earlier this year, they teamed up with the NYC Public Schools Arts Office and Snug Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island for a donation event that delivered supplies to dozens of local educators. This spring, we also launched "MFTA After Hours," a new initiative that keeps the warehouse open for evening shopping so that more DOE teachers can visit the warehouse once the school day ends. In all, over 10,000 students and 2,000 teachers and community-based educators were instructed by MFTA teaching artists last year.

MFTA also supplies groups aiming to help those most in need and combat inequality. MFTA has been a crucial source of supplies for city agencies and nonprofits working to support asylum seekers arriving in our city. This

week, the team at MFTA is also dropping off a donation of coats to The Shed for an event they are hosting on Saturday to support asylum seekers.

DCLA's Public Art unit, which commissions permanent public art and manages the Public Artists in Residence and City Canvas programs – also centers community engagement in its approach to creating public art. One recently commissioned artist is vanessa german, who will be creating a permanent artwork for the Shirley Chisholm rec center in East Flatbush. German is going to create the “Brooklyn Museum of Love and Wonder,” embarking on a series of community engagements that will directly shape the final artwork. Few, if any, other programs that commission permanent, public artwork engage in this level of community engagement, inviting residents into the process in meaningful ways that generate investment in the result. Percent for Art panels are another way we invite the public to participate the commissioning process. Panels include representatives of the community board, local leaders, and other members of relevant communities, giving them a seat at the table for decisions that have profound effects on our public realm.

NYC's cultural groups aren't isolated institutions. They are fundamental parts of NYC's communities. They are places of employment, enjoyment, and community connection. They are also community hubs that offer relief services, as we have seen after natural disasters, notably – the COVID-19 pandemic. DCLA's focus on fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in our cultural community and in our own programs is at its core an effort to ensure that the city's cultural community continues to reflect, connect with, and serve our city's diverse residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

American Museum of Natural History

Chair Ossé and distinguished members of the City Council Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Dohini Sompura, Director of Government Affairs, and I am providing testimony on behalf of The American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) at this hearing today.

Founded in 1869 by the State of New York, AMNH is one of 34 members of New York City's Cultural Institutions Group (CIG). CIGs are charged with maintaining some of the most important New York City owned cultural entities throughout the five boroughs and these institutions are vital economic engines that power tourism, employment, and commerce in addition to providing cultural, educational, and workforce development programming to New Yorkers.

As one of the largest cultural institutions in the City, AMNH understands the importance of having our programming accessible to all communities throughout the City. Community programming allows the Museum to extend its educational reach beyond traditional museum visitors and provides opportunities for individuals who may not have access or the resources to visit us. We strive to engage underrepresented communities to spark curiosity and encourage a lifelong interest in science and the natural world through various community and educational programs such as Discovery Days, Cool Culture, Culture Pass, Urban Advantage, Lang Science Program, and the Science Research and Mentoring Program.

Community Programs

Discovery Days

Since 2014, AMNH has been proud to partner with the New York City Council to offer families in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments opportunities to participate in the AMNH Discovery Days Program. The program was developed to serve communities who might not normally consider visiting or may feel disenfranchised to visit a museum due to a variety of social factors (costs, language barriers, physical/geographic access, and/or limited access to formal education). The program is designed for families from NYCHA developments to visit the Museum and interact with Museum scientists and educators; explore exhibition halls; and experience the ways in which the Museum is an educational resource. AMNH hosts eight Discovery Day sessions throughout the academic year, hosting as many as 100 individuals per session. Free transportation to and from the Museum, as well as a light breakfast are provided.

Each family also receives vouchers to encourage a return visit to the Museum with up to four family members. Vouchers have proven to encourage families to visit the Museum again and to use the tools and techniques they learned during Discovery Day to further explore the Museum on their own. In FY24 Speaker Adams graciously allocated \$100,000 to support this program.

Cool Culture

AMNH is one of several cultural institutions participating in Cool Culture, a program offering free general admission to participants at federally funded day care and Head Start programs and their families. Although general admission is already free to New York City residents, the Cool Culture program provides additional access to under-represented groups to institutions like ours with the goal of redistributing cultural resources, increasing cultural participation, building community, and addressing cultural equity. In FY23, 14,000 individuals accessed the Cool Culture Family Pass to visit AMNH.

Culture Pass

AMNH passes for free general admission plus access to the Museum's large-format film are available through the City's public libraries' Culture Pass program. Each pass is good for up to four family members. Half of all the passes are made available to libraries located in economically challenged zip codes. In FY23, 2,034 tickets were issued through this program with a 100 percent claim rate.

IDNYC

AMNH participates in IDNYC, the City's free municipal identification card regardless of immigration status. The Museum provides free one-year memberships for one adult and up to four children and the membership provides free general admission plus tickets to our giant-screen film. Over 90,000 free memberships have been distributed since the program began.

Educational Programming

Urban Advantage Program

The New York City public school system is the largest in the country, serving students primarily from black and brown communities. Urban Advantage (UA) leverages the resources of AMNH, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, New York Botanical Garden, New York Hall of Science, Queens Botanical Garden, Staten Island Zoological Society, and the Wildlife Conservation Society's

Bronx Zoo and New York Aquarium so that middle and elementary school children have access to qualified science teachers in addition to engaging them in science education and help them succeed on the 8th grade science assessment. It is important to note that in New York City, a teacher does not have to be trained or certified to teach science.

UA is baselined at \$6.5 million in NYC Public Schools' budget and the program is administered by AMNH. In FY23, 323 schools and 988 teachers participated in the program serving over 90,000 students. The program serves almost 50 percent of all NYC public schools and every Council District, with participating students reflecting the diversity of the City's school system. As a result of the UA program, about 127 more UA students per year achieve "proficient" on the Intermediate Level Science exam and aids in science teacher retention at school and district levels. The City created a network of qualified science teachers wanting to stay at their school or within their district.

Master of Arts in Teaching

The Museum's Master of Arts in Teaching Earth Science (MAT ESRP) trains Earth science teachers for high-needs public schools in New York City and beyond. Since the program's first cohort began in 2012, it has prepared 167 science teachers, reaching approximately 80,000 students. Close to 50 percent of Earth science teachers hired in NYC public schools between 2020 and 2021 are MAT ESRP graduates; and students of MAT ESRP teachers in NYC are outperforming students of non-MAT ESRP prepared teachers on the Earth Science Regents exam. Tuition is free for this program and graduates must commit to teaching at high-needs public schools for three years.

After School Programming

Science Research and Mentoring Program (SRMP)

The Science Research and Mentoring Program is an intensive two-year program for high school students to conduct original scientific research alongside Museum anthropologists, astrophysicists, earth and planetary scientists, and biologists. The first year consists of after-school classes in the relevant subject areas to train and prepare students for research placement. During the second year, qualified students are placed with research mentors at the Museum where they work on a research project after-school during the academic year. Each Science Research Mentoring Program includes a summer session where students can hone

their skills and explore their research interests. AMNH typically serves about 60 students a year through this program.

Lang Science Program

The Lang Science Program is a six-year educational relationship with the Museum that begins with students in 6th grade and where each team is engaged in an in-depth exploration of topics relating to the study of biology and biodiversity, physical science, and anthropology through hands-on exploration, behind-the-scenes adventures, field trips, and research. The goal of this program is to nurture students' interests in science.

The Lang Program's tuition is scaled to family size and income, determined by New York City affordable housing eligibility. Low-income families receive free tuition, while middle-income families pay reduced tuition. Currently, the Lang Science Program has 118 students, with 50 percent of students receiving free tuition, and 20 percent receiving reduced tuition. In Fiscal 2022, participants of the program were from 38 Council Districts and representation includes 35 percent Hispanic/LatinX, 19 percent Black, and 58 percent Female. AMNH commits to serving at least 100 students a year through this program.

As we look towards the future, AMNH continually seeks to engage diverse communities through our programming, where the resources of the Museum are accessible for all New Yorkers. We see our institution as an extension of our City's public school system and welcome partnerships with City agencies and community-based organizations to extend the reach of AMNH. Cultural organizations like AMNH depend on City funding to provide the sort of quality, community-centered programming I have described in my testimony today. We depend on City funding to provide the sort of quality, community-centered programming we have described today. I join my colleagues in the Cultural Institutions Group, and the entire cultural sector, and ask that DCLA be spared from the next two rounds of the Administration's PEG cuts so that we can continue to serve all New Yorkers.

Thank you for your time.



**Ballet Hispanico
City Council Testimony
Cultural Organizations Serving NYC Communities
December 13, 2023**

Good day, as Chief Engagement & Inclusion Officer at Ballet Hispanico, I thank you, New York City Council Members, for the opportunity to submit testimony today.

Thank you to the City of New York, CDF and DCLA for providing almost \$2.8MM in absolutely vital support to Ballet Hispanico over the past 10 years. This funding—from CASA programming for school students and their families and beyond—helps to sustain and empower Ballet Hispanico to expand our youth, school and community service with underserved children and communities who need it most—with accessible programs that reach beyond schools and professional arts organizations to communities where they live.

As the City considers financial cuts that threaten cultural organizations' outreach to all five boroughs of New York City, I here advocate for the continuation of vital support for cultural organizations, in particular Black, Indigenous and People of Color-led organizations like Ballet Hispanico, that provide important, culturally relevant, inclusive youth development and arts and cultural programming that also now serve growing migrant family populations (our newest New Yorkers) who need care and attention urgently. Our Community Arts Partnerships and CASA afterschool programs sustain one another and can be extended to public housing communities, as well. Not only does Ballet Hispanico have a 360-degree model for this work, we can share it as an integral partner to the city and other arts and cultural organizations with your support.

As we join our fellow cultural organization and youth development leaders in responding to increasing demand and need for sustained, on-going, culturally relevant programming and services—now more than ever for a growing Latine population, we look to City leaders to support our commitment with equal dedication through the resources that empower our programs to effect change—beyond museum-goers.

Ballet Hispanico is the nation's largest Latine cultural organization, and an American Cultural Treasure - one of only 20 across the country to receive this honor. We are led by a majority BIPOC board of directors and staff who ensure our programming is grounded in authentic, lived-experience – exemplified by our founder Tina Ramirez and her successor Eduardo Vilaro, himself a Spanish-speaking immigrant who arrived as a child. We were founded to amplify and uplift historically under-represented Latine/x/Hispanic, Black and brown voices—and are expanding programming now in response to the urgent need for our work. We welcomed new migrant families at PS 70 in Queens, are currently holding a holiday clothes and toy drive with Rising Ground NY—serving children who crossed the border without adults, and are hosting these children and their caretakers for an after-school residency at Ballet Hispanico during the President's Day week, concluding with a warm celebration of our community.



Approximately 27% of all New Yorkers and 41% of the city's student population are Latine—according to the most recent census, the fastest growing demographic—and growing rapidly in our city. Unfortunately, Latine New Yorkers also suffer a poverty rate of 25% - the highest of all populations, with Latine immigrants enduring the highest poverty rates of all immigrant groups in New York City (24%). This is caused in part by the high dropout rate for Latine high school students in New York City—which rises in part when students do not receive culturally relevant educational curricula—the very curricula Ballet Hispánico has been developing authentically for 53 years. These are exactly the families Ballet Hispánico serves uniquely well with our relevant, accessible and high-touch programming and curricula in all five boroughs that reach audiences outside of museum-going populations.

Furthermore, Latine students in New York City often reside in under-resourced communities; go to under-served schools; and have few opportunities to learn about, celebrate and share their rich cultural contributions, heritage and pride. They too often suffer gentrification which further exacerbates poverty, under-employment and challenge to educational engagement and feelings of belonging. It is the DCLA that has provided the vital funds to strengthen youth development and culturally relevant organizations like ours that reach out to communities where they are in all boroughs—and with whom we look to continue partnering so that we may serve more children and families, grow the community that nurtures health and vitality, and grow the arts and cultural sector in NYC, bringing additional tourism to our city as our own communities thrive.

Ballet Hispánico's Community Arts Partnerships provide an answer to the lack of Latine awareness in schools and communities that goes on to disaffect and disclude Latine families from employment and community inclusion. We are in schools, in neighborhoods and communities—and bring families into the broader NYC community to educate, nurture and celebrate. Ballet Hispánico's *Bienvenidos* free ticket program provided over 1,000+ free tickets for school families to our Annual Season performances at New York City Center in 2022, and 1,000+ more tickets for the 2023 season—and we have added yet another inclusion and access program: our discounted ticket *En Familia* performance at New York City Center this April, along with the *Bienvenidos* program.

Through a 360-degree approach, Ballet Hispánico ensures the benefits of programs that become joyful, inclusive, whole-community, whole-person experiences for school students, families and communities who are otherwise too often discluded from these experiences. The very families who most benefit from inclusion and enrichment that lead to educational engagement, feelings of belonging in our city, and valuable sustaining employment.

We depend on the City of New York, and all of you, to fulfill our mission of 360-degree service to underserved and BIPOC students and communities in all five boroughs, and now the newest New Yorkers who need these services and inclusion in order to thrive and give back to their new home, our city and the United States. We thank the City of New York, City Council, DCLA and CDF for this opportunity to advocate for vital support to youth serving and cultural institutions like ours who are uniquely positioned to provide critical resources to the City's growing population. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today.

**Testimony of Melody Capote, Executive Director
Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute
before the
City Council Committee on
Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
December 13, 2023 @ 1:00PM**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the City Council. My name is Melody Capote, Executive Director of the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute.

With respect to Reso. 423 which you will be considering today, I rise in favor of the resolution in principle, but I am saddened that this would be passed by this committee without any reference to the role that arts and culture plays, particularly in communities of color to ameliorate conditions associated with poverty. It reminds me of statements from legislators saying that arts and culture is good for tourism, hard stop.

I appear today to comment on the oversight topic of “Arts and Cultural Organizations’ Outreach into New York City Communities.” I congratulate each of you for what appears to be a long overdue insight, namely, **if you want to make a difference in communities where intractable poverty, turmoil, hate incidents, or institutionalized racism prevail, one cannot expect that community to reach out to the purveyors of arts and culture because it is the duty of the arts and culture community to reach out to them.**

Yet, only 15% of the DCLA budget goes to smaller organizations who both exist in the community and do not have to do outreach in the classic sense, because they are an integral part of that community. And, while there is insufficient transparency to look deeply within the 15%, it is fair to say that only a small percentage of that represents organizations of color within communities of color. And now, we are told to get ready for PEG cuts that can result in reductions as high as another 20%.

What I want to make clear is that there is no hesitancy within organizations of color to engage in outreach, whether informative or performative. What is missing is the budget to do so. Let me give you an example. Last week, we conducted a program honoring the birthday of the Orisha Shango, God of Thunder, Lightning and Justice. We spent \$10,000 between artists and staff to put this program on “in the community.” It was worth every penny but it underscores that reaching the community, what you call outreach, is more than just flyers and electronic newsletters. By the way, besides a full house, we had just over 500 see the program on YouTube.

As we approach the annual ritual of discretionary funding requests, I hope that you all will take the realities of community-based production into consideration.

So, I close my remarks with this thought: if you want outreach to the community that represents the quality of programming that we know how to do in the most cost effective manner, then fight for it by creating a new discretionary allocation called the “Community Programming Initiative” where every Council Member can award an amount (TBD) of money to an arts and culture organization with an under-\$5M budget which addresses one or more of the intractable issues of poverty, racism, hatred, violence, etc.

Again, I call for designating this coming year as the **Year of Arts and Culture for Social Change** and thereby urge all agencies to focus their attention on how arts and culture can be used as a vehicle for ending hatred in the city, for reconciliation between groups in the city, for love and understanding of migrants coming to the city. Truth be known, with the exception of the indigenous Native community and those who arrived because of enslavement, all the remainder have been migrants.

One more thought. Congratulations on Intro. 1184 requiring transparency and disclosure of funding from DCLA. Looking at the first sentence which defines capacity building, I want to renew the call I made last year for a Council-mandated Capacity Building Fund. Defining capacity building is not enough!

Our community needs you to put your money where your words are. If you want to see this work done, don’t just ask us to testify. Ask us to sit at the table as equal partners to reimagine and collaboratively negotiate the new package.

Thank you for your time.

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CARNEGIE HALL

New York City Council Fiscal Year 2024

December 13, 2023

**Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
Oversight – Arts and Cultural Organizations’ Outreach into New York City Communities**

Good morning, Chair Ossé and Members of the New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations. My name is David Freudenthal, and I am the Director of Government Relations at Carnegie Hall. Thank you for the opportunity to testify about Carnegie Hall Citywide.

For more than half a century, Citywide has taken Carnegie Hall beyond its four walls with free, world-class concerts to diverse audiences of all ages and cultures across all five boroughs. The series showcases outstanding mainstage artists and exciting rising stars of classical, jazz, world music and more. Through partnerships with local community organizations, Citywide taps into the pulse of the city and brings people together to share the joy of music. Through leveraging high-profile artists in hyperlocal venues, these partnerships generate tourism throughout the city and stimulate local economies. Built on long-term and new partnerships with important neighborhood gathering places such as libraries; parks; museums; houses of worship, mission-driven organizations; and public plazas, our close collaborations with local partners are key to the program’s success, strengthening these community anchors.

As you saw in the Chair’s opening remarks, Citywide can be a great way to advance the City Council’s goal of centering arts in revitalizing communities, energizing and activating economic and cultural activity in NYC with a hyper-local neighborhood-based model. Free concerts encourage New Yorkers to take part in community activities and provide access to extraordinary music in their neighborhoods. Vibrant arts programming in public spaces serves as a powerful driver of local economic development and improved quality of life for residents, creating thriving New York City neighborhoods. These free performances seek to bolster neighborhood-driven community-building efforts, thereby creating opportunities for civic engagement and supporting local small businesses and the entire network of New York’s tourism and entertainment economy.

The Citywide Partnership

Citywide is unique among public concerts because of Carnegie Hall’s deep investment in the partner. Success of this is based on:

- Bespoke program curation – the organization and CH work together to identify the best artist for that venue/community. Culturally responsive programming is prioritized in partnership with the venue to identify artists relevant to their communities.
- Partnership – Carnegie Hall brings talent, strength of brand, expertise, to enhance each organization by both reinforcing the organization’s engagement with its own community and bringing the community of Citywide fans to that organization.
- Carnegie Hall supplies:
 - artist/artist fee

- marketing
- artist hospitality
- project and production managers
- volunteers
- supplemental backline
- supplemental production support
- Community partner supplies:
 - Venue
 - house staff
 - security
 - ticketing support (if venue has a set capacity)
 - production staffing
 - backline
 - marketing

Carnegie Hall works closely with the partner venue to promote and market the performances to both the partner's constituents and our own community of Citywide fans who attend the performances all around NYC. Carnegie Hall volunteers staff the Citywide information tables at the concerts. The role of these volunteers is to make the concert attendees feel welcome at the event and to answer any questions they may have about this and other events. They also encourage them to complete a survey to understand better who is coming to these events and to help us develop programming of interest to them.

Citywide and COVID

Citywide events were the earliest live Carnegie Hall events emerging from the pandemic. On June 12, 2021, Carnegie Hall presented its first in-person event since March 2020, a Carnegie Hall Citywide performance by Los Hacheros in Harlem's Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park. Throughout summer 2021, Carnegie Hall Citywide produced 22 concerts with fantastic artists, including Adrienne Warren, Terence Blanchard, Hazmat Modine, Slavic Soul Party!, Toshi Reagon & BIG Lovely, Harlem Quartet, Son Del Monte, and Ensemble Connect. Several new partner venues joined the summer lineup, including Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park, DUMBO Archway, Historic Richmond Town, New York Botanical Garden, Times Square, Queens Botanical Garden, the Third Avenue BID, and The Bronx Music Heritage Center. After a truly challenging period for arts and culture organizations, Carnegie Hall Citywide concerts brought the performing arts in NYC back to life and spread the healing power of music to every borough.

In the 2022-2023 season, Carnegie Hall presented a diversity of artists comparable to past seasons such as Edna Vazquez, Los Hacheros, Le Vent du Nord, Ray and Vivian Chew, Cha Wa, Harlem Quartet, The Baylor Project, and Soh Daiko. Partner venues included Madison Square Park, Bryant Park, Historic Richmond Town, Times Square, and many others. As in past years, the concerts featured established and emerging artists representing an array of musical genres, styles, and traditions that reflect the vibrant diversity of the city and of Carnegie Hall's programming.

Citywide Today

This year, Carnegie Hall will co-produce 37 concerts with 19 community partners serving approximately 30,000 people in-person throughout the city and more than 90,000 through streamed performances. Our current partners include:

- Brooklyn
 - Brooklyn Museum
 - Brooklyn Public Library – Central Library
- Bronx
 - Wave Hill
- Manhattan
 - Bryant Park
 - El Museo del Barrio
 - Harlem Stage Gatehouse
 - LGBTQ Center
 - Robert F. Smith Performing Arts Center at Riverbank State Park
 - Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
 - Music at Our Savior's Atonement (MOSA)
 - St. Paul and St. Andrew Church
 - Times Square
 - Madison Square Park
 - NYC Parks: Jackie Robinson Park Bandshell
- Queens
 - Flushing Town Hall LaGuardia Performing Arts Center
 - Louis Armstrong House
 - NYC Parks: Beach 17 in the Rockaways
- Staten Island
 - Historic Richmond Town

As the program returns to pre-pandemic levels this year, Carnegie Hall invites local elected officials and agency community liaisons to table at Citywide concerts. These events generate attendance from the immediate neighborhood, borough, and city at-large, and therefore provide meaningful opportunities to share important resources, including but not limited to IDNYC registration and renewal, information for newly arrived migrants and their families, participatory budgeting, and other community events.

Upcoming Dates

- St. Paul and St. Andrew UMC (Manhattan – UWS)
 - 1/12 7PM Alexandra Nowakowski, Francesco Barfoed
 - 2/25 4PM Joseph Parrish, Shawn Chang
 - 3/8 7PM Meghan Kasanders, Dror Baitel
- Our Saviour's Atonement Lutheran Church (Manhattan – Washington Heights)

- 4/24 5PM Bridget Kibbey, Samuel Torres, Ismail Lumanovski
- Brooklyn Public Library, Central Library (Brooklyn – Crown Heights/Prospect Heights)
 - 2/25 4PM The Met Orchestra Chamber Ensemble – **Due to the most recent round of City budget cuts, Carnegie Hall and the Brooklyn Public Library must postpone this event.**
- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (Manhattan – Harlem)
 - 12/14 7PM Ravi Coltrane
 - 4/17 7PM Aja Monet
- LaGuardia Performing Arts Center (Queens – Long Island City)
 - 3/23 3PM Soh Daiko

Citywide Expansion

Looking ahead to the future, we seek to expand from 30,000 to 50,000 attendees over the next couple of years.

We propose to expand in phases by:

- Deepening existing partnerships (more events at existing venues). We tend to stay away from established presenting organizations that have well established programming as they don't need our support. We are interested in venues such as: BIDS/Plazas (privately owned spaces); Parks; Mission Driven Organizations; and Churches/Synagogues/Mosques.
- Serving public goals by working through systems of human services agencies that exist to support New Yorkers in need. For example, Settlement Houses have arts central to their mission. Similarly, the City's system of public hospital and health centers is another model.
- Forging new partnerships in new neighborhoods and venues, specifically outside of Manhattan.

This work is made possible by consistent public support of arts and culture.

A commitment to funding the arts and culture is a compound investment in economic resiliency and growth, workforce development, community healing, education, and public safety. Sustained investment in the arts and culture is a statement to each and every person who calls New York City home that their holistic wellness matters. I join my colleagues in the Cultural Institutions Group, and the entire cultural sector, and ask that DCLA be spared from the next two rounds of the Administration's PEG cuts so that we can continue to serve all New Yorkers.

Our city's cultural organizations are community anchors for employment, commerce, and social connection. We are the lodestar of our city's economic revitalization and continued growth. We are essential human services providers with our partners in government. Our ranks include some of the most vital cultural, science, and artistic institutions in the world. Our organizations are the core of the cultural economy that makes NY the greatest city in the world.

New Yorkers are at home in our buildings, our halls, our classrooms, and on our stages. The diversity of our offerings is our greatest strength, and we strive to create equitable cultural opportunities for New Yorkers in

every borough. Highlights of Carnegie Hall's offerings throughout the five boroughs include many of our partnerships with human services agencies:

- **The Council's \$25,000 initiative for youth programs** supports [The B Side](#), a free intensive program for New Yorkers ages 14-22 interested in the business of music, with a focus on those from under-resourced communities. The B Side provides participants an interactive space to learn about the inner workings of the music industry. Curriculum is designed and facilitated by teaching artists, and music executives, while guest speaker panels, and field trips guide participants through the many roles and career paths across the industry. Participants, experienced youth development facilitators, and guests are encouraged to co-create a learning community that supports the development of aspiring artists and future music industry leaders.

This season, participants will progress through activities beginning with an exploration of the various career tracks through the music industry and an introduction to key terms and concepts. Activities will include engaging in lessons/curricular activities; presentations from guest speakers; field trips to record labels, music tech companies, local recording studios, music festivals, venues; panels and interactive discussions; and jam sessions/performances. This is a paid experience. Participants receive a stipend, transportation and meals.

Through The B-Side, Carnegie Hall draws upon our experience creating meaningful youth development programs in order to deepen our impact and provide young people with the tools they need to thrive, lead, and transform the music industry.

- In partnership with NYC's Administration for Children's Services (ACS), Carnegie Hall's **Future Music Project (FMP)** creates a space for young people ages 14-19 in juvenile justice settings to develop as artists, critical thinkers, collaborators, and individuals. Carnegie Hall's Teaching Artists support young people in creating, producing, and performing music, using songwriting as a vehicle through which they can explore their creativity, develop musical skills, and collaborate with their peers. In addition to direct service workshops customized to the unique needs of secure and non-secure settings, young people in non-secure placement and ACS staff participate in sharing events at Carnegie Hall for family members and peers.
- Carnegie Hall's early childhood programs encourage connection, well-being, and creativity for families, most of whom are facing challenging personal circumstances. The [Lullaby Project](#) pairs new and expectant parents and caregivers with professional artists to write and sing personal lullabies for their babies, supporting maternal health, aiding child development, and strengthening the bond between parent and child. Since the launch at Jacobi Medical Center in 2011, nearly 1,800 families have written original songs for their children through city agency partnerships including the NYC Departments of Homeless Services (DHS), Correction (DOC), Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and Education (DOE's LYFE program), the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), Health + Hospitals (H+H), and the Housing Authority (NYCHA). [Big Note, Little Note](#), is a music class for NYC families that

offers a range of experiences for families and caregivers to engage with their babies through musical play, singing, instrument exploration, and more. The program—in partnership with Harlem Children’s Zone—is centered around community, and supports family well-being, early childhood development, and parent-child connection.

- Regarded by DOE’s Office of Arts and Special Projects as a lead partner in music education, Carnegie Hall’s school programs have effectively delivered the agency’s standards for music education, providing high quality, fundamental music instruction and best practices by amplifying and celebrating the cultural richness of our city for over a decade. Our learning and engagement programs inspire the next generation of music lovers in NYC’s K-12 classrooms and support local teachers in refining their skills.
 - [Musical Explorers](#) connects students in grades K–2 to NYC’s rich and diverse musical community as they build fundamental music skills through listening, singing, and moving to songs from all over the world. Each season, students meet six NYC–based artists who each represent a different musical genre and cultural tradition. Teachers have access to a free curriculum, professional development, and a culminating interactive concert for their students.
 - [Link Up](#)—Carnegie Hall’s longest running education program—introduces the orchestra to children in grades 3-5, inviting them to sing and play an instrument in the classroom and perform with a professional orchestra from their seats at a culminating concert at Carnegie Hall. Both programs continue to expand with digital platforms that provide teachers with free online resources, including lesson plans, artist-led videos, and virtual concert experiences.
 - [Music Educators Workshop](#) provides on average more than 450 NYC K–12 music teachers monthly professional development each year, in a vital space for teachers to recognize their shared experiences and receive support, community, and professional growth. The program leverages teachers as catalysts to enhance the quality of instruction for almost 30,000 NYC students each year.
 - [Ensemble Connect](#) is a program of Carnegie Hall and The Juilliard School in partnership with DOE. Ensemble Connect places extraordinary young classical musicians for a two-year fellowship in NYC public schools. Fellows partner with DOE music teachers to bring insight, creativity, and artistry to classrooms; and create interactive performances in schools and at community sites.

Programs like these continue to be critical components of the city’s strategy to meet people directly, effectively, and safely where they are. The Council’s continued investment in these partnerships is absolutely critical to ensure that these essential services for our city’s youth and families continue. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you individually to discuss Carnegie Hall’s programming partnerships in your district.

Programming and services provided by nonprofit organizations have already been reduced as a result of the cuts announced in November. The additional 5% planned cuts in January would be detrimental to the continued running of these community programs. Organizations like Carnegie Hall touch every vital aspect of daily life - from public education, health and human services, cultural enrichment to language

access. We call on the City to partner with the nonprofit sector and work toward creative solutions - not hinder us further. The City cannot withstand a 15% cut to its budget, and any additional cuts to the nonprofit sector will only undermine the public safety, health, and cleanliness of New York City.

We thank the Committee for their interest and investment in these programs, and we encourage the Council to continue to support this important work and other programs by our cultural colleagues across the city. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and thanks to our community partners, artists, educators, and community members for being a part of truly transformational changes.



Written Testimony for the
New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries,
and International Intergroup Relations

December 14, 2023

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the staff and trustees of New York City Center, I am delighted to share the following testimony on how our organization serves New Yorkers through our programming. My name is Tia Powell Harris and I am City Center's first Vice President of Education and Community Engagement. I have been with City Center for a little over two years, and have previously served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts Project and the Ellington Fund (Washington, D.C.) and as the Executive Director and President of Weeksville Heritage Center (Brooklyn, NY).

City Center's mission is to be New York City's leading center for dance and musical theater. Dedicated to making the arts accessible to the broadest possible audience, City Center seeks to create a welcoming environment and engage all audiences with inspiring programming that reflects the eclecticism, energy, and spirit of New York City. To best uphold this mission, City Center commits to organizational values of curiosity, collaboration, accessibility, and inclusivity. In our most recently completed fiscal year, City Center served an audience of nearly 120,000 individuals through our dance, musical theater, and education and community engagement programming.

We are a proud member of the Cultural Institutions Group, a coalition of 34 organizations housed within historic properties owned by the City of New York, and which provides countless positive benefits to its citizens. This includes employing over 11,000 staff members and providing countless hours of world-class programming at low- or no-cost to participants. Cultural organizations depend on City funding to provide the sort of quality, community-centered programming we have described today. I join my colleagues in the Cultural Institutions Group, and the entire cultural sector, and ask that DCLA be spared from the next two rounds of the Administration's PEG cuts so that we can continue to serve all New Yorkers.

Across our three pillars of programming (dance, musical theater, and education and community engagement), City Center seeks to intentionally engage diverse audiences, including BIPOC communities, youth, and low-income New Yorkers. Our community engagement work in particular is built on partnerships with other organizations that serve as 'hubs' within their communities, including libraries, schools, and other nonprofits. In our most recently completed season, City Center served 9,213 individuals.

Firstly, City Center's arts education programming brings the world-class performing arts we present on our stage directly into classrooms across the five boroughs. Our dance and musical theater workshops and residencies are inspired by our on-stage productions and our expert cohort of teaching artists are adept at crafting curricula around those productions. A majority of our schools receive Title One funding, and, thanks to a network of private and institutional funders, our arts education programming is offered at little or no cost to schools. Often, our in-school programs are paired with student matinee performances, which are offered at an enormous discount (including free admission for partner schools) to schools across New York City and allow thousands of students to attend a live performance in our historic theater. All together our educational programs work to

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make arts and culture more accessible to young people in communities across the City. A current list of partner schools organized by Council District is also included as a supplement to this testimony.

Similarly, our community engagement programming is built on meaningful partnerships with community-centric organizations across the five boroughs, particularly those serving historically marginalized communities. Beginning this year, we have partnered with The Door, a nonprofit focused on providing professional development services for at-risk BIPOC youth, on a program called Artivism. This ten-week program provides direct instruction on how young people (ages 18-24) can harness their unique artistic creativity to agitate for positive social change. We have also offered career development programs to community organizations like Rosie's Theater Kids and iHope which have focused on how young people can pursue careers in arts and cultural organizations that are not based on performance. All of these programs are offered at no cost to participants.

Our on-stage programming also endeavors to be inclusive and accessible to all New Yorkers. For example, the annual and beloved Fall for Dance Festival is known for being one of the most accessible showcases of contemporary dance in the United States; each year the Festival presents over a dozen local, national, and international ensembles for two weeks of performances with every ticket set at just \$20. Additionally, throughout the year we offer Community Nights in partnership with a rotating cohort of partner organizations. These pre-show events are free and open to the public and feature performances or conversations relevant to the City Center production. City Center provides these partner organizations (which almost universally have served marginalized communities) with discounted or complimentary tickets to the applicable performance. Previous partner organizations have included the Brooklyn Music School, NY Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and the Korean American Family Service Center.

When City Center was founded in 1943, Mayor Fiorello La Guardia declared it 'The People's Theater.' Eighty years later, his vision for an accessible performing arts center in Midtown Manhattan lives on in every aspect of our programming. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your leadership and service in providing for an equitable arts and culture sector that can serve all New Yorkers.

Best,

Tia Powell Harris
Vice President, Education & Community Engagement
New York City Center





Testimonial Letter to the New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
Hon. Chi Ossé, Chair
Hearing: Oversight | December 13, 2023

December 8, 2023

Chairperson Ossé, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Dancewave, a nonprofit dance organization located in Brooklyn.

I will open with a few words that a young person shared with me :

"Brooklyn is the home of many immigrants; some members of my family have been living here for more than two decades before I came here three and half years ago from Haiti. Brooklyn was the home I heard about but had never seen. I want all fellow immigrants like me to know that Brooklyn is as much theirs as it is those who were born here. Immigrants are working hard to keep the City growing, therefore they deserve to be represented. Immigrants are an essential part of Brooklyn's identity."

This is an excerpt from a grant proposal that a 17-year old Dancewave student named Amarah wrote to produce a free, multidisciplinary and intergenerational art performance celebrating Brooklyn's vibrant cultural diversity and providing new community members with an increased sense of belonging. We know that art has been proven to help people feel connected, valued, seen and heard, in addition to improving academic performance and developing the social and emotional skills necessary to thrive.

Through a city-funded partnership with Dancewave, Amarah's international high school is able to provide dance programming that recognizes and celebrates the many cultures of the students enrolled. Students surveyed reported that their experience with Dancewave's program was one of the first times that they truly felt seen and celebrated in their new country.

Amarah's story is one of success. She received a full scholarship and invitation to join Dancewave's pre-professional dance company program, where she has continued to grow as a young artist, performing on stages that many New Yorkers only dream of. Through Dancewave's college and career preparatory program, she has access to the tools, resources and networks to help facilitate a smooth transition into higher education. Amarah's potential is great, as evidenced by her grant proposal in which she is applying what she's learning in service to others.

Amarah's success story is one of many that illustrates the wide-reaching and lasting positive impact that nonprofit arts organizations like Dancewave have on our community. Dancewave's programs can inspire and empower over 6,300 children, adults, and seniors -- from the most under-resourced and marginalized neighborhoods -- across all five boroughs each year because of the investment of the City. Funding from the Department of Cultural Affairs enables Dancewave to provide future-affirming programming to participants free of charge. For the vast majority of participants in our programs, these are the only arts experiences truly accessible to them.



Budget cuts of \$16.4M to the Department of Cultural Affairs threaten our city's economic prosperity, and will have detrimental and long-lasting impacts. In the short term, these cuts will force nonprofit art organizations like Dancewave to eliminate programs, which the City leans on to help fill persistent service gaps in New York City schools, older adult centers, shelters, libraries, and community and social service centers citywide. In the long term, these cuts will cause significant and lasting damage to the health and vibrancy of our neighborhoods as social disconnection further exacerbates the current mental health crisis, and as youth have fewer opportunities to engage in meaningful and future-affirming activities, just to name two examples.

Our city and its future is at stake, and our people, especially promising young people like Amarah, deserve better. Let us not make New York -- where arts and culture is a major economic sector with over 400,000 jobs -- a place that disregards culture and community as an integral part of our lived experiences. These budget cuts may be presented as a short-term savings solution, but they will only cost us more in the long run.

I ask that the Committee continue to stand by and fiercely advocate for our city's arts and cultural organizations, who represent the future cultural and economic health and vitality of our city.

Thank you for your attention and consideration,

Nicole Touzien
Executive Director, Dancewave



Dancewave's Master Class Tour (MCT) free dance classes and invitation to DTCB, Summer Intensive Programs

Provide John Dewey High School students with free access to DTCB - NYC Rockettes
300 families patronizing hotels, restaurants and other cultural organizations

Spring Season allows students from public school residencies to share the stage NYLA, BRIC, in performance

Arts Educator Training experiential training program that strives to subvert oppressive systems and center holistic wellbeing in educational settings. The curriculum, aligned with the NYC Blueprint for Teaching & Learning and National Core Arts Standards, prioritizes mental, physical, and emotional well-being for all within the dance ecosystem. Through supporting responsive, anti-oppressive, and experiential learning practices, Dancewave's AET allows educators to deepen their practice alongside thought partners in the field. This event is offered to educators from all disciplines as well as recent graduates, professionals and organizers.

It cannot be stated enough: a healthy and vibrant arts and culture sector is necessary for a thriving city. **Local arts and cultural organizations such as Dancewave provide direct services that fundamentally address our city's complex and multifaceted issues such as public safety and mental health.** As the New York City Council engages in the fiscal year 2024 budgeting process, we urge the Committee to prioritize increased baseline funding for arts and culture, a critical investment necessary to sustain the necessary work of arts and cultural organizations like Dancewave who play a crucial role in the economic, social, and cultural fabric of New York City.

Thank you,

Nicole Touzien
Executive Director

Move significant funds away from the military budget in order to fund social services, and to hold in-depth public hearings on the basic human needs of City residents that are unmet because of government appropriations for the Pentagon.

Hearing: Arts and Cultural Organizations' Outreach into New York City Communities

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
Testimony from Susan Hapgood, Executive Director, International Studio & Curatorial Program
December 13, 2023

Thank you, Committee Chair Chi Ossé and Council Members, for the opportunity to testify about cultural organizations' outreach into our city communities.

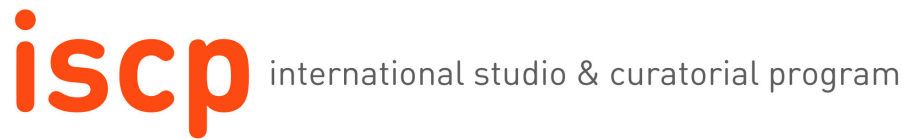
I am director of the International Studio & Curatorial Program (also known as ISCP), a non-profit arts organization in North Brooklyn, embedded in a community of industrial businesses, warehouses, hardworking families, and artists' workshops. We are a non-profit organization housed in a former three-story printing factory, and our mission is to support the development of artists and curators from around the world, to introduce New York audiences to exceptional international art practices, and to enrich the appreciation and understanding of contemporary art.

We are open to all, and we work hard to organize excellent contemporary art programming—talks and exhibitions and open studio events—year-round, free of charge. We contribute to the cultural fabric of our neighborhood, to the stability, safety and education of our community. We also attract visitors from all over the city, and even from many other countries as well. The people who participate in our programs come from Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa as well as North America.

Over the past year and a half we have organized special events for nearby high school administrations, public housing residents, and all of our neighbors, making them feel welcome them to our institution and hosting special events for them alone. We are very actively reaching out to make sure that our many publics know that our organization is doing programming for them, and that we want them to take advantage of what we are doing at ISCP! We care about all of our neighbors a great deal. We are the biggest arts non-profit in North Brooklyn, where there is always something great on view.

Our partnership with City Council is crucial to our strength. In particular I would like to again thank Council Members Gutiérrez and Ossé for coming to ISCP and for their enthusiasm and support. All of ISCP's public programming is funded by City Council District 34, Cultural Immigrant Initiative funding, and the Department of Cultural Affairs. We wouldn't survive without this City government support.

I want to add one final note about potential budget cuts. Programming and services provided by nonprofit organizations have already been reduced as a result of the cuts announced in November. The additional 5% planned cuts in January would be



detrimental to the continued running of these community programs. Organizations like ISCP touch every vital aspect of daily life - from public education, health and human services, cultural enrichment to language access. We call on the City to partner with the nonprofit sector and work toward creative solutions – and please not to hinder us further. The City cannot withstand a 15% cut to its budget, and any additional cuts to the nonprofit sector will only undermine the public safety, health, and cleanliness of New York City.

Thank you for your time and attention.



Leonard Jacobs
Executive Director

Courtney Ffrench
Artistic Director

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December 6, 2023

To the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations:

I represent the Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning (JCAL). Founded in 1972, we operate in Queens, where 2.4 million African-American, Caribbean-American, Indo-Asian, African, Latinx, Caucasian, Native American, and Indigenous artists and audiences live, work, and play. Our mission is to offer quality visual, performing, and literary arts, and to provide accessible education programs to encourage participation in the arts. JCAL was created during the same era as Studio Museum, PS1, Bronx Museum and the Queens Museum because of activists, artists, and allies demanding an alternative to the systemic racism and structural inequities of the City's cultural scene. Even as these issues persist today, we are proud of our outreach into Queens communities, especially in the southern half of our borough.

JCAL operates the Jamaica Arts Center (JAC), a 45,000-square-foot headquarters with two galleries, six dance studios, four studio spaces, a 99-seat theater, and offices. We also operate the Jamaica Performing Arts Center (JPAC), a state-of-the-art 400-seat theater. As the only CIG in South Queens, we are a proud cultural anchor. In our budget range, we are one of the few CIGs to operate more than one building—despite more than a decade of disinvestment by DCLA.

JCAL's arts education work fundamentally changes lives in our community. Our Arts Expressions program, for example, engages those facing homelessness, foster care, neurodivergence, and trauma; our partners include NYC DOP, AIDS Center of Queens County, Venture House, and Homes for the Homeless. Our weekly arts classes are among the most affordable in NYC. We also support our community through partnerships with the City Council on CASA, SU-CASA, and the Cultural Immigrant Initiative.

In total, JCAL's programs reached more than 52,000 people in NYC—thousands of schoolchildren among them. Nearly every exhibit, concert, artist talk, festival, and performance are free and open to the public.

JCAL's core visual and performing arts programs, too, are all about community outreach. Our pop-up Hip Hop installation (made possible via support from CM Nantasha Williams), is now open at King Manor Museum. Through a grant from Association for a Better New York, JCAL and Jamaica YMCA have created a new workforce development program for those in transitional housing. JCAL Artistic Director Courtney Ffrench and I jointly serve on the Queens College Arts Advisory Board and Queens Rising Steering Committee; I also serve on the Steering Committee of the Jamaica Areawide Rezoning (JAR) project.



Here is another, more holistic example of JCAL's outreach into the community. In 2019, JCAL launched its Building Equity for BIPOC Artists initiative. (At JCAL, BIPOC = Black, Immigrant, Indigenous, and People of Color.) Funded through a multiyear grant, Building Equity was a pilot dedicated to engaging and promoting underrepresented artists in our community, and to providing greater access for audiences to see and experience their work. Run throughout COVID, Building Equity inspired 34 in-person and remote events and two week-long festivals curated by a 20-member Advisory Council of BIPOC leaders, scholars, educators, community advocates, culture warriors, and arts administrators.

As a result of the success of Building Equity, JCAL received a two-year grant from the Mellon Foundation in 2023 to begin to rebuild its staff. AdvanceNYC, a consulting firm that specializes in BIPOC-serving organizations, is assisting JCAL on its new three-year business plan that centers the community even more deeply in our work. Until the brutal cuts of FY2024, JCAL's finances were in their best position since 2008. I note this because our drive for long-term sustainability has taken place despite DCLA's decades-long pattern of disenfranchising JCAL and Southeast Queens. I should know: I served as Director of Cultural Institutions at DCLA from 2011 to 2018.

Below, then, is the story of JCAL since literally the start of the 21st century--:

- In FY 2001, JCAL managed one building (Jamaica Arts Center) with a \$769K baseline.
- In FY 2008, JCAL began managing two buildings (with JPAC) with a \$641K baseline.
- In FY 2012, JCAL's baseline was cut to \$499K, where it has stayed for 13 fiscal years.

Year for year, crisis for crisis, cultural institutions like JCAL have proven responsive, adaptable, and astonishingly resilient. The emotional trauma being inflicted on our communities right now through budget cuts is devastating an entire generation of New Yorkers—foolishly. As tireless stewards of our community, we know we can and must do better. We pray that City Hall comes to see community outreach as something more than sound-bite lip-service soon.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Leonard Jacobs
Executive Director
Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning

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**Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations
December 13, 2023**

*Testimony of Leah C. Johnson
Executive Vice President & Chief Communications, Marketing and Advocacy Officer
Member on the Cultural Institutions Group*

Chair Ossé and members of the Council's Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations we appreciate you raising the importance of engaging with and in communities throughout New York City. I am the Chief Communications, Marketing & Advocacy Officer at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and member of the Cultural Institutions Group. Lincoln Center's founding mission was to make the performing arts an invaluable part of daily civic life and broadly accessible to all. We have invested in this work with an evolving roadmap for how we can better reflect, uplift, and rejoice in the vibrant communities of New York City in all aspects of our artistic and civic work. Lincoln Center should be a place where all New Yorkers can see themselves and are welcomed.

This work requires confronting various barriers to entry head on. The vast majority of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts programming, including all events at the David Rubenstein Atrium, is free and Choose-What-You-Pay. After a successful pilot in 2022 and continued success since, we have seen sold out houses full of new, young, and diverse audiences. We saw this for a second year during *Summer for the City*, which brought more than 380,000 visitors to our campus for a summer of hundreds of free outdoor concerts and programs. By the numbers, 75% of audiences attended one of our performances for the first-time, 54% identifying as BIPOC, and 25% of attendees came from the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island.

Access needs for audiences with disabilities are built into our venues and programming. In addition to comprehensive access accommodations for performances (including ASL interpretation, accessible entrances and seating, braille and large print programs, and audio description), chill out spaces, visual directions, alternatives to standing in line, and welcome staff trained in inclusive practices have been designed into the audience experience.

For nearly 40 years Lincoln Center has been an institutional leader developing targeted programs around the experience of audiences with disabilities. Passport to the Arts, one of our longest running access programs, provides free and inclusively designed performances and behind the scenes experiences with world class artists, in person and virtually, for children, teens, and adults with disabilities. Our Passport program has built a city-wide community of families, schools, and service organizations, bringing more than 3500 attendees to Passport programs in FY23 alone. Lincoln Center Moments uses performance and facilitated art making to reconnect people with dementia with the joy, healing, and community that the performing arts provides. We have worked with the Department for the Aging and Council Member Crystal Hudson to connect Older Adult Centers city-wide with the program. Additionally, Lincoln Center Moments is offered virtually for audiences that cannot physically join us but can still benefit from the healing community the program creates.

Lincoln Center's Education initiatives, under the leadership of Dr. Lee Bynum, centers access and equity both inside and outside classrooms. Since 2014 we have partnered with the Department of Education to host Middle School Arts Audition Bootcamp, welcoming more than 200 students each year from 150 middle schools across the city. Additionally, we have piloted the Young Artist Pipeline, an arts training program for middle school students interested in developing their craft in a chosen art form and learning about the professional arts world. Pipeline seeks to address the opportunity gap that many students experience due to the prohibitive cost of training in the arts. This year we have 34 six-graders from 17 DOE middle schools, primarily Title 1 school in School District 3.

Lincoln Center engages with New Yorkers, outside of our neighboring Manhattan core, with marketing and earned media efforts that attract a more diverse audiences to the campus, spotlighting our programming that is reflective of the voices and genres of a global New York City. Working with marketing agency GoDiversity, we develop marketing materials and assets in multiple languages, including Spanish and Mandarin. We employ targeted ads in Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, and Korean, and earned media coverage in 10 languages across local representative media outlets, such as La Mega, El Diario, El Especialito, and Sing Tao, to name a few from this summer's metrics. We place outdoor digital ads across all five boroughs through LinkNYC kiosks, and participate in community street fairs, block parties, and parades like the West Indian Day Parade and Puerto Rican Day Parade. We go door-to-door to more than 23,000 NYCHA households in upper Manhattan, including our neighbors in NYCHA Amsterdam Houses, Amsterdam Addition and Harborview Terrace. Additionally, we are thankful for partnerships with local community organizations and our friends in the City Council to help promote upcoming events in newsletters, on social media, and in community interactions.

We at Lincoln Center recognize that we not only serve as a performing arts organization but as a civic hub. These kinds of programs and initiatives serve to embed Lincoln Center in the fabric of New York. We are on a journey. We have not yet reached our destination, but Lincoln Center is committed to being a place where all New Yorkers see themselves.

Engaging with and welcoming New Yorkers requires intention and resources. We greatly appreciate the City Council's continued support for our free and low-cost public programming and join our colleagues across the cultural sector in calling on the Administration to consider sparing DCLA from the proposed PEG cuts.

Thank you again for your time on this critical issue. Lincoln Center is committed to New York City as a place where everyone is welcome and where they belong, and we continue to engage as lifelong learners to do better as an arts, education, and civic hub for all.

Respectfully submitted,

Leah C. Johnson
Executive Vice President & Chief Communications, Marketing and Advocacy Officer
Lincoln Center
ljohnson@lincolncenter.org

MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE A LIVING MEMORIAL TO THE HOLOCAUST



Edmond J. Safra Plaza | 36 Battery Place
New York, NY 10280
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December 13, 2023

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations

Dear Chair Ossé and Members of the Committee:

My name is Elizabeth Venditto. I serve as the Director of Institutional Giving of the Museum of Jewish Heritage –A Living Memorial to the Holocaust.

The Museum educates visitors of all backgrounds about Jewish life before, during, and after the Holocaust. We teach New Yorkers about what unchecked hate and bigotry can do. Our exhibitions and education programs examine the richness of Jewish cultures and history. Our work builds bridges between the city's communities and creates mutual respect and understanding.

The Museum makes arts and culture accessible to New Yorkers through free admission programs and our work inside city schools. This year, we have served over 16,000 NYC public school students. We provide free Museum admission to public schools. We also organize free transportation for schools with financial need so that students in the outer boroughs have the same access to us as those located closer to our home in Battery Park. CUNY students and IDNYC cardholders also receive free Museum admission, and we will host a CUNY Day at the Museum on March 15.

Last year, we brought our work into city schools through a new peer-to-peer Holocaust education program. The Holocaust Educator School Partnership trains local college students to teach lessons on Holocaust history in public school classrooms. Then the schools come to the Museum—at no cost—for an exhibition tour led by the college students. The program served 2,000 NYC public school students last school year. It will serve 10,000 students this school year.

Cultural organizations depend on City funding to provide quality, community-centered programming. I join my colleagues in the Cultural Institutions Group, and the entire cultural sector, and ask that DCLA be spared from the next two rounds of the Administration's PEG cuts so that we can continue to serve all New Yorkers.

Elizabeth Venditto

Director of Institutional Giving

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MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

A cultural institution could not call itself so if it was not in some ways a reflection of its physical and cultural surroundings. Museum of the Moving Image takes pride in the fact that, self-contained, it is one of the many treasures in Western Queens. It does not end there, though. MoMI takes the initiative to ensure that community members of many backgrounds see the Museum as a fully accessible and considerate institution. MoMI takes very seriously its role within the greater Astoria and Western Queens community. The neighborhood has an embarrassment of riches in terms of its diversity and history. It is a special honor to not only be a part of what makes it special, but to also celebrate it whenever we can.

This initiative begins with our Neighborhood Council. Created in 2018, the Neighborhood Council is comprised of 10 individual community members, small business owners, association presidents, artists, and others, who meet monthly to ensure that Astoria has a direct line and voice in the decision-making processes of the Museum. They have been a welcomed source of fresh ideas and perspectives and have played an integral part in bringing programs such as multi-lingual museum tours to the Museum.

We have also been able to cultivate a prolific slate of programming focused on historically underserved constituencies within the community. Our Juneteenth celebration spanned over the full holiday weekend and included live musical and dance performances, on top of well-attended film screenings. The Museum's Día De Los Muertos festivities were also well-attended. Specially curated tours, face-paintings, and traditional ceremonies that invite entire families to engage, and make for a wonderful day spent at MoMI. This Fall we have been able to bring back Access Mornings, where we offer a sensory-friendly gallery experience and workshops for families with children on the Autism Spectrum. In addition, every First Friday of the month, our theaters screen films at a deeply discounted rate for seniors and the disabled.

The history of film is as broad and varied as any medium of art, and we would be derelict in our programming duties if we did not regularly screen films that reflect this. Through recurring programs such as *Las Premieres*, *Always on Sunday*, *Infinite Beauty*, we come closer to fulfilling those duties. These programs are in addition to other events that hosts in partnership with 14 community organizations such as New Immigrant Community Empowerment, Ghetto Film School, and the Hellenic Film Society. MoMI's offerings reflect our priorities, and putting Astoria at the forefront is certainly high on that list.



229 W 42nd Street, 10th Floor
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Thank you all for this opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of New 42 and The New Victory Theater. At New 42, we take immense pride in maintaining our position as a major NYC cultural institution as we present a dynamic season of world class performances, essential education programs, and public engagement opportunities all to fulfill our worthwhile mission: *to make extraordinary performing arts a vital part of everyone's life from the earliest years onward.*

Research has proven that quality early arts exposure can have a positive impact on the socioemotional development of young people and yet many still face barriers when engaging with the arts and culture sector. New 42 uses its programming, particularly our **Bring Your Family to the New Victory Program** and **New Victory Education Program** to engage with neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs and to create accessible, authentic pathways for young people to become regular arts attendees and participants. In partnership with NYCHA, the Bring Your Family to the New Victory Program provided **over 1000 complimentary tickets to 228 distinct families living in NYCHA housing** for our 2022-23 Season and we are continuing to expand our network of partner organizations this year with additional in-person family engagement events at locations like Chelsea's Fulton and Elliot houses, as well as Bronx's Butler, Patterson and Mitchel houses. We are also in conversation with NYCHA and the Public Housing Community Fund to provide MTA travel vouchers to augment free tickets, as well as \$5 concession vouchers moving forward.

The New Victory Education Program, brings free, dynamic, in-classroom arts education to around **130-150 school partners a year**, 70% of which serve large populations of students living in low income neighborhoods. For many students, our New Victory Education Program is **the only in-school arts education they receive during the year** and so, by providing this unique opportunity to engage in collaborative and creative educational play, we are in a position to positively impact thousands of students each year through our engagement opportunities that wouldn't otherwise have the arts in their lives. As one teacher noted, **"students are empowered by theater and hearing different stories. They communicate with more confidence when theater is in their lives."**

Accessibility for ALL continues to be a core value of our organization, and this commitment extends to our Bring Your Family to the New Victory Program and New Victory Education Program so that kids and their families can experience the transformative power of the arts. Thank you for continuing to support the work of New 42 and the New Victory Theater as we bring the joy and power of the performing arts to young people across the city.

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM & LIBRARY

Testimony to the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries & International Intergroup Relations

Expanding Access to Cultural Institutions for Underserved Communities

Delivered by Donju Min, Manager of Institutional Giving Operations

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Dear Members of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries & International Intergroup Relations:

Thank you for your continued service to education and the arts in New York City, particularly during these challenging times, and thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of the New-York Historical Society. For over 200 years, New-York Historical has told the story of our nation's founding and history, using our vast collections to highlight diverse perspectives throughout that history. New-York Historical aims to be an active, accessible community resource for audiences historically underrepresented in textbooks or cultural institutions, with programming that reflects the rich cultural fabric of our city and nation.

DIVERSIFYING MUSEUM PROGRAMMING

New-York Historical aims to supplement content in cultural institutions or history curricula by re-telling critical chapters in our history through the perspectives of those often left out of the American narrative. Recent exhibitions include:

Under Cover: J.C. Leyendecker and American Masculinity (May 5, 2023 - August 13, 2023), a review of the work and influence of the preeminent illustrator and commercial artist who helped shape American visual culture in the first three decades of the 20th century. Leyendecker, a gay artist, often included unspoken homoerotic undertones in his art, while working for a mainstream, commercial audience. The exhibition delves into the early politics of sexual identity and gender, while also demonstrating Leyendecker's exclusionary nature and promotion of a nationalistic ideal of white male beauty.

Women's Work (July 21, 2023 - July 7, 2024), an exploration of how broad trends in American economic, legal, and political history have encouraged women to take certain jobs and restricted them from "men's work," while also considering how race, ethnicity, social class, legal status, sexual orientation, and gender presentation have impacted these distinctions. The exhibition demonstrates that "women's work" defies categorization and has been essential to American society.

Crafting Freedom: The Life and Legacy of Free Black Potter Thomas W. Commeraw (January 27, 2023 - May 28, 2023), the first exhibition to bring overdue attention to a skilled craftsman whose racial identity was long overlooked. The exhibition tells the life and story of Commeraw,

who owned and operated a successful pottery in New York between late 1790s and 1819 as a free Black man after being born enslaved. Long thought to be the work of a white potter, Commeraw's work was an integral part of New York City's free Black economy and exemplifies the production, decoration, and markings of pottery during this time.

Kay WalkingStick / Hudson River School (October 20, 2023 - April 14, 2024), a showcase of the contemporary Cherokee artist's landscapes, in conversation with highlights from New-York Historical's collection of Hudson River School paintings. This artistic dialogue showcases the ways in which WalkingStick's work both connects to and diverges from the Hudson River School tradition, and celebrates a shared reverence for nature while engaging crucial questions about land dispossession and its reclamation by Indigenous peoples and nations and exploring the relationship between Indigenous art and American art history.

Together, these exhibitions help to provide a more comprehensive view of the American story by including voices historically left out of museums or history textbooks. Our programming reflects our efforts to engage the broadest possible audience in the making and meaning of history.

EDUCATION OUTREACH

At the forefront of our commitment to engage the broadest possible audience is our education initiatives, which provide high-quality offerings and services at every learning level, from K-12 programs, to higher education opportunities, to adults and the general public.

New-York Historical partners with schools across the five boroughs to provide quality **K-12 education services** that reflect the cultural fabric of this city. Through field trips, social studies enrichment, workforce development opportunities for teens, early childhood education, teacher professional development opportunities, and digital curricula and classroom resources, New-York Historical enriches classroom learning and highlights under-told stories of BIPOC and minority heroes that have shaped this nation. In recent years, New-York Historical has served schools in 50 City Council Districts, with a particular focus on Title 1 schools. Education staff conduct deep and thorough outreach to ensure our programs are promoted across all five boroughs, and school discounts are offered on a case-by-case basis for programs that aren't already offered free of charge. In FY23, 535 of the 672 schools we served in were located outside of Manhattan. In addition, 60% of slots in our high school internship program—for which students are paid a stipend—are reserved for students who are eligible for reduced-price lunch, ensuring that students do not face financial barriers to participation. Participants in select programs receive Family Passes or Family Memberships, which encourage students in the outer boroughs who have visited the Museum with their classes to return with their families.

To continue this work at a higher level, New-York Historical developed a **Master of Arts in Museum Studies** degree program offered through **City University of New York's School of Professional Studies** (CUNY SPS) in an effort to generate an equitable cultural workforce. Conceived in an effort to diversify the museum workforce and from a belief that history is better when a diverse array of people tell a diverse array of stories, the program leverages New-York Historical's world-class museum and library collections, as well as our curatorial and educational expertise, to prepare participants for meaningful careers in New York City's arts and culture economy. The program was specifically designed to increase accessibility through flexible class

schedules and a hybrid model, accommodating students from myriad backgrounds with a multitude of existing responsibilities. Students are eligible to apply for scholarships which are underwritten by private donors.

Lastly, our **Citizenship Project** provides Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) seeking citizenship with free civics and American history workshops that prepare them for the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Naturalization Test. Launched in 2017, in direct response to drastic new federal restrictions on immigration, the Citizenship Project is the first program nationwide to utilize a major museum collection to facilitate citizenship education. In addition to civics classes based on the Naturalization Test, the program includes English language practice workshops and mock test interviews to help participants prepare beyond the test itself. Participants are recruited through CUNY's Citizenship Now!, the USCIS, and local immigrant advocacy organizations, and a dedicated Citizenship Project Outreach Coordinator works to build strategic partnerships with community organizations to ensure communities across the five boroughs are aware of the program. In FY23, 15% of participants lived in Brooklyn, 35% in the Bronx, 33% in Queens, 1% in Staten Island, and 17% in Manhattan. The program is offered in-person and virtually, in both English and Spanish to attract the broadest possible audience. Participants also receive Family Passes to the Museum, encouraging participants not only to come see the objects and artifacts they are studying with their own eyes, but also to bring their family and friends.

CONCLUSION

Ever-rising to the challenge of bringing little or unknown histories to light, New-York Historical's mission is to collect, preserve, and interpret, for the broadest possible public, material relevant to U.S. history, and serve as an accessible community resource and destination for audiences underserved or underrepresented by cultural institutions. We understand that we cannot complete this mission by only serving our neighbors in the Upper West Side, and remain deeply committed to engaging audiences across all five boroughs. Through diverse programming and dedicated outreach, we aim to promote our mission and offerings to all New Yorkers, regardless of zip code, and retain a visitorship that reflects the diversity of this City. This work would not be possible without the support of the City Council and the Department of Cultural Affairs, and New-York Historical remains grateful for programmatic and capital funds received in recent fiscal years. These funds are essential to our institutional goals, and we thank you and your fellow City Council Members for your exceptional service.

NYBG

**New York Botanical Garden testimony to the
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations
Oversight: Arts and Cultural Organizations' Outreach into New York City Communities**

December 13, 2023

Good afternoon Chair Ossé and Members of the Committee. My name is Angel Hernandez, Director of Government Relations for the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG.) We are part of the Cultural Institutions Group, the CIG – a New York City coalition of 34 fine cultural institutions located in all five boroughs. Chair Ossé, thank you for letting me speak today and for your ongoing support in our city's cultural community. I also want to thank Council Speaker Adrienne Adams, and your colleagues in the council for their supportive efforts as well.

With over 130 years of serving the people of New York, our institution has created programs to address the needs of our city's everchanging communities. NYBG has always played a major role in The Bronx as a cultural anchor where not only our scientific collections and exhibitions should be deemed as our main strength. In fact, we are also a major community partner where we create and promote educational and economic opportunities for local residents, while maintaining open access. For example:

- Our Bronx Green-Up program, which celebrates 35 years, continues to be one of our main outreach programs where we provide horticultural education, training, and technical assistance to Bronx residents, community gardeners, urban farmers, local schools, and community organizations. With over 300 Bronx community gardens the program has had a major role in creating, we celebrate our latest partnership at Karol's Urban Community Farm, located at NYCHA's Castle Hill Houses. There, Bronx Green-up will hire a farm coordinator, pilot youth programs for 4-6-year old's, continuing to build out the farm with more raised beds, lead community workdays, offer free educational and cooking workshops, manage food distributions for the community and more.

- Addressing Food Insecurity in The Bronx, Bronx Green-up also coordinates the work of dozens of community gardens into six Bronx Farm Hubs to donate over 25,000 seedling plants to Bronx community gardens and donating nearly 20,000 pounds of fresh produce to public schools and other charitable organizations.
- We also launched the Bronx Neighbors initiative during the first summer of quarantine back in 2020, where over 120,000 Bronx residents came at no cost to experience our engaging exhibitions and landscape ever since. Our Community Partner evenings is another initiative where we work with elected officials to offer exclusive free all-access passes to their constituents.
- NYBG provides over 500 full-time positions, in which half are Bronx residents and 175 are DC37 union jobs. Sustaining middle-class jobs – the average annual salary and benefits for Bronx staff at the Garden is \$68,000. We also provide career pipelines, like the high school Explainers program, where Bronx students work as mentors and educators for younger visitors in pursuit of careers in science and education. Last year we served 178 Bronx high schoolers.
- Taking part in the economic development efforts around the Rezoning of Webster Avenue, a busy commercial corridor that runs near NYBG, we built an intergenerational affordable housing complex on Webster Avenue and Bedford Park Boulevard to address the ongoing need of affordable housing in the area. All senior residents there have been given a year's membership.

Cultural organizations depend on City funding to provide the sort of quality, community-centered programming we have described today. I join my colleagues in the Cultural Institutions Group, and the entire cultural sector, and ask that DCLA be spared from the next two rounds of the Administration's PEG cuts so that we can continue to serve all New Yorkers.

Thank you.

Angel Hernandez
 Director of Government Relations
 The New York Botanical Garden
ahernandez@nybg.org



Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations

To: Councilmember Chi Ossé

From: Aya Esther Hayashi, PhD, Development Director

Date: December 13, 2023

Dear Councilmember Ossé and committee members,

Thank you for your advocacy and leadership on behalf of arts and culture in NYC.

I write on behalf of **People's Theatre Project (PTP)**. PTP is the largest performing arts organization in Manhattan north of Harlem and a steering committee member for the Latinx Arts Consortium of New York (LXNY). We, at PTP, create theatre with and for immigrant communities to build a more just and equitable world. As an immigrant and Latina-led organization, our neighbors of all ages, backgrounds, and immigration status in Washington Heights, Inwood, and the Bronx trust and rely upon us.

At PTP, theatre is our tool in the work of social justice, amplifying and humanizing the stories of NYC immigrants: we create and produce **original theatre by immigrant artists of color**. Through our **PTP Academy** and **Partnerships** with schools and CBOs, we serve over 1,000 Multilingual Learners (MLLs) every year, free of charge.

We are grateful for the support that we receive from the City Council and the DCLA every year. This funding is essential to our ability to serve your constituents. Because of this, the PEG cuts announced last month concern us greatly. PTP (and so many of our colleague arts organizations Uptown) rely not just on DCLA funding, but also funding from DYCD, DOE, and other city agencies. What is a tiny cut in the scheme of the overall city budget will be devastating, severely impacting our ability to provide service to our immigrant community, particularly our Multilingual Learners.

Today, I join my colleagues in the cultural sector, and ask that DCLA be spared from the next two rounds of the Administration's PEG cuts. We are asking you to partner with us and work toward creative solutions: surely you can see that there is an abundance of creativity in this room and

online! Consider that the impact of City Council funds will *go so much further* if invested in the cultural workers who are a direct link to your constituents. We create safe and inclusive spaces for ALL New Yorkers: City funding is essential and transformative.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Aya Esther Hayashi, PhD
Development Director

December 11, 2023

Testimony by
Jonathan Forgash, Executive Director.
Queens Together
jonathan@queensstogether.org
917-626-8960

Regarding
New York City Council Committees on Small Business, Contracts, and Economic Development
Oversight: The Role of Small Businesses In Shelter Food Procurement

Good afternoon. Thank you for allowing me to speak today on this issue. I am Jonathan Forgash, founder and executive director of Queens Together, a restaurant-driven food relief organization.

We started our work in March 2020, just as COVID-19 was shutting down NYC. Restaurants were closing, people were losing jobs, getting sick, and going hungry. We built a system to raise money and pay restaurants to do what they are already licensed to do; provide culturally fresh meals to the public.

We utilized this system to build a “boots on the ground” emergency response food relief program and small business empowerment initiative. To date, Queens Together has helped feed over 400,000 people and supported hundreds of restaurants. Today, our business model supports multi-cultural mom-and-pop restaurants on the road to success and partners with them to provide meals to neighbors facing food and economic insecurity.

The small business restaurant community of Queens is perfectly situated to provide culturally appropriate fresh-made meals to shelters across the city. Not only can we match restaurants based on cultures and dietary needs, but our model directs the flow of funding to local restaurants which will then uplift the local economy by way of jobs, goods, and services.

We see this work as community building. Successful small business entrepreneurship is a pathway to the middle class for families across New York City. These businesses are also a source of job creation and prosperity in their communities. The Queens Together model has a 5X impact on the community. With every dollar spent on food relief:

1. Food is provided to people in need.
2. Small business restaurants benefit.
3. Jobs are supported.
4. The local economy grows.
5. Tax revenues increase.

As a former chef and caterer, I know the power of providing people with compassionate culinary care. I also know the importance of providing goods, services, and jobs in a community. As someone who works hand in hand with restaurants and community groups across our borough, I see the importance of familiar, culturally rich meals to people struggling for normalcy and a sense of home in a new land.

Thank you for allowing me to speak with you today.

Jonathan Forgash
Queens Together

TESTIMONY OF JESSICA BAKER VODOOR
PRESIDENT & CEO
SNUG HARBOR CULTURAL CENTER & BOTANICAL GARDEN

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL FY24
Oversight Hearing of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries
and International Intergroup Relations
December 13, 2023

As President & CEO of Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden, I am pleased to submit this written testimony to Speaker Adams, Chair Ossé of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations, and the entire New York City Council. Snug Harbor is a nonprofit organization located in CD 49 on Staten Island's North Shore, one of the most diverse areas of New York City. I thank you for this opportunity to detail Snug Harbor's outreach to and impact on our community, and to express our concern over the November Budget Plan and additional proposed cuts as part of the Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG).

Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden is Staten Island's largest cultural organization, welcoming 480,000 visitors to explore our galleries, gardens and grounds, and experience the breadth of history, architecture, culture and the natural environment that we manage across our 83 acres. We are open daily, year-round, from dawn to dusk and our grounds are free to explore. We offer a robust green education and workforce development program, serving thousands of emerging adults from our underserved community each year. We are a property manager, overseeing a historical campus and serving more than 40 tenant organizations. Since 1993, we have been a host site for the NYC Compost Project, which is also targeted for elimination. We are a unique culture park in New York City.

Snug Harbor is located on Staten Island's North Shore, a dynamic, diverse area with no single predominant ethnic or cultural heritage. The North Shore includes 35% Black, 28% white residents, and 26% Latine. Twenty-four percent of our residents live in poverty with 77% of our children qualifying for free/reduced lunch. The level of disengaged youth (16-24 year olds who are neither in school nor employment) hovers around 24%. The North Shore is home to multiple State-designated Qualified Opportunity Zones; Snug Harbor serves 31 North Shore census tracts that are designated as Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) by NYSEDA.

The area is home to multiple immigrant populations, with recent arrivals from Mexico and Central America (many from Indigenous populations) joining established communities from Liberia, Sri Lanka, Albania and elsewhere. Spanish is spoken at home by 11% of the population. The North Shore offers 18,866 units of NYCHA housing, 11,982 of them within a two-mile radius of Snug Harbor. The North Shore is a rich tapestry of culture and vibrant diversity.

Snug Harbor is an essential community resource for Staten Island, providing a robust workforce development program to under-served youth, free cultural programming, subsidized space rental to a host of community organizations, technical and material assistance to local growers, and processing 50+ tons of organic waste as a host of the NYC Compost Project. Snug Harbor supports entrepreneurship with monthly vendor fairs showcasing creators and small businesses, and hosts a variety of food and cultural festivals with community partners. Some examples:

Workforce Development

All workforce development recipients receive workshops in life skills and financial literacy in addition to specific professional training

- Hosted 96 Summer Youth Employment Program participants in 2023
- Longstanding partnership with NYC Department of Probation YouthWRAP program, serving young adults emerging from the criminal justice system
- Year-round partnerships with City Access New York, the GRACE Foundation and other day-hab centers serving people with physical and/or sensory challenges
- Year-round partnerships with Staten Island Urban Center, New York Center for Interpersonal Development, H.E.A.L.T.H. for Youths
- Summer Job Expo held annually in March for Staten Island youth

Free/Low-Cost Arts & Cultural Programming

A sampling of programming, FY23-FY24

- African Film Festival
- Alvin Ailey Dance: Ailey Moves!
- Jazzmobile Lincoln Center
- Little Amal Walks New York
- Sisters in the Studio
- Snug Harbor Dance Festival
- Snug Harbor Porch Plays
- Joy on the Edge: storytelling that amplifies the lived experience of Black Staten Islanders
- Autumn Moon and Lunar New Year celebrations (\$10)

Subsidized Space Rentals

A sampling of organizations that have benefited from free/discounted space rentals for their events

- Beeping Egg Hunt, City Access New York
- Black Girl Magic with Alpha Kappa Alpha
- Eid Fun Day and annual Geek Out Festival, Muslim Sisters of Staten Island
- Harriet Tubman Purple Hat Society monthly meeting
- Juneteenth Festival, Jubilee Collective and National Council of Negro Women
- Love in Bloom, Universal Temple of the Arts
- Mixteca Festival, Pakistani Picnic and Polish Festival
- Women's Playwright Collective New Worlds Festival

Technical and Material Assistance to Local Growers

A sampling of 30 community growing spaces with whom we partner

- Castleton Hill Moravian Church Community Garden (CD49)
- College of Staten Island (CD50)
- Frederick Douglass Memorial Park (CD51)
- Great Kills Garden Club (CD51)
- Hill Street Community Garden (CD49)
- Joe Holzka Community Garden (CD49)
- Roots of Peace Community Garden (CD49)
- Skyline Garden (CD49)
- Staten Island Therapeutic Gardens (CD49)
- West Brighton Community Garden (CD49)

Composting

Note: Snug Harbor received DSNY funding as the host of the NYC Compost Project, which has been eliminated now been eliminated. We will cease compost operations on December 16.

- Since July 1, accepted 11 tons of food scraps
- Since November 1, accepted 13 tons of lawn and leaf bags
- In FY23, processed over 50 tons of organic waste
- Distributed 295,963 pounds of free compost, 8,775 lawn and leaf bags
- Supported over 30 community growing spaces in CD49, CD50 and CD51
- Taught over 9,000 Staten Islanders how to live more sustainably by engaging in community composting

The PEG and Its Impact on Snug Harbor

Snug Harbor is a proud member of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) -- a collection of 34 cultural organizations that operate on City-owned property. We are tasked by the Department of Cultural Affairs with stewarding a unique historical and environmental asset for the City, a mission that we believe is crucial to public health, public life and public benefit. Three CIGs are located on our site: Snug Harbor, the Staten Island Museum and the Staten Island Children's Museum. A cut to one of us is a cut to all of us.

The CIGs have already absorbed a \$5 million reduction at adoption. Programming and services provided by nonprofit organizations have already been reduced as a result of the cuts announced in November. The additional 5% planned cuts in January would be detrimental to the continuing operation of these community programs. Organizations such as Snug Harbor touch every vital aspect of daily life, from public education, health and human services, cultural enrichment to language access.

For Snug Harbor, the impact of the proposed cuts will be devastating. Options we are currently examining:

- Elimination of three full-time staff positions and partial furloughs of remaining staff

- Reduction of security presence across Snug Harbor campus
- Full-day site closures during inclement winter weather
- Elimination of Snug Harbor's participation in the Summer Youth Employment Program
- Reduction and/or elimination of space usage subsidies for community partners and culture creators, including cancellation of support to our Juneteenth celebration and access discounts for marginalized community groups
- Reduction of staff hours dedicated to campus lawn maintenance and garbage collection of our 83-acre campus
- Closure of the Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art visual art exhibition program

The elimination of the NYC Compost Project hosted at Snug Harbor means additional impact:

- Elimination of compost collection, processing and distribution to the Staten Island community
- Elimination of a staff position
- Severe reduction/elimination of workforce development, services and technical support to hundreds of Staten Island community partners and thousands of Staten Island youth

The City cannot withstand a 15% cut to its budget. Any additional cuts to the nonprofit sector will undermine the public safety, health and cleanliness of New York City, and jeopardize the tourism industry, which is only now recovering from the pandemic. Snug Harbor calls on the City to partner WITH the nonprofit sector to work toward creative solutions – not to hinder us. Together, we can productively address the systemic financial challenges that the City is facing. The proposed PEG will further decimate the life of the City with negative impact on tourism and therefore tax dollars.

Cultural organizations depend on City funding to provide the sort of quality, community-centered programming we have described today. The proposed cuts will force a return to pandemic levels of staffing and programming, with profound long-term harm. I join my colleagues in the Cultural Institutions Group, and the entire cultural sector, and ask that DCLA be spared from the next two rounds of the Administration's PEG cuts so that we can continue to serve all New Yorkers.

Thank you for your time.



JESSICA BAKER VODOOR

President & CEO

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Testimony by Staten Island Museum, Janice Monger, President & CEO

Oversight – Arts and Cultural Organizations’ Outreach into New York City Communities

Committee On Cultural Affairs, Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Good morning, Chair Ossé and members of the Committee on Cultural Affairs. Since 1881, the Staten Island Museum (SIM) has been a hub for diverse exhibitions, educational programs, and public events in art, science, and history, welcoming over 30,000 visitors annually. I am grateful for the opportunity to inform you about SIM's many outreach efforts that we need to sustain and grow. SIM works in collaboration with 60 community partners, including many BIPOC-led organizations and those working with special needs populations. SIM supports community-based organizations and a wide-range of individual artists in their cultural and social endeavors. For instance, the Staten Island National Council for Negro Women (NCNW) Youth Chapter and Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS) rely on our space for their meetings. SIM delivers STEAM education programs to school groups at the museum and in schools in Staten Island and Brooklyn, benefiting 11,000 NYC school children annually, 45% from Title 1 schools. The most in-demand program is about Lenape culture, which we aim to expand outreach efforts into every borough to amplify these important cultural lessons and broaden our community impact.

SIM's educational programs, cultural experiences, and community resources are at risk due to proposed funding cuts, endangering services and employment opportunities. Urgently, we appeal to the Committee on Cultural Affairs to help protect NYC cultural funding to ensure that cultural organizations can deliver for our communities. You know the value of culture. I hope these examples of the outreach work that SIM has been doing inspires and gives you what you need to strongly advocate.

In 2019, the Museum implemented a board-approved, multi-year Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) plan. One goal accomplished under this plan is the establishment of a Museum Fellow program, offering young people access to museum careers through an apprenticeship with part-time employment for a nine-month term. Adequate funding is essential to sustain programs such as this. Additionally, we collaborate with AHRC New York City to provide employment training for individuals with developmental disabilities or those requiring individualized services. Our commitment to this program has resulted in SIM hiring two of these individuals in 2023 as part of our staff team.

Since 2022, the Staten Island Museum has digitized 10,000 records from the Frederick Douglass Memorial Park in partnership on an institutional initiative we spearheaded: ACEGen - Access, Collaboration, and Equity in Genealogy Collections. This project provided direct support to the cemetery and our program partner the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society. Additionally, the public was invited to participate in transcribing these documents, turning them from handwritten historical papers into searchable family history records. We held community-powered Transcribe-a-Thon events with members of the public, students, and corporate volunteers, such that more than 150 people have helped transcribe these African-American records to make them publicly accessible and searchable.

In early 2023, the Staten Island Museum hosted a bilingual program with artist Arlette Cepeda from La Colmena, an immigrant rights organization, as part of our *Yes, And* exhibition—a survey of Staten Island artists. This exhibition gave visibility to the work of living, local artists as we came out of the pandemic. During 2022-23, SIM conducted a residency program for photographer Nataki Hewling and HERShot, a girls' photography collective, inspiring students to convey visual narratives. The resulting photography is showcased in SIM's current exhibition, *Vulnerable Landscapes* until December 31, shedding light on Staten Island's vulnerable shorelines and presenting their views on climate change.

Cultural organizations have already received reductions from November cuts. Further cuts will result in reduced hours and programming and will necessitate staffing cuts as organizations like ours run lean operations to deliver the levels of community programming we offer. From employment to programming, the Staten Island Museum steadfastly provides opportunities for all those in our community. Cultural organizations depend on City funding to provide the sort of quality, community-centered programming we have described today. I join my colleagues in the Cultural Institutions Group, and the entire cultural sector, and ask that DCLA be spared from the next two rounds of the Administration's PEG cuts so that we can continue to serve all New Yorkers.

Thank you deeply for your support.

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM

December 15, 2023

Dear Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations,

As a member of the Cultural Institutions Group, a diverse body of thirty-four cultural institutions throughout the five boroughs of New York City with a commitment to providing all New Yorkers and tourists with access to vibrant cultural, historical, and scientific programming, we are proud to submit testimony for the Committee's "Oversight — Arts and Cultural Organizations' Outreach into New York City Communities" meeting.

The Studio Museum in Harlem is the nexus for artists of African descent locally, nationally, and internationally and for work that has been inspired and influenced by Black culture. It is a site for the dynamic exchange of ideas about art and society. In 1968, our founders saw Harlem "as the place for this more experimental, less institutionalized museum because of the sense of newness, strength, and change" that is present here. As the primary visual arts institution in Harlem and first Black arts museum to receive accreditation in the 1987 by the American Alliance of Museums, the Studio Museum continues to be guided by this deeply rooted confidence in and support of our communities. Since opening originally in a rented loft on Fifth Avenue and 125th Street, The Studio Museum in Harlem has earned international recognition for its catalytic role in the formation of a new art history, one fully attuned to the vital contributions of visual artists of African descent. The *Artist-in-Residence* program was one of the Museum's founding initiatives and gives the Museum the "Studio" in its name. The program has supported more than one hundred-and-fifty emerging artists of African or Latino descent; many have gone on to establish highly regarded careers, including several MacArthur Foundation awards. Alumni include David Hammons, Kerry James Marshall, Wangechi Mutu, Mickalene Thomas and Kehinde Wiley.

During its 50-year history, the Museum has also amassed a permanent collection of

144 W 125th Street
New York, NY 10027
www.studiomuseum.org

over 2,000 objects—spanning the 19th through the 21st centuries—and has provided a unique home for the creation, exploration and appreciation of work by Black artists. The Museum's exhibitions expand personal, public and academic understanding of modern and contemporary art and broaden the scope of art historical literature through the production of catalogues and brochures.

While our physical doors remain closed, we engage multiple partnerships across the City as a way to continue our programming and exhibitions. Now in its fifth-year of a multi-year collaboration, our partnership with MoMA PS1 has been crucial, as it is the current site of our annual *Artist-in-Residence* cumulative exhibitions. MoMA has also been an incredible partner of ours, as they continue to host many Studio Museum mission-oriented exhibitions, such as the recent *Projects: Ming Smith* exhibition in FY23. At Lincoln Center and in collaboration with the Public Art Fund, the Studio Museum worked with Nina Chanel Abney and Jacolby Satterwhite for two incredible public installations. As we continue serving constituents outside of Harlem, we expand the Museum's mission and presence, making Black art and culture more accessible for people of color, intergenerational communities, and low-income New Yorkers.

It is an institutional priority that both our longest-standing Harlem school partners— Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School, P.S. 036 Margaret Douglas School, Park East High School, P.S. 79 Horan School, and P.S. 133 Fred R. Moore — receive our high-quality arts instruction at no cost to them. Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School (TMALS) has been one of our valued partners for 14 years. Without a designated art teacher or even a devoted art classroom, the Studio Museum partnership is one of the primary ways that students at TMALS have access to the arts. Since 2017, we have collaborated with Park East high school, where despite limited resources, enthusiastic art teacher Daiana Muñoz and Assistant Principal Dr. Ort enhance our partnership to provide a diverse, creative experience for the kids. Many of our other partners' curriculums reveal significant gaps in their arts-education programs, gaps that would continue without our partnership.

Through teen programming, The Studio Museum creates space for connectivity, holistic support, and positive outlets to channel emotional distress during a time of social turmoil. *Expanding the Walls: Making Connections Between Photography, History, and Community* (ETW) implements a collaborative space for young adults to convene to investigate connections between history, community, and identity through the lens of a camera. ETW is an eight-month program for 16 local teens that incorporates a college-level photography curriculum guided by the Museum's James Van Der Zee collection, along with rich dialogues that promote the exploration of Harlem's cultural landscape. Since its founding in 2001, ETW has served over 300 high school students with targeted professional development, boosting community access to arts education. The program culminates in an exhibition, and the 2024 annual exhibition, *Between matter and memory: Expanding the Walls 2024*, is now accessible online.

Beyond the classroom, the Studio Museum offers programs and experiences for families to share in viewing, discussing, and creating art together. *Lil' Studio* is an early childhood class that engages children in reading, singing, movement, and artmaking guided by the Museum's Permanent Collection. *Books, Authors & Kids* explores literacy and visual arts, while *Family Days* make physical and emotional space for art engagement that educates, connects, and nurtures families. These Family Programs were a staple of our work for many years but have been on hiatus since the onset of the pandemic due to safety precautions and limited event spaces. We have begun relaunching these programs, holding a *Family Day* in Marcus Garvey Park in June, and are looking to increase the frequency of these events this year. Engaging Harlem families is an essential institutional priority, as we work to provide creative engagement with visual art that gives children and families opportunities to foster understanding and togetherness.

In June 2024 and in collaboration with Columbia University's Zuckerman Institute, we will launch "Open Art", a new art therapy-based program which demonstrates the Museum's Learning and Engagement team's continued commitment to centering mental health and wellness within a museum setting. Open Art is rooted in an Open Studio approach, developed by art therapist Pat Allen, in which the roles of facilitator and participant are relaxed, with the facilitator often creating artwork alongside participants. In this way, facilitator and group members are equals. Group members are the authority on their work, determining the meaning it holds, and the facilitator offers materials in an open format, with group members self-selecting materials. Open Art is beneficial in a community-based practice as it can be a vital resource in fostering community connection, growth, and care. Visual imagery, artmaking, and art materials can tap into the subconscious and bring expressions to the surface. Artmaking provides safety, through reflective distance, to begin describing and discussing what can be potentially emotionally charged experiences. Lastly, the therapeutic value of art is a powerful resource which brings community together in spacing of healing and care, providing a level of access that may not otherwise be possible. Upon launch, this is a program we anticipate will continue well beyond FY24.

Despite the unforeseen challenges of the past few years, we have pushed our work to new heights of innovation, collaborating and cementing our community partnerships in remarkable ways. We continue to expand the discourse on Black art and artists, locally, nationally, and globally as we prepare to reopen our physical space on 125th Street. We are proud of the work we have accomplished with local communities, elevating our audience's arts literacy and artmaking skills through our educational and public programming.

All of this is to say that the Studio Museum strongly believes in the united and individual impact of each CIG and the ways in which we engage with the New

York community. We are grateful to the City Council and this Committee for continuing to advocate for arts and culture in such an uncertain time. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Terrence Phearse

Chief of Staff

The Studio Museum in Harlem

The Grenchus Foundation

Testimonial Letter to the New York City Council Committee on Finance,
Hon. Just Brannan, Chair
Hearing: Oversight-Mayor's November Financial Plan
December 11, 2023

December 14, 2023

Thank you to Chair Brannan and the City Council for your support of arts, culture, and arts education across New York City. I'm writing to support the **It Starts with the Arts** coalition — calling on our city to prioritize funding for arts in NYC schools and communities. My name is Mary E. Grenchus and I work at The Grenchus Foundation ~ for my own organization, supporting local artists and culture throughout Manhattan.

The mission of The Grenchus Foundation is a foundation for arts, faith, and culture. We promote events that have to do with arts, faith and culture while also helping artists to become visible, seen, and to make connections with major organizations in the city.

I know for a fact budget cuts in this area would impact the arts, the artists we are working with, and the arts organizations we are in contact with, as well as the youth that we serve in the arts. As we have hosted arts education programs in central park as well as free creation of art in central park for the last 3 years. Cutting funding would cut funding for programs like this as well as for individual artists, and arts employment. Additionally, it would cut cultural arts programs and performances, these decreasing the celebration of culture and diversity in the city; which would be a shame!!!

Arts education is essential as many artists and youth participate in the arts as a healthy way to express themselves, their emotions, as well as to do what they love and are passionate about. Cultural education celebrates diversity and culture, something that is greatly needed and appreciated throughout all of NYC. Many people come to NYC to experience not only the cultural diversity and cultural celebrations and are grateful for cultural education and cultural education events, as well as for the arts and arts education. We have experienced much success in helping artists make connections in nyc and become discovered through the work we do as a foundation and the arts and culture organizations we are in contact with. We have also had many students who have now signed up for lessons with some of the artists in different areas of the arts that would be devastated if budget cuts to the arts took place. This would cause them to lose the arts education they are receiving. Additionally, many students we are in contact with during the summer already crave the arts year round... if you make budget cuts to arts and culture you will see an increase in violence among youth as well as increased hatred of different cultural groups, as arts and culture both foster harmony, diversity, and respect for different cultures as well as different forms of expression. If you make cuts to the arts, these youth will start engaging in violent activities as a way to express themselves, and gangs and gang violence will again be on the rise!!

Budget cuts of \$17.3 million to the Department of Cultural Affairs and more than \$1B to NYC Public Schools threaten our city's creative spirit, economic prosperity, and our students. Cuts to these agencies spell disaster for arts education and the cultural community that is part of the fabric of this city. The damaging cuts laid out in the November Financial Plan are further compounded by the expiration of temporary federal COVID-19 relief funds, which has funded considerable arts education programming to support student's academic recovery and social-emotional wellbeing over the past three school years.

Let us not take it out on our students or their future. And let us not make New York – where culture is a major economic sector with over 400,000 jobs – a place that disregards culture and community as an integral part of our lived experiences. Programs that foster student engagement, mental health, tourism, and community rejuvenation should be the last cut, not the first.

Our city's young people represent the future cultural and economic vitality of our city. Please prioritize investment in arts education and in NYC's future because success **starts with the arts.**

Thank you for your attention and consideration,

Mary E. Grenchus
&
The Grenchus Foundation

The Public Theater's Testimony Arts and Cultural Organizations' Outreach into New York City Communities

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Chair Ossé, esteemed members of the committee, my name is Kate Madigan, and I serve as the Government Relations Coordinator at The Public Theater. I extend my gratitude to Chair Ossé for convening this committee hearing to deliberate on the critical topic of Arts and Cultural Organizations' Outreach into New York City Communities.

New York City, recognized as the global cultural capital, consistently provides both locals and visitors with invaluable opportunities to engage in artistic and cultural experiences. The collaborative efforts of Cultural Institutions, exemplified by The Public Theater, extend beyond our immediate sector to encompass partnerships with valued entities such as the library systems, community centers and community organizations in all five boroughs, schools, and correctional facilities. Through these alliances, as well as our programming using our City owned facilities, The Delacorte in Central Park and The Public Theater in the Lower East Side, we strive to offer free and low cost programs that facilitate a more inclusive and accessible entry point to the world of theater with a particular focus on making our programming welcoming to historically marginalized communities.

I am proud that we have many programs that focus on the work of making theater and our work more inclusive for low-income New Yorkers, Black and brown communities and youth, persons with mobility needs, and older adults. Since we have limited time today I will focus on just three examples and have submitted a full report of our FY2023 offerings along with my testimony.

My first example, Free Shakespeare in the Park, has reached six million people over the last sixty years, and in 2023 we welcomed nearly 80,000 New Yorkers and visitors from around the world to our productions. We continued to pursue ticket distribution strategies to reach a broadly diverse audience of New Yorkers, incorporating COVID-era innovations to our model of ticket outreach to create as many access points as possible. The Public once again provided all tickets to Shakespeare in the Park completely free of charge through daily in-person distribution lines at The Delacorte, with dedicated lines for senior citizens and persons with disabilities, and reserved seating for individuals using wheelchairs/motorized scooters; an in-person ticket lottery was also held at our Astor Place home. Additionally, tickets were distributed throughout New York City's five boroughs via partnerships with a network of local non-profit organizations, including Brooklyn College, Queens Public Library, Bronx Community College, Snug Harbor Cultural Center, and our Public Works partner organizations, all to reach audiences where they live. In order to extend accessibility to those without the time or physical ability to wait in line for tickets, we once again partnered with TodayTix to offer a digital lottery, with virtual lines exclusively for elderly patrons and those requiring ADA resources.

The Public also reaffirmed our commitment to serving patrons with limited mobility, as well as those who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or have vision loss. At each performance, seating was reserved for individuals using wheelchairs or motorized scooters. In partnership with TDF's TAP Plus program and Hands On, both HAMLET and THE TEMPEST offered performances for audiences with accessibility needs.

Over the course of its 2022-23 season, The Public Theater offered a wide range of programming examining the works of Shakespeare through my second example, Hunts Point Children's Shakespeare Ensemble (HPCSE), which, for more than a decade, has offered hundreds of elementary and middle school students the opportunity to develop their confidence, knowledge, and creativity through the transformative experience of bringing

Shakespeare's words to life onstage. In the 2022-2023 Season, approximately 50 students engaged in eight months of study of Shakespeare's timeless tragedy, ROMEO AND JULIET. This year culminated in the students crafting and performing a fully staged production of the play on May 19 at the Bronx Academy for Multi-Media and the Theresa Lang Theatre in Manhattan on May 21 for audiences totaling roughly 500 family members, friends, and teachers.

My third example, The Mobile Unit, continued its mission of extending the reach of Free Shakespeare in the Park by sending stripped-down versions of Shakespeare into New York communities whose access to arts experiences are severely inhibited by their environments. Traditionally, we have toured productions to correctional facilities, halfway houses, community centers, and other places where the most critically underserved and overlooked parts of our population are congregated, and then present these productions as part of our downtown season at 425 Lafayette Street.

Our 2022-23 Season marks a dramatic reinvestment in The Mobile Unit, including a return to our community partners with live touring across New York City. Earlier this year we presented MOBILE UNIT: IN TRANSIT, a limited run concert series from February 8-15, 2023, featuring groundbreaking jazz musician Sarah Elizabeth Charles, and continuing with a tour of Rebecca Martinez's bilingual musical adaptation of THE COMEDY OF ERRORS, featuring music by Julian Mesri. COMEDY toured to 14 community partner locations in all five boroughs from May 2-21, 2023, followed by a run of performances at The Public from May 25-June 11, 2023.

Our commitment to community engagement finds resonance with numerous organizations present here today, each boasting world-renowned community programs. However, the current allocation of less than 1% of the city's budget to our cultural sector, coupled with the prospect of additional 5% to 15% in PEG cuts, underscores the formidable challenges faced by our industry in meeting the needs of both our communities and artists. The repercussions of this fiscal environment are evident in the struggles experienced by cultural organizations citywide particularly in the live-performing arts sector which has been uniquely harmed by the effects of the pandemic.

I stand before you today in the company of my colleagues from around the City committed to serving historically marginalized communities, united in our plea for increased support for the cultural sector in the city's budget. The testimonies presented throughout this hearing underscore the urgent and compelling need for a reevaluation and augmentation of the financial backing extended to our industry. By heeding this call and asking that DCLA be spared from the Administration's upcoming PEG cuts, the city can fortify its commitment to the cultural vibrancy that defines New York and ensure that the arts remain an accessible and enriching force for all residents. Thank you for your time and consideration.

See FY23 Public Theater Programming overview - attached

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, staff, and artists of The Public Theater, please accept our profound gratitude for the City of New York's support of our FY23 (9/1/22-8/31/23) general operations. For the past several years, The Public has grappled with what it means to deliver our mission amid the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the face of numerous complexities, we have endeavored to remain expansive in our vision, continuing to produce artistically excellent productions and programming that we endeavor to make radically accessible to all.

With our 2022-2023 Seasons, The Public Theater realized a full season of productions and artistic programming, once again inviting hundreds of thousands of artists and audience members to gather for a dazzlingly eclectic array of programming at our Astor Place home, The Delacorte Theater in Central Park, and in communities across all five New York City boroughs. Despite these successes, The Public, along with our entire industry, faced ongoing challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, including diminished audience numbers, significant materials cost inflation, rising labor expenses. In response to these circumstances, in FY23 The Public's Board of Trustees and leadership team undertook a series of carefully considered institutional shifts and realignments to meet the demands of this moment. We are a transformed organization, one that has emerged from the last several years with great ambition buoyed by hard-won organizational and financial sustainability. None of this would have been possible without the partnership of the City of New York.

In this report, we will provide the City Administration and City Council with details of our 2022-23 Season, including:

- Free Shakespeare in the Park
- The Downtown Season at Astor Place
- Joe's Pub at The Public Theater
- Community Partnership Programs
- New Work Development
- Institutional Challenges and Realignment

I. FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

Our 2023 Free Shakespeare in the Park Season presented two outstanding productions over nine weeks of performances. As we prepare for our major renovation of the Delacorte Theater and the planned closure of the theater in the summer of 2024, The Public was thrilled to cap 61 years at our home in Central Park with a slate of ambitious, powerful new Shakespeare productions. The 2023 Free Shakespeare in the Park productions include:

- **HAMLET** (June 8 – August 6) For the first time in more than a decade, one of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies returns to The Delacorte Theater. In a new production helmed by Tony Award-winning director Kenny Leon and starring Tony Award-nominee Ato Blankson-Wood, HAMLET speaks to the eternal themes of vengeance, grief, and the consequences of inaction. Hamlet, Prince of Denmark is back home from university when he encounters the ghost of his late father, who claims to have been murdered by his own brother – and demands Hamlet avenge his death. HAMLET reached approximately 67,000 audience members over 9 weeks of performances.

- **PUBLIC WORKS' THE TEMPEST** (August 27 – September 3) Our 11th year of Public Works culminated with our World Premiere musical adaptation of **THE TEMPEST**, Shakespeare's tale of love, revenge, and community. Our Public Works production featured nearly 100 New Yorkers from partner organizations in all five boroughs alongside an ensemble of professional actors and highly skilled amateur performance groups. **THE TEMPEST** reached roughly 12,500 audience members over seven performances.

Approximately 79,203 individuals attended these productions, an increase from an estimated 75,000 attendees in FY22. The demographics of the Shakespeare in the Park season were approximately: 69% White, 10% Asian or Pacific Islander, 8% Hispanic or Latino, 8% Black or African American, 7% Prefer not to say, and 2% Other; less than 1% of attendees were of Native American or American Indian descent in our polling.

TICKETS AND ACCESSIBILITY

Free Shakespeare in the Park has reached six million people over the last sixty years, and in 2023 we welcomed nearly 80,000 New Yorkers and visitors from around the world to our productions. We continued to pursue ticket distribution strategies to reach a broadly diverse audience of New Yorkers, incorporating COVID-era innovations to our model of ticket outreach to create as many access points as possible. The Public once again provided all tickets to Shakespeare in the Park completely free of charge through daily in-person distribution lines at The Delacorte, with dedicated lines for senior citizens and persons with disabilities, and reserved seating for individuals using wheelchairs/motorized scooters; an in-person ticket lottery was also held at our Astor Place home. Additionally, tickets were distributed throughout New York City's five boroughs via partnerships with a network of local non-profit organizations, including Brooklyn College, Queens Public Library, Bronx Community College, Snug Harbor Cultural Center, and our Public Works partner organizations, all to reach audiences where they live. In order to extend accessibility to those without the time or physical ability to wait in line for tickets, we once again partnered with TodayTix to offer a digital lottery, with virtual lines exclusively for elderly patrons and those requiring ADA resources.

The Public also reaffirmed our commitment to serving patrons with limited mobility, as well as those who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or have vision loss. At each performance, seating was reserved for individuals using wheelchairs or motorized scooters. In partnership with TDF's TAP Plus program and Hands On, both **HAMLET** and **THE TEMPEST** offered performances for audiences with accessibility needs.

The dates for **HAMLET** included:

- Open Caption Performance with TDF TAP: July 14, 2023
- American Sign Language Interpreted Performance with Hands-On: July 28, 2023
- Audio Described Performance: July 29, 2023

The dates for **THE TEMPEST** included:

- Open Caption Performance: September 1, 2023
- Audio Described Performance: September 2, 2023

In 2023, The Public embarked on a new accessibility partnership with ACCESS Broadway NY, a consultant group led by performing arts advocates throughout the disabled community, to find new and innovative ways to offer our programming to audiences across the spectrum of ability. For our 2023 Free Shakespeare in the Park Season, we offered on-demand closed captioning and audio description to our audiences through Act One Access, an app which makes theater accessible through audience members' personal mobile devices. This new software provides increased functionality to our accessibility offerings, including:

- Virtual mirroring between Captioning and Audio Description, allowing audience members access to either or both services through the same application.
- Captioning and Audio Description scripts which can be edited at any time to reflect changes to the show and/or casting, making accessibility in the theater an evolving process.
- Real-time operation and troubleshooting from ACCESS Broadway NY, which employs people who are Blind, Hard of Hearing, Deaf and Low Vision for the operator role.

We successfully implemented Act One Access for all performances of the nine-week run of HAMLET. We are working with Act One Access on refining processes for acquiring accurate user data, and we look forward to sharing this information in future reports.

We also continued developing digital programming, which has served to broaden the accessibility of Free Shakespeare in the Park to audience members worldwide. Following the wildly popular GREAT PERFORMANCES recordings and broadcasts of MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING in 2019, MERRY WIVES in 2021, and RICHARD III in 2022, we filmed our 2023 production of HAMLET, which will premiere on GREAT PERFORMANCES in spring of 2024. As with all previous productions are also developing free pedagogical materials for middle and high school teachers to accompany the film's release.

II. THE DOWNTOWN SEASON

Our mainstage programming at 425 Lafayette Street featured a diverse line-up of new plays and musicals, as well as Shakespeare and other classics, in five theaters. Our downtown productions aim to present the most pressing issues of our time, as told by the field's most cutting-edge voices, to the broadest possible audience.

The 2022-2023 season featured work by both the American theater's most celebrated artists and innovative new plays and musicals by a diverse slate emerging artists, including four world premieres and two New York premieres. In total, our 2022-23 Astor Place season served nearly 50,000 audience members with over 320 performances across 425 Lafayette's five theaters.

World Premieres included:

- Suzan-Lori Parks's PLAYS FOR THE PLAGUE YEAR, November 4 – November 27, 2022, encore production April 5 – April 30, 2023. **4,486 attendees.**
- Suzan-Lori Parks's musical adaptation of THE HARDER THEY COME, February 16 – April 9, 2023. **14,013 attendees.**
- Ryan J. Haddad's DARK DISABLED STORIES (Produced by The Bushwick Starr), February 28 – March 26, 2023. **3,590 attendees.**
- Erika Dickerson-Despenza's shadow/land, April 20 – May 29, 2023. **3,932 attendees.**

New York premieres included:

- Greig Sargeant and Elevator Repair Service's BALDWIN AND BUCKLEY AT CAMBRIDGE, September 24 – October 23, 2022. **6,811 attendees.**

The Public Theater – New York Shakespeare Festival
2022-2023 General Operating Report

- Madeline Sayet's **WHERE WE BELONG** (Produced by Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company and in association with Folger Shakespeare Library), October 28 – November 27, 2022. **2,876 attendees.**

Other highlights included:

- Lorraine Hansberry's **A RAISIN IN THE SUN**, September 27 – November 20, 2022. **13,500 attendees.**

III. JOE'S PUB

Founded in 1998, Joe's Pub at The Public Theater presents a diverse range of performances by artists across the fields of music, film, and dance. A semi-autonomous arm of The Public, Joe's Pub shares The Public's mission to reflect the full spectrum of our communities, providing emerging and established artists representing a broad range of genres and backgrounds with an intimate space to perform and develop new work. Since its opening, Joe's Pub has presented over 9,000 performances from an eclectic roster that includes top performers from Broadway, cabaret, dance, world, singer-songwriter, jazz, country and indie genres, today's rising stars, and GRAMMY Award-winners.

In the 2022-2023 Season, Joe's Pub welcomed audiences for nightly programming featuring a mix of familiar and new faces such as Justin Vivian Bond, Bridget Everett, Toshi Reagon, and Murray Hill. In October 2022, the Pub held our second annual Habibi Festival, a week-long celebration of groundbreaking artists from throughout the Middle East/North African regions. **In total, the 2022-2023 Season featured nearly 400 artists across 554 performances for approximately 56,500 attendees.**

IV. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

Public Works

Founded in 2012, Public Works represents one of the most significant changemaking efforts at The Public since the organization was founded in 1954. Public Works aims to restore and build community as a central motivation in our theatermaking, manifesting our core belief that the ability to create art should be shared with everyone, not just the professional or the specially trained.

During the 2022-2023 Season, Public Works continued its year-round efforts to engage our community through weekly classes, monthly social gatherings, semi-regular workshops, and opportunities to attend Public Theater performances. The Public Works team worked closely with eight community partner organizations to offer this annual programming, a majority of which have engaged with The Public for all or most of the program's decade-long history: The Children's Aid Society (Manhattan), Fortune Society (Queens), DreamYard (The Bronx), The Brownsville Recreation Center (Brooklyn), Domestic Workers United (Staten Island and citywide), Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education (Bronx), Center for Family Life in Sunset Park (Brooklyn), and Military Resilience Foundation (citywide).

In summer of 2023, we celebrated Public Works' 11th year of productions at the Delacorte Theater with the World Premiere production of **THE TEMPEST**, adapted by Director of Public Works Laurie Woolery and featuring music by Benjamin Velez. In a thoughtful gender-conscious adaptation directed by Laurie Woolery, **THE TEMPEST** tells the story of the sorceress Prospero, who has succeeded in protecting herself and her daughter from their enemies by isolating on a remote island inhabited by spirits. As the outside world threatens to break into

their controlled existence, Prospero must learn what it means to forgive. THE TEMPEST has been a spectacular showcase for our performers and explores the impacts of colonialism and intergenerational trauma and how these wounds might be healed.

Over the course of FY23, approximately 500 Public Works community members attended classes, theater workshops, and/or theatrical productions throughout the season. Included in this number are 83 Public Works community members who participated in the 2023 Free Shakespeare in the Park production of THE TEMPEST alongside professional cast members. The self-reported demographics of the community ensemble of THE TEMPEST include: 41% Black/African American, 12% Latino/Hispanic, 11% Multi-Ethnic, 8% Asian, 8% White, 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 18% No Response.

Mobile Unit

The Mobile Unit continued its mission of extending the reach of Free Shakespeare in the Park by sending stripped-down versions of Shakespeare into New York communities whose access to arts experiences are severely inhibited by their environments. Traditionally, we have toured productions to correctional facilities, halfway houses, community centers, and other places where the most critically underserved and overlooked parts of our population are congregated; and then present these productions as part of our downtown season at 425 Lafayette Street.

Our 2022-23 Season marks a dramatic reinvestment in The Mobile Unit, including a return to our community partners with live touring across New York City. Earlier this year we presented MOBILE UNIT: IN TRANSIT, a limited run concert series from February 8-15, 2023, featuring groundbreaking jazz musician Sarah Elizabeth Charles; and continuing with a tour of Rebecca Martinez's bilingual musical adaptation of THE COMEDY OF ERRORS, featuring music by Julián Mesri. COMEDY toured to 14 community partner locations in all five boroughs from May 2-21, 2023, followed by a run of performances at The Public from May 25-June 11, 2023.

Approximately 3,406 audience members attended Mobile Unit productions, including THE COMEDY OF ERRORS (1,585 at tour sites and 1,591 at TPT's Shiva Theater) and MOBILE UNIT: IN TRANSIT (230 at tour sites). Over the course of the season, the demographics of The Mobile Unit audience were approximately: 15% Black or African American, 55% White, 24% Hispanic or Latino, 4% Other, 8% Asian or Pacific Islander, and <1% Native American. 2% of responders preferred not to answer. This aligned closely with past seasons.

Public Shakespeare Initiative (PSI)

Over the course of its 2022-23 season, The Public Theater and The Shakespeare Society offered a wide range of programming examining the works of Shakespeare through the Public Shakespeare Initiative (PSI), including: three Public Shakespeare Talks lead by Shakespeare Scholars and notable Shakespearean actors in Joe's Pub; two Teaching Teachers workshops for middle and high school educators, built around our productions of COMEDY OF ERRORS and HAMLET; two artist development workshops; and Education Programs, specifically the Hunts Point Children's Shakespeare Ensemble (HPCSE), which, for more than a decade, has offered hundreds of elementary and middle school students the opportunity to develop their confidence, knowledge, and creativity through the transformative experience of bringing Shakespeare's words to life onstage. **In the 2022-2023 Season, approximately 50 students engaged in eight months of study of Shakespeare's timeless tragedy, ROMEO AND JULIET. This year culminated in the students crafting and performing a fully staged production of the play on May 19 at the Bronx Academy for Multi-Media and the Theresa**

Lang Theatre in Manhattan on May 21 for audiences totaling roughly 500 family members, friends, and teachers.

V. NEW WORK DEVELOPMENT

Developing new works and supporting early-career writers are central to our mission. Through an interrelated suite of new work development initiatives, The Public provides holistic support for artists during every period of career development. Each program fosters connections between artists and audiences, and across ethnicities, ages, and experiences—connections that are fundamental to the work of the institution and the freshness and vitality of American theater.

Early Career Working Groups

The Public's early career working groups provide collaborative, effective models for supporting artists at critical stages of their development:

- **Emerging Writers Group (EWG).** The primary goal of the EWG program is to build meaningful pathways for artistic and professional development for writers at all stages of their careers while fostering a web of supportive artistic relationships. Writers are offered a two-year fellowship supported by a \$7,500 stipend. Eligibility criteria are tailored to serve qualified writers who are shut out of the field's typical play development channels – particularly those without professional representation or graduate school training. The playwrights participate in a bi-weekly writers group led by our New Work Department and featuring master classes with established playwrights. Their fellowship culminates in our Spotlight Series, an industry-invited showcase of work developed during the residency.

Due to the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic and internal staffing changes, our 2020 Cohort was placed on hiatus in Fall 2021 – we were thrilled to welcome them back in the summer of 2022, and the cohort finished out their tenures with performances of their plays in The Public's Spotlights Series taking place throughout the spring of 2023 in the Shiva Theater. The 2020-2023 cohort included Nissy Aya, Aya Aziz, Francisca Da Silveira, Katie Do, Timothy DuWhite, Ying Ying Li, Julián Mesri, AriDy Nox, and Else Went.

- **Devised Theater Working Group (DTWG).** Formed in 2014, DTWG is a resource group designed for artists of all disciplines, including those who don't self-identify as theater makers but for whom theatre is a potent framework. Using a similar model to EWG, DTWG supports cohorts of between eight and ten artists or performance groups that meet consistently throughout the year as they create theater, and offers them the dramaturgical, technical, artistic and administrative resources of The Public. The 2020-2022 Devised Theater Working Group, which concluded their work at our 2023 Under the Radar Festival, included Savon Bartley, Nile Harris, Miranda Haymon, Eric Lockley, Raelle Myrick-Hodges, Mia Rovegno, Justin Elizabeth Sayre, and Mariana Valencia.
- **Joe's Pub Working Group (JPWG)** JPWG supports cohorts of six early career musicians and performance artists by providing a variety of resources, including administrative support, physical space, and curatorial services, while cultivating a community atmosphere wherein those artists can create and sustain new and developing work. The program selects from the field's most exciting artists—identifying musicians and performance artists that exhibit a strong narrative voice in their work—and asks them to explore theatrical storytelling and songwriting. Our 2022-23 cohort included J. Hoard, Lama El Homaïssi, Latasha N. Nevada Diggs, Olivia K, Roshni Samlal, and Sita Chay.

The Public Theater – New York Shakespeare Festival
2022-2023 General Operating Report

- **New York Voices** started from a desire to directly address the crumbling music industry and the lack of album sales, as well as to find a new way to support artists in a manner unique to Joe's Pub. We have committed to commissioning at least three musicians per year and helping them to develop new tools for a culminating performance. The hope for these shows is that they will lead to longer runs in various markets around the country and allow these musicians to access a new realm of funding. In addition, the program provides finishing funds as necessary to assist the artist in fully realizing each project and increase their viability for a touring life. Our 2022-2023 cohort includes Bahia Watson & Liza Paul, Chris Pattishall & Vuyo Sotashe, Daniel J. Watts & Nick Mlaemire, Sunny Jain, and treya lam.
- **Writers-In-Residence.** Over years of building community with theater practitioners of all trades, The Public keenly recognizes the vital importance of offering exceptional playwrights the time, resources, and tools to do what they do best: write. Our **Master Writer Chair**, a position held by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Suzan-Lori Parks, provides an artistic home and support for an established playwright whose work has set the standard for the highest level of achievement in theater. Building off the success of the Master Writer Chair position, we have extended **Artist-in Residence** positions to playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney, director Daniel Sullivan, and composer Shaina Taub. These roles provide industry-leading artists with physical writing space, access to Public Theater resources, and a full-time salary and benefits. We are also proud to host activist-playwright Erika Dickerson-Despenza as **The Public Theater and Barnard College Ntozake Shange Playwright-in-Residence**.

With support from Creatives Rebuild New York, a project of the Tides Center, The Public has also hired Ife Olujobi, Ryan J. Haddad, and Julian Goldhagen as **full-time resident artists** from 2022-2024. The Public recognizes that the working artists in our community need to have an active voice in advocating change on the ground level of our operations and, to that end, these three extraordinary theatermakers working at the intersection of artistry and activism are partnering directly with Public Theater leadership on the areas of their respective expertise while receiving full-time salaries to execute their own artistic goals.

- **Devised Theater Initiative/Under the Radar Festival.** The Devised Theater Initiative is a year-round program that commissions, develops, and presents devised theater in all its forms at The Public. It creates an infrastructure to support the field of devised/independent theater by combining the dramaturgical, technical, artistic, and administrative resources of The Public and the expanding web of relationships of the Under the Radar Festival, a 12-day program promoting the discovery and dissemination of innovative contemporary work from around the world. The Under the Radar Festival serves as a vital presenting vehicle for artists creating work outside the normal avenues of playwright-driven theater practice. After making the heartbreaking decision to cancel our 2022 Under the Radar Festival amidst a spike in COVID-19 cases, we were delighted to bring the festival back for its 18th Season, with performances running January 2 – January 15, 2023. Pieces showcased at the 2023 Festival included SEVEN METHODS OF KILLING KYLIE JENNER, OUR COUNTRY, AN EVENING WITH AN IMMIGRANT, and OTTO FRANK. **In FY23, the 24 Under the Radar productions were attended by a total of 5,659 audience members.**

VI. INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES AND REALIGNMENT

Alongside all our sister theaters, The Public has experienced several extremely difficult years from both a programmatic and financial perspective due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. FY23 was an inflection point year for The Public, during which several factors converged to cause a particularly challenging financial picture. These included: 1) the end of all emergency COVID-19 relief from the federal government; 2) an ongoing 30% reduction of audiences compared to pre-pandemic levels; 3) significant materials cost inflation; 4) tighter

markets leading to increased labor expenses; and 5) limited growth in our contributed revenue streams. Following several months of in-depth discussions and strategic planning, The Public's Executive Team and Board of Trustees have collectively enacted several heartbreaking, but necessary measures to contend with these financial challenges, including a reduction in force (roughly 19% of our fulltime staff), limiting our 2023-2024 mainstage season to five productions, and indefinitely postponing the Under the Radar Festival. We look toward FY24 with the primary goal of returning The Public to a fully balanced budget and are working with our board and staff to develop strategies to increase sources of both contributed and earned revenue. We are confident that, with these measures in the place, The Public will remain a financially sustainable institution that will continue to deliver on the promise of our mission for years to come.

VII. CONCLUSION

The support of the City of New York represents a cherished partnership with The Public Theater, one that heartens our shared endeavor to support artists and serve audiences. Amid a city and theatrical landscape that continues to contend with the long-term impacts of the pandemic, the City enabled The Public to engage hundreds of thousands of artists, audiences, and community members – gathering for the ineffable magic created through live performance. The resources and support necessary to accomplish the expansive work of The Public during a very challenging landscape for the performing arts cannot be understated. We are deeply grateful for all we have accomplished together and look forward to partnering for many more years of exceptional and impactful artmaking.

Testimony to the New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries & International Intergroup Relations
The 92nd Street Y, New York
December 13, 2023

Thank you to the New York City Council and this Committee for the opportunity to share testimony on cultural outreach. **My name is Hannah Mackler, and I am the Director of Government and UJA Relations at The 92nd Street Y, New York (92NY), a nonprofit cultural and community center in Manhattan.**

While we are based on the Upper East Side, we reach patrons, schools, and communities in all five boroughs.

Through our School Engagement in the Arts department, we connect thousands of students – about 6,500 annually – with artists of the highest caliber through school-based instruction and live events at 92NY.

For example, this year's Discovery Series offers curriculum-based dance and music education to students in grades 2-5 Citywide.

- 23 schools are already enrolled this year, from 15 Council Districts, and registration is ongoing.
- Each student will have 18 lessons by a 92NY teaching artist and come to 92NY's Kaufmann Concert Hall twice over the course of the year for engaging performances by the featured artists:
 - For 2nd-3rd graders in Discover Dance, Ephrat Asherie Dance and Passion Fruit Dance Company, both groups former Artists in Residence in 92NY's Harkness Dance Center; and
 - For 4th and 5th graders in Discover Music, GRAMMY-nominee Anat Cohen and GRAMMY-award winner Christian McBride
- 75% of partner schools have Title I status.
- The majority of partner schools receive significant subsidies to participate in the Discovery Series.
- We were disappointed to learn that PEG cuts will be decreasing this year's CDF funding. We ask that there be no further cuts, and that the funding be fully restored and increased as we look ahead to FY25.

We also request that there be no cuts to CASA funding this year.

- FY23 CASA funding enabled 92NY to provide impactful after-school cultural programs at 9 schools in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx.
- We work closely with each partner school to craft a program, and last year's CASA offerings included visual arts residencies, a percussion club, and a hip hop dance residency with Passionfruit Dance Company, to name just a few examples.

Other School Engagement programs include:

- The Concerts Schools Project, which provides in-class music workshops at high schools Citywide, brings students to 92NY for our mainstage concerts, and returns them home again at the end of the evening.

Building on the work done in communities Citywide, 92NY increases access for students to further their skills in the arts through classes and workforce development at 92NY:

- Arts Fellowships offer 4 years of fully subsidized instruction in music, dance, or visual arts at 92NY for select public high school students; mentorship; and access to live 92NY performances.
- Teen Gems offers professional trade skills training for teens in basic jewelry-making techniques.
- Teen Producers offers a two-year paid internship in the arts at 92NY to high school juniors and seniors.

In these ways, we are reaching students where they are, and also enabling them to experience art at a cultural organization outside their neighborhood.

In a similar vein, in March 2024, we are thrilled to be reviving Teen Arts Week, a Citywide celebration of the arts – for teens, by teens.

- Leading cultural organizations across all five boroughs present free admission, classes, workshops, and performances.
- In 2019 and 2020, 80% of registrants were first time visitors to an institution
 - Helping teens take advantage of the vast cultural resources of the City, in their own neighborhoods and in other boroughs
 - Enabling teens to expand their own cultural understanding and artistic skills, and explore their interests

We thank you for the support you have already provided, and we urge you to continue to support NYC cultural organizations by exempting DCLA from further PEG cuts this year, FY24, and increasing funding available in FY25.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,



Hannah Mackler
Director, Government and UJA Relations

Move the Money Res 423 Testimony

I am Alice Sturm Sutter, a retired family nurse practitioner and public health nurse. During the COVID epidemic I volunteered with the NYC Medical Reserve Corps. I now volunteer with SHAP, the NYC Street Homeless Advocacy Program.

I strongly urge our City Council members to pass resolution 423, "Move the Money" This resolution is direly needed, more than ever.

According to the Coalition for the Homeless, NYC homelessness is at its highest level since the 1930s Great Depression. In September 2023, there were 87,907 homeless people, including 31,510 homeless children, sleeping each night in New York City's main municipal shelter system.. Families entering shelters come from the poorest neighborhoods in New York City, mostly due to lack of affordable housing. Causes include eviction, severely overcrowded housing, domestic violence, job loss; and hazardous housing conditions. Each night thousands of unsheltered homeless people sleep on New York City streets, in the subway system, and in other public spaces. There is no accurate measurement of this population. Numbers are underestimated. Many endure mental illness or other severe health problems. Black and Latinx New Yorkers are disproportionately affected. Through my volunteer work I have come to know many sick disabled and aging homeless people who we are unable to help find adequate living spaces for. We meet many asylum seekers who are unable to find warm clothes, and may soon lose their temporary spaces. All struggle with poor nutrition and hunger.

We are facing drastic budget cuts proposed by our mayor. They will bring even more pain to those New Yorkers who can barely afford basics. Thousands of housing and service agency positions are being eliminated. Library hours and essential compost programs are being cut. Education, childcare, City College assistance programs will lose funding. City workers are losing their jobs. Cuts are planned for food pantries, domestic violence shelters, after-school programs and legal services for the most needy. Our city health care system, essential to the neediest in our city has already been cut back severely with ongoing inadequate staffing. . I was alarmed at the shortage of care in our nursing homes, where I volunteered during the COVID epidemic. The shortages endured well beyond the epidemic! Our very essential home care workers are underpaid and having their hours cut, while the need for their services is rising rapidly. And the city is now trying to deny the health benefits promised in our contracts to NYC retirees!

While the mayor blames our asylum seekers for our problems, we need to shift our gaze to the outrageous national military budget.. National Priorities Project gives the facts. In Dec 2022 our Congress passed an obscene military budget of \$858 billion. The president is now asking for \$105 billion more for military aid to Ukraine, Israel, border security and deterring China.

To date, the U.S. had approved \$113 billion in aid to Ukraine, including \$66 billion in military aid. The current proposal includes an additional \$46 billion in military aid

to Ukraine. The US and NATO surround Russia with weapons, provoking Russia to continue this war. The US has discouraged Ukraine from engaging in peace negotiations.

Annual military aid to Israel is \$3.8 billion . The \$13.9 billion request for military aid to Israel is equivalent to 75 percent of the total Israeli military budget. Biden just bypassed Congress to fund more weapons through the State department. Israel's attacks on Gaza, with massive bombing of homes, schools, hospitals, food and fuel supplies, with direct attacks on health care workers and journalists is genocidal and in violation of international law.

This package caters to anti immigrant Congressional members with \$7.8 billion for Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Their combined budget is already \$26.2 billion. These agencies detain and deport immigrants.

US government states the hideously bloated budget is needed to contain China. The US has increased military bases throughout the Indo-Pacific region with massive environmental destruction including fuel leaking into oceans and coral reefs. We are not building allies that way. It is time to use diplomacy and negotiate globally. And demilitarize!

So pass Move the Money and let our NYC communities survive and thrive.

Good afternoon. My name is Ann Fawcett Ambia. I am a member of Brooklyn For Peace and Fight Back Bay Ridge. I'm a retired public interest attorney, who worked as a staff attorney at DC 37, representing NYC municipal workers in housing proceedings of all kinds.

Congress -- doesn't listen to us. As a body they tend to make decisions based on what's profitable for big business. And wars are profitable. Unfortunately, war profits have led the U.S. to become THE country with the largest % of its budget spent on the military and wars of any nation on earth.

What that priority in spending leaves for social services programs has put the U.S. far down the list internationally in every area, from providing affordable healthcare, education, and housing to community services. A few examples of what these spending priorities have meant for me personally, as a now single retiree living alone on one fixed income, are:

- 1) Having to fight as a NYC retiree to keep my employer promised retiree health care benefits from City plotting to save \$, by privatizing my federal Medicare into an inferior for-profit Medicare Advantage plan.
- 2) Having to fight to restore weekend service for the X28 Express bus that runs past my home, so that I can get into the City without having to walk 7 blocks back home from the nearest subway at night.
- 3) Shortages during pandemic 2020 that left the park nearest me filled with garbage and broken benches, both inside it and along its perimeter sidewalks, with the children's playground equipment broken and covered in yellow caution tape.

Now, with budget cuts pending from the end of COVID stimulus funds and ever increasing war spending, these same things and more are on the line again. I'm even worried that Medicare and my pension will be defunded, leaving me with nothing to live on. So much for the "golden years".

However, I am in better shape than many of my former municipal worker clients, whose lower pay leaves them with unsustainable retirement incomes that mean having to choose between essentials like buying food and medicine or paying rent. For many, the pending budget cuts will mean no internet access when libraries are closed; a harder time getting Access-A-Ride to get out anywhere, fewer senior citizen programs. Cuts to programs like Meals On Wheels will leave many disabled or ill retirees with NO access to food, as funding for Mutual Aid orgs that delivered food already ended. These are just a few examples of the disproportionate impact of across the board budget cuts on the same people who were lauded as "essential workers" for keeping NYC running just a short time ago.

We are vulnerable and we are asking you, our City Council members, to be our voice. Please vote to pass Resolution 423, so that NYC can go on record locally and nationally in support of us, the PEOPLE, over war spending.

Testimony submitted on Dec. 13, 2023:

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations

I'm Charlotte Phillips, a Brooklyn resident. I want to thank the committee for holding this hearing on this important and timely Resolution.

I'm a pediatrician, and I worked for my entire career in the New York City public hospital system, most recently in Bushwick as part of the North Brooklyn Health Network. I am also the Chairperson of Brooklyn For Peace. Among the reasons that I retired from clinical practice was so that I could focus my energy on working for reallocation of our national resources away from military buildup and toward the well-being of children.

I am very disappointed by the Mayors' recent announcement of a five per-cent in all New York city services. I am especially alarmed by the proposed decrease in resources allocated to Health and Hospitals, as well as to the Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division (B-HEARD) which provides mental health services. As a pediatrician on the front line, I would see on a daily basis how often these services are needed, and can make the difference between life and death.

But the real question is, why are these cuts even necessary? Why shouldn't the New York City Council push Mayor Adams, in line with the US Conference of Mayors, to call for more funding from the federal government. In 2022 the US spent \$877 billion, more than the next 10 countries combined, on military buildup. In Fiscal Year 2024, 56% of the federal discretionary budget will go to military buildup. This is a time when our country is not at war, and when the greatest threats to our security are from the climate crisis, not from any foreign military power.

Resolution 423 would mandate that the City Council call on Congress and the President to move significant funds away from military buildup into vitally needed social services, to hold in-depth public hearings on the basic human needs of City residents that are unmet. I urge this Committee and the Council as a whole to pass Resolution 423.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Charlotte Phillips, M.D.

██████████ Brooklyn NY 11201

cpforpeace@gmail.com

██████████

Testimony submitted at City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs in favor of Resolution 423.

Constancia Romilly



New York, NY 10003

cdromilly@gmail.com

Committee members and friends:

I am a Bellevue Hospital Center Advance Practice Registered Nurse, now retired. I worked in Emergency Services, Pain Management, and Infection Control.

I am the mother of three sons who attended public schools in New York City, Atlanta, and Detroit.

I am the grandmother of five grandchildren who attend public schools in Los Angeles, Oakland, and New Haven.

I am a gold star daughter whose father died fighting in WWII while I was an infant.

I have lived on East 7th Street since 1968.

I have observed the underfunding of schools, health care facilities, neighborhood services, and cultural institutions throughout every facet of life in my community.

At the same time, as a well-informed citizen and voter, I have shuddered at the huge sums of money spent on war. I hate war. Humans must find another way to resolve our differences.

Move the money from war to human services. Pass this resolution.

Testimony of Dr. Frances Geteles, PhD., Clinical Psychologist

Presented before the New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries
and International Intergroup Relations

Regarding the need for money to enable justice for people with mental health problems who are too often unhoused and living on the streets or are housed, inappropriately, in our prisons and jails where the care they need is not available.

In Support of Resolution No 423

December 13, 2023

My name is Frances Geteles and I am a Clinical Psychologist, licensed in New York State. I am a member of the Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (CAIC), also known as the HALT Solitary Campaign, and the Jails Action Coalition (JAC). These groups are fighting on behalf of the people who are in the New York City jails and the New York State prisons to assure that they are treated humanely, that they are given the care and treatment they need, and that they are helped to build better futures for themselves and their families.

As a psychologist, I am particularly concerned about the fact that people who are struggling with mental health problems are very much overrepresented in our incarceration system. They do not belong there. Having a mental health disability should not be treated as a crime. Unfortunately, they are there because we have a radical shortage of mental health treatment facilities, programs, or other appropriate and affordable services.

The development of this problem dates back to events of the 1960s, the era of the Civil Rights Movement. Prior to that time there were many psychiatric facilities. But most of those facilities were dreadful hell holes, where individuals were merely dumped and warehoused and treated very cruelly. The public was made aware of how bad the situation was, and this led to a fight for de-institutionalization.

When laws were finally passed that led to the closing of these terrible psychiatric institutions, the promise was that they would be replaced by community facilities and the people who were released would be transitioned into that community care.

But this promise was never really kept – certainly not to the level it was needed and continues to be needed to this day. A critical reason was underfunding of the program. Money was saved by closing the hospitals, but it was not then put into the creation of the promised community services. Under the Community Mental Health Act, the federal government initially provided direct payment for community-based nursing homes which were accessible to people needing long-term mental health care. But later the laws were changed and under new federal restrictions these nursing homes could no longer take in individuals who were dealing with mental health issues. As a result of these changes a large majority of those needing care are either homeless and living on the streets, or are being housed in our jails. In other words, they were moved from one terrible living situation to another which is often just as hurtful and cruel. This must change.

The federal government has an obligation to participate with the city in the care of all of our people. One critically important aspect of this is to make sure that the funding that is needed to appropriately care for the people with mental health problems is made available. Instead of spending our money for war and bombs, it should be used to help and support many programs for the people – including helping the people with mental health problems to get the care they need so we can keep them in decent living conditions and out of the jails.

With this urgent need in mind, I ask that you pass Resolution 423.

December 13, 2023

Good Afternoon:

My name is Eileen Bardel and I live on Staten Island. I am grateful to have the opportunity to address the City Council today to express why I believe it is important that Resolution 423 is passed by the City Council.

As we witness the seemingly endless wars going on all over the world the suffering of children is happening right before our eyes. This is what war does. As long as our tax dollars are used to continue these wars we bear a responsibility for the results. But we don't have to travel abroad to learn about the plight of innocent children.

According to some statistics 1 in 5 children on Staten Island is food-compromised. Nationwide it is estimated to be 1 in 6.

Without access to affordable and nutritious food a child's ability to learn and begin to build a successful future is severely undermined. Food insecurity continues to grow especially within Black and Latino communities. Homelessness. In an article written by Tony Flosson and published 10/26/2022, more than 104,000 public school students in NYC were homeless during the last school year. 1 in 10 children lived in shelters, in cars, in abandoned buildings or outside because of rising rents and housing shortages.

Ahead or right at home this is what happens when congress spends our tax dollars for defense spending instead of taking care of people's needs.

Thank you.

Good afternoon members of the City Council. My name is Faye Moore and although I am an employee of the Professional Staff Congress the testimony and opinions I offer today are my own and are not submitted as a representative of the PSC.

For the majority of my adult work life, I have worked in or represented workers in NYC public sector social services. NYC social services are historically underfunded; always the first place cuts are sought and the last area to see any extra resources. As we have seen the federal government pour tax dollars into the Department of Defense, we have seen programs addressing the needs of the elderly, children and veterans shrink and face elimination as the result of a reduction of funding to local governments.

As a result of this underfunding, local governments have had to make tough choices about programs that provide food, jobs and job training, safe havens for survivors of domestic violence and affordable housing. As we speak today, the NY City Council is responding, yet again, to demand for across the board cuts that harm all levels of public education from CUNY to 3K.

We are represented by a government that willingly agrees to fund the DoD at massive amounts of our tax dollars while they refuse to act on initiatives that provide jobs, and funding for education and childcare because of who will benefit from the service.

This country treats poverty as a moral failure. Those in Washington do not understand that investment in human infrastructure is just as important (if not more) as the concrete and iron infrastructure that has received some investment.

As a taxpayer I support Res. 423. I want money to be moved to social programs will help to populate our

city with healthy children that have access to a quality public education from age 3. I want my taxes to fund food for the elderly, services for veterans, and affordable housing for all. Move the money and move it now.

Respectfully submitted,

Faye Moore
Resident of NYC Council District 36
moorefaryce@gmail.com

When I watch shows about what NYC needs, I hear the inevitable chant that “ funds are not available.” No. we are not broke!

How can I say such a thing,? Because data speaks loudly. A huge pot of money is there.

In order to access it, funds must be in the federal budget. The military budget was one sixth of this year’s federal budget, costing one and a half Trillion dollars.

Added to the Pentagon’s trillions, the feds must pay for Social Security, SSI, Medicare, Medicaid, welfare and debt.

What’s leftover is fought for by numerous departments competing to fulfill their mandates. Education and social services got \$298 billion. I didn’t say trillion. Federal budgets are plundered even further by lobbyists -- some are arms dealers and manufacturers.

NYC could lead the charge for more funds for human needs. One way could be a legal maximum on military expenses. Another could be a small percentage of the Pentagon’s budget that would be earmarked for human needs.

How could such a vast change come about?

It starts by winning support for Resolution # 423, the “Move The Money” resolution. It’s not a big deal. 423 is a legal requirement for the City Council to organize citizens for a change in priorities from war to people. We’re ready for it. New York needs the money! My library needs the money.

Thank you.
Georgia Wever

**Written Testimony for Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries,
and International Intergroup Relations
In support of Resolution 0423-2022
December 13, 2023**

I'm Gloria Brandman and I'd like to thank the committee for holding this very important hearing. I served in NYC Public Schools as a special educator for over 30 years. I'm also representing Retiree Advocate, a caucus in the Retired Teachers Chapter of the United Federation of Teachers. We are one of 60 groups that have endorsed Move the Money Reso 423 and I would like to explain how important this Reso is to the education of all our students, especially those with disabilities.

The students and families that I was privileged to work with needed extra services to succeed in school and in their lives. Many came on school busses and required paraprofessional to assist getting to school as well as in the classrooms. Smaller class size and additional teaching supports were also necessary. And of course extra programs such as art, afterschool, preschool and computer technology help ensure happy and thriving children. These are all slated to be cut by the Mayor.

City officials have said that the Department of Education will be cut by \$547 million this fiscal year and \$600 million next year. Why should any of our students be deprived of what they need to succeed in the richest country in the world. These cuts should not be necessary because the money is clearly available.

Last year Congress voted to approve up to \$877 billion in military spending for 2023. In Fiscal Year 2024, 56% of the federal discretionary budget will go to the military buildup. Who benefits? Military contractors and weapons manufacturers. Not our children, our seniors, our poor and working people.

Resolution 423 mandates the City Council call on Congress and the President to move significant funds away from the military budget in order to fund programs which truly benefit our communities and to hold public hearings on the basic human needs of City residents that are unmet.

New York City can and should set an example for our entire country,
especially for our children.

I urge this Committee and the entire Council to pass Resolution 423.

Thank you for your attention

Gloria Brandman

gbran289@aol.com

[REDACTED]

Hi, thank you chairman Ossé and all council members. My name is Greg Calvin. I am a Queens resident, and I support Resolution 423. By passing resolution 423, the council would simply state that the military budget directly takes away federal funding that is needed to support the people and services of New York City. When funding of military bases overseas, to take just one example, competes with programs struggling to survive here, something is not right. I thank the committee for taking the time to consider this resolution and hope it will be passed and voted on next week!

Sincerely,

Gregory Calvin

 Queens NY 11385

December 13, 2023, City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs: Public hearing on Reso 423

Testimony of Hillary Exter, HJExter@yahoo.com [REDACTED] in support of Reso 423

My name is Hillary Exter. I am a life long NYC resident, a rent stabilized tenant, an elder, a retired social justice lawyer who done prisoners' rights work and has worked in a community economic development program working with community-based organizations in East New York/Cypress Hills/Brownsville/Bushwick, and a former NYC public school teacher. I am a cofounder of an environmental justice organization working along the waterfront and park land in Flushing Bay, Queens, and a board member of the most loving nonprofit child care organization in Cypress Hills, Brooklyn. In my retirement I have volunteered in various capacities working with asylum seekers, our newest New Yorkers and in a therapeutic horticulture program at Rikers Island. I am a cancer survivor and Jew. I get around the city by public transportation and am a frequent user of our libraries, parks and museums. I say this all to and lend my heartfelt support of the resolution because in so many ways I see first-hand the pain and joys on our city, have a deep commitment to making the city or more just, equitable and thriving place.

I thank the Committee for holding this hearing and to the many Councilmembers who are co-sponsors, including my own Councilmember Keith Powers.

Our city cannot afford the draconian cuts that the major has proposed. The inhumanity of the lack of affordable housing and mental health services are appalling. Class size and space constraints in public schools are major issues. Youth services are so important. Quality and affordable childcare is needed. Parks, libraries and cultural institution play such an important role in our quality of life. Safe, dependable public transportation is essential. Health care is a major need. Infrastructure maintenance is needed.

All this is expensive—**and the money is there**. But sadly, how the government is using our tax dollars is shocking. According to the National Priorities Project, New York City residents' federal tax dollars accounted for \$36.46 billion of the US military budget in 2023. Last year our Congress voted to approve up to \$858 billion in military spending for 2023. That's \$45 billion more than President Biden had asked for. Congress is restoring weapons programs that the Dept. of Defense wants to eliminate. Who benefits? Military contractors and weapons manufacturers like Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, and Northrup Grumman. Moreover, military spending has supported the bombings, civilian death and injuries, and destruction in Gaza.

Our priorities and our funds must shift dramatically. We call upon you to pass Reso 423 to call upon the federal government and its legislators to move significant funds away from the military budget in order to fund human needs and services

We are retired teachers. We are also parents, grandparents and great grandparents. We are community members who care about the education of our young ones.

For years, we have urged Congress to cut back on its military spending - indeed, to end its involvement in wars around the world. Like so many of our fellow community members, we have been opposed to cuts in the budgets for human needs, such as education, housing, and health. We urge the New York City Council to adopt the Move the Money proposal urging Congress to cut back military spending and restore human needs budgets. Adopting this proposal will tell the rest of the nation how much New York City cares about people.

Jaki and Henry Florsheim

Testimony of Jane Tara Currie before the New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations, Council Member Chi Ossé, Chair.

December 13, 2023

Good afternoon. Thank you Chair Ossé and other committee members for holding this hearing on Resolution 423. My name is Jane Tara Currie, a native-born New Yorker residing in Brooklyn. I serve as the Downstate Co-Chair of Peace Action New York State, and an organizer with the Move the Money–NYC Campaign.

I will leave it to my colleagues to present testimony with the facts, figures and details on the many human needs which are underfunded while weapons manufacturers reap enormous profits from Department of Defense contracts. You may be in agreement with those analyses but still question the importance of passing Res. 423, a resolution about the Pentagon budget, over which the council has no direct control. My testimony will focus on the answer to that question.

Our Mayor has announced that he must implement an austerity budget, cutting money from vital and already under-funded social services, like schools, libraries, parks, and hospitals. He says he must do this because New York City just doesn't have the money to sustain these services. How is it that the largest and richest city in the largest and richest country in the world doesn't have enough money to run its schools effectively? To a great extent, this is because our national leadership has chosen to allocate about 60% of the federal discretionary budget to the Pentagon, a department which has never been able to pass an audit. Our city leadership needs to say loudly and clearly that this is theft. The city should not quietly "do its best" with the inadequate funding it has. The mayor and council must assert that there is plenty of money around; it's just not being allocated to our cities and localities to provide the social services that the people of every other rich country in the world has. The U. S. Council of Mayors made such a declaration back in 2017.

As members of the Council of the City of New York, you have a megaphone that will be heard nationally. Use it to say it's time to rethink what we mean by national security: Move the Money from War to Our Communities.

FOR THE RECORD

[REDACTED]

From: Keith Nelson <keith@bindlestiff.org>
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2023 9:43 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations

[REDACTED]

Written Testimony of Keith Nelson
Executive Director
Bindlestiff Family Variety, Arts, Inc.
Keith@Bindlestiff.org

[REDACTED]
Attn: New York City Council Finance Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations

Ref: December 13, 2023, 1 p.m.meeting
Oversight - Arts and Cultural Organizations' Outreach into New York City Communities

Dear Council Members,

I wish I could have been there in person for today's committee meeting. Glad I was able to be there this past Monday to bring the creative spirit to the budget cut discussion.

My name is Keith Nelson. I am a clown, juggler, Executive Director and co-founder of the Bindlestiff Family Cirkus, a non-profit arts organization.

Since 1994, we've presented circus and variety arts in non-traditional spaces like breweries, warehouses, and even Green-Wood Cemetery. Plus, more obvious places like theaters, schools, festivals, and most recently, free shows in NYC's streets. We are also the producers of the NYC Unicycle Festival, now in its 14th year.

While concerned by city wide budget cuts, I am here to share our appreciation of the city's support. This includes DCLA, DOT, and City Council. We want to recognize how Open Streets has benefitted New York. We want to let you know what Bindlestiff has been able to do with this support.

In 2021, after a 60-week run of Bindlestiff's Open Stage on Zoom, we were ready to get the Cirkus back on the road. We imagined a mobile stage concept equipped to present live music, wire walkers, and acrobats. With a boost of pandemic relief funding, the Cirkus stages were brought to life, and in the summer of 2021, Open Streets gave Bindlestiff Family Cirkus's Flatbed Follies a home.

For the past three years we have been working with the DOT to tour the 5 boroughs, bringing high caliber art to often overlooked communities and neighborhoods. Even with budget cuts and the expiration of federal pandemic funds, this year we presented 73 shows in 36 Open Street locations- and 23,000 New Yorkers were able to experience the Follies. The city's support of cultural initiatives made this possible.

In the past three years of the Follies, we have been able to provide work for nearly 400 musicians, performers, teaching artists and production staff. We offered hundreds of New Yorkers hands-on circus arts educational experiences, and best of all, we are able to do this for free. When we bring the show to the streets, there are no tickets, no one is turned away because they can't afford it. New York City funding support makes this possible.

Bindlestiff's Flatbeds were created to host more than just the Cirkus. Workshops, movies, bands, DJs, and discussions take place on these shared stages. We have been able to present dozens of bands and other performance groups, including the Marching Cobras, King Charles Unicycle Troupe, the Kaisoko Moko Jumbies, and numerous marching bands from HONK NYC. Poets and politicians have been able to join us on stage. The Follies create a place for communities and artists to come together via a shared resource. Thank you, New York City, for making this possible.

We look forward to continuing to partner with city institutions. Concerning budget challenges, we encourage the city to include the nonprofit and cultural organizations to work toward finding creative solutions, our sector's specialty. We can all work together to keep the magic alive, and celebrate the things that make New York, New York.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Keith Nelson

Bindlestiff Family Cirkus
PO Box 386
NYC 10009
<http://www.bindlestiff.org>

I am a retired CUNY adjunct lecturer—I taught English for 30 plus years at BMCC and was the VP for Part timers at the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) for 13 years. PSC is the union that represents 30,000 CUNY faculty and staff. I am an active member of the Retiree Chapter. CUNY needs so much support...even though a jewel of the city, its 25 colleges providing opportunities for 500,000 students each year, most of whom go on to work in the city and pay taxes—it has been underfunded for years. I know the City Council has increased funding for the community colleges which are its charge, and we are grateful, but we need more. Austerity is the common excuse—but there is no excuse for this undervaluing. The 838 billion dollar military budget is excessive—we could lop off a mere ten percent and attend to so many CUNY needs. For example, the national ratio of counselors to students is 1: 1000; at CUNY it is 1: 2,700. Adjuncts, who teach 77% of the courses have no job security or insurance after retirement. Our current contract demands include intellectual property rights and greater equity between titles.

At Move the Money, an outgrowth of US Labor Against the War, we are connected to an even deeper impulse—to redirect the impulse to war. As Aldous Huxley wrote decades ago, “War is not a law of nature, nor even a law of human nature. It exists because men wish it to exist; and we know as a matter of historical fact, that the intensity of that wish has varied from absolute zero to a frenzied maximum....we can wish otherwise than we actually do. It is enormously difficult for us to change our wishes in this matter; but the enormously difficult is not the impossible.” Author Arthur Kessler wrote: “Until we have created a romance of peace that would equal that of war, violence will not disappear from people’s lives.”

Resolution 473, which so many of you have co-sponsored, is a step in this expansion of consciousness. A public hearing, which the resolution asks for, would enable people to get a deeper understanding of the effect of military spending on their lives.

Marcia Newfield

██████████ NY 10025

revolu@earthlink.net

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FOR THE RECORD

Testimony before NYC City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations, Re: Res 423, December 13, 2023

Mary Nolan, Professor of History emerita, NYU

The pentagon budget for 2024 is \$886 billion dollars and it has grown over the past several years. The U.S. spends more on its military than the next 10 countries combined! The military budget accounts for over 50% is federal discretionary spending, that is, everything other than Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. 18% of every federal tax dollar you and I pay goes to the Pentagon. The Department of Defense has more money than it knows what to do with and more money than it can account for, having failed every audit since audits were required.

New York City, on the other hand, is being asked to practice austerity. The NYC budget was \$109 billion in 2023 and Mayor Adams wants to cut that by 20% or \$22 billion for 2024. These drastic cuts will hurt every single City agency, institution, and program. Let's look at one that I, as a lifelong educator, care deeply about—libraries.

The 3 NYC public library systems are a vital and impressive part of our civic infrastructure and educational system. Their 220 branches receive 37 million visitors a year. They circulate 491 million books, videos, and ebooks, and provide 7000 public computers. They run 263,500 programs ranging from tutoring and homework help to adult literacy and citizenship preparation classes and computer training and job hunting help. They offer concerts and lectures of all sorts. As sociologist, Erich Klinenberg noted, public libraries are, "Palaces for the People... they help fight inequality, polarization and the decline of civic life."

Yet Mayor Adams plans to cut library funding from \$36.2 million this year to \$12.6 million in 2024. This will force libraries across the city to cut 7 day a week service and end Sunday service in most branches. They will have to reduce spending on library materials, programming, and building maintenance and repairs. And what will the City gain by severely weakening these essential institutions. The \$23.6 million "saving" amounts to less than .02% of the City's budget. According to Mitchell L. Moss, NYU professor of urban policy and planning, "Cutting libraries is the moral equivalent of starving those who cannot afford to subscribe to a newspaper or buy an online book."

Mayor Adams claims he has to make these drastic cuts in order to pay for the migrant crisis. But the problem isn't migrants; the problem is the obscenely large military budget. Redirecting even a small portion of the \$886 billion military budget would cover the \$22 billion Adams wants to cut. Moving the money from the Pentagon to the needs of our community is essential. I urge the committee to vote for Res 423 and work with other cities and organizations to pressure for a revision of federal spending priorities.

Hi. I'm Matthew Weinstein. I live in Prospect Heights in Brooklyn and I've lived and worked in Brooklyn my entire life. And I'm a proud member of **Brooklyn For Peace**.

Today, I want to talk trash. Being a community activist, I care about my neighborhood and my neighbors. So my neighbors always see me picking up litter on the length of my block, keeping my tree pits clear of soda cans, candy wrappers and other trash. They call me the Sanitation Commissioner.

Our streets are filthy but the DOS has been the first to suffer when cutbacks are made. The once-ubiquitous trash baskets have been removed by the thousands. So people just toss their litter in our tree pits or just throw it in the street. And the baskets that remain, overflow because DOS doesn't empty them on time...not enough workers, trucks. Cutbacks.



This is the richest city in the world. But our filthy streets do not reflect that. And now, with the Mayor ordering draconian cuts, the amount of trash on our streets will grow exponentially.

Our City can have good things. Our people can have vital services delivered instead of receiving one round of cutbacks and layoffs after another.

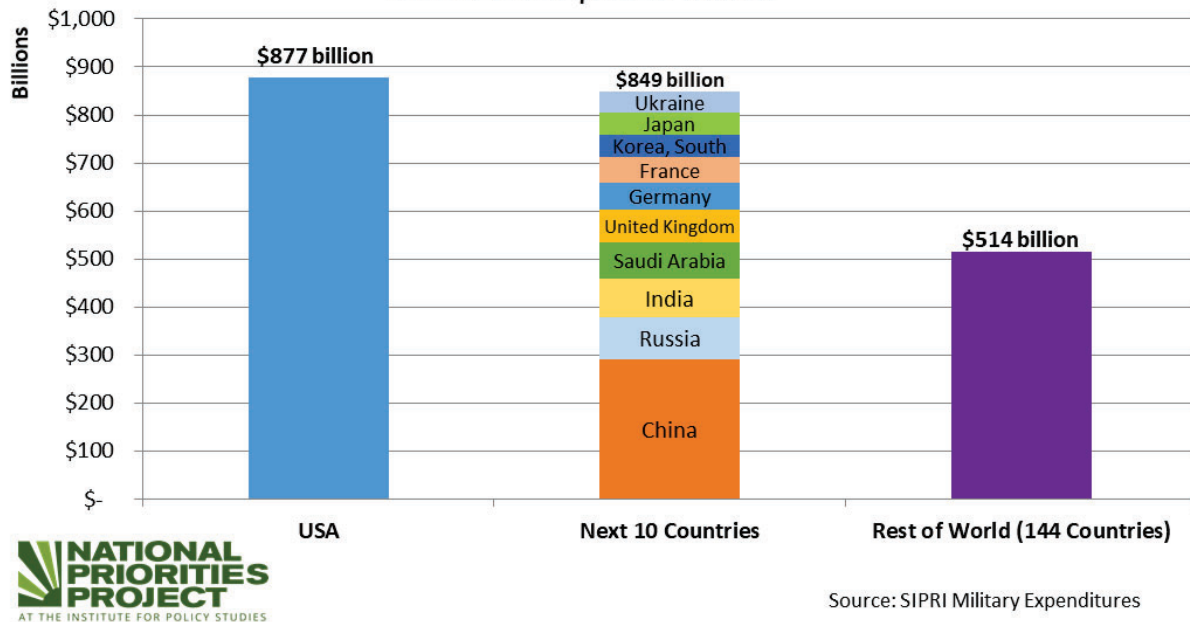
But as Dr. King so preciently said:

"A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

The New York City Council can't *force* Congress to change its lopsided spending priorities *that favors war over people's needs*. But as the country's largest city, it also has the largest megaphone that other cities look to. So when New York City speaks, the country listens.

US vs. World Military Spending, 2022

Global Total: \$2.240 Trillion



So, dear Council Members. Take a bold step. Identify that giant elephant in the room that impoverishes our cities and our populace.

PASS RES 423 and tell Congress and the world that New York City wants to MOVE THE MONEY FROM WAR TO OUR COMMUNITIES.

Thank you.

Matthew Weinstein

[REDACTED]
Brooklyn NY 11238

Email nyccyclist@yahoo.com

Please see the National Priorities Projects' assessment of our out-of-control military budget:
<https://www.nationalpriorities.org/blog/2023/05/04/us-still-spends-more-its-military-over-144-countries-combined/>



Statement in Support of Resolution 423
Cultural Affairs Committee
New York City Council

By Professor Richard D. Wolff

Two fundamental facts about the social conditions in New York City today and the military conditions in the world today argue in favor of supporting Resolution 423.

In New York City today, housing affordability, public schools, transportation systems, healthcare, and services for the elderly are all in or near crisis situations. Social conditions are deteriorating and thereby threaten city life today and for the next generation as well. Huge and growing inequality of wealth and income only make matters worse. Improving the quality and quantity of public services throughout the city can make a major difference in at least slowing the deterioration and at best reversing it. Similar conditions afflict other major metropolitan centers while parallel declines have long undermined smaller cities and rural areas across the US.

Globally, the US dominance of the world economy since 1945 is now over. A new world economy has emerged in which the US no longer dominates. A second economic bloc has arisen that now exceeds the US bloc in terms of its annual total output of goods and services (its GDP). Since 2020, the GDP of the US and its major allies – the G7 – (including the UK, Germany, France, Italy, Japan and Canada) has been LESS than the GDP of China and its allies – the BRICS – (including Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa). And the gap between them keeps growing. The fact is that the US military can no longer impose US global dominance. Keeping that project going only risks even more costs and as always, catastrophic nuclear war.

The US must now learn to live in a multi-polar world, to negotiate shared power with its global partners in a new world. One way to do that is to reduce its military footprint: to show the world its commitment to share power rather than to try - in ever more desperate wars - to dominate.

Moving a good part of the taxes we pay from military uses to better quality and larger quantities of public services can strengthen both the US global position and our badly neglected local social conditions.

I urge the Committee and the Council to move in that direction.

December 5, 2023

Richard Wolff
Manhattan

December 12, 2023

Dear Honorable Council Members:

My name is Robert Jereski. I represent indigent New Yorkers as an attorney. I am a member of the United Auto Workers Local 2325, the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys.

There is a critical link between resources wasted on U.S. military spending and the poverty New Yorkers face every day. This is why the Joint Committee of my union voted overwhelmingly in March of this year to support Resolution 423. We are asking that you pass this Resolution as well.

As Dwight D. Eisenhower warned, the ballooning military budget threatens our communities by robbing them of shelter, education, and critical infrastructure. In his 1961 farewell address, he declared the following:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.

This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities. It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals. It is some fifty miles of concrete pavement. We pay for a single fighter with a half-million bushels of wheat. We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people.

The indigent New Yorkers, who are served by members of my union across our city, often face debilitating poverty, exacerbated by threats of eviction, the hurdles of re-entry from incarceration, lack of quality education, unemployment, low wages, and/or living conditions that make living in New York City an overwhelming challenge. This poverty robs these New Yorkers of life chances and of years of life. So much of our city's human potential is wasted because of underinvestment in these fellow New Yorkers and in our communities generally.

It is critical also to acknowledge that the Pentagon process is corrupt and corrupting. It is emblematic of the pork barrel politics that is hollowing out our democracy. The outcomes are at the service of raw power, threatening democracies and stability the world over.

For instance, politicians lie about military spending being net job creators. For instance, former President Trump promoted military spending, misstating its importance for job creation. Economists at the Watson Institute at Brown University debunked his claim, finding that, in fact, by spending trillions of dollars on wars since 2001, the US lost the opportunity to create millions of jobs in other sectors, and further lost the opportunity to create a healthier, more educated, and more economically secure nation." (See Job Opportunity Cost of War by Heidi Garrett-Peltier, Brown University, May 24, 2017 downloadable at

<https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2017/Job%20Opportunity%20Cost%20of%20War%20-%20HGP%20-%20FINAL.pdf>.)

Furthermore, year after year, the Pentagon has failed to pass independent audits of its spending. Overcharging by Pentagon suppliers of military parts of as much as 3,800% are draining our nation's treasure contributing to the National debt and the impoverishment of our country. It is robbing our children's future to benefit military contractors. (see <https://quincyinst.org/2022/02/03/what-a-waste-778-billion-for-the-pentagon-and-still-counting/>). Besides the gouging of taxpayers for insanely overpriced spare parts, the military budget robs taxpayers by procuring – as described by the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft - weapons we don't need at prices we can't afford.

And yet, year and year, nearly a trillion dollars is lavished upon the military and military contractors at the expense of our schools, hospitals, public infrastructure, housing, and mass transit. The transit systems in Europe, Japan and China boast high-speed rail that contribute significantly to the necessary transition to a sustainable future. But the United States continues to starve mass transit, largely a patchwork of antiquated technology in a dilapidated state.

Last year, world military spending was a record-breaking \$2.24 trillion. Approximately 40% of that spending was by our government, three times what the next largest expenditure, by China.

Martin Luther King, Jr. warned us all that “(a) nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.” Our city and our country is tragically experiencing the snuffing out of our Nation's spirit. Lobbyists for arms contractors are draining our treasury in the service of death and destruction, indebting our nation, and indebting ours and future generations.

The environmental costs of our military spending, as well as the pressure our federal government puts on other countries to increase their military spending, are devastating. Those costs include the lost opportunity of 100s of billions of dollars that are desperately needed to fund a just transition to a clean, renewable energy-based world economy wasted on new military spending. Our country's future is endangered by delays in ending the subsidies to promote hydrocarbon dependency and to secure access to dirty fuel with military might. These subsidies come in the form of military spending that could otherwise be spent to develop and deploy a clean energy future and mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The massive spending on our military robs our treasury of the funds necessary to transform our economy into a sustainable and clean one.

The proposal for budget cuts by Mayor Adams is a statement of the moral bankruptcy of our city's top politician, who, instead of exhibiting the moral courage to expose and denounce the most powerful in our nation on behalf of the least enfranchised, would prefer to punch down and blame those who are being fleeced year after year.

In the largest city in our country, already underserved by austere budgets that cut social services and boosts police overtime and taxpayer settlements for police abuses, the Democratic Mayor is seeking cuts in the anticipated budgets to critical social services: properly funded housing

voucher program, real affordable housing, our residents' mental health services, schools, libraries, childcare, school food programs, environmental programs, including to DEP and other environmental staff, workforce programs, and, yes, to the underpaid legal services workers who represent indigent New Yorkers.

Of course, better ways to address gaps in budgets exist and have been pointed out. The Federal government has a key role to play, and the City Council's passage of Resolution 423 will highlight that role, demanding the allocation of federal tax money from runaway military spending that costs about a trillion dollars a year to grants for public services that makes our country's largest city livable.

Your passage of Resolution 423 will give voice to those who suffer the most from budgets that starve our communities, providing an opportunity to expose, denounce and transform the corrupt system that endangers our communities and our country.

My name is Rosemarie Pace. I am a life-time resident of Queens, NY and Coordinator of Pax Christi New York State, a state chapter of the international Catholic Peace Movement in the United States of America. I have long been an advocate of the Move the Money Campaign and Res. 423. This is not my first time offering testimony on this issue. I am very sorry that we have to keep testifying. This should NOT be necessary. It should be a priority of every last one of the New York City Council and every human being who cares more about life than death, more about care for one another than profit-making, more about social services than political maneuvering. As you well know and are probably hearing from fellow Move the Money Campaigners, Res. 423 calls on Congress and the President to move significant funds away from the military budget in order to fund social services, and to hold in-depth public hearings on the basic human needs of City residents that are unmet because of government appropriations for the Pentagon. While this may sound like a federal issue which allows you to wash your hands of it, we know that Mayor Adams has been making clear the connection between federal funds and their impact on the City in terms of the migrant situation. It is not only the migrant issue that connects the federal budget and city services.

The budget of the USA is steeped in military expenses, nearly 50%, and far exceeds anything that can be considered necessary or defensible. The budget of the USA is approximately that of the next NINE countries in the world, more than double the second largest national military budget, which is China's. Meanwhile U.S. Americans, the people you are supposed to be representing, struggle to live their daily lives, and now Mayor Adams is claiming to have to cut the City budget across the board, which will only harm almost everyone's quality of life. We're talking about cuts to health care, education, sanitation, police and fire protection, housing, food programs, jobs and wages, parks, libraries.... Need I go on?

It is CRITICAL that you respond positively to the Move the Money Campaign. Anything less is a vote for hunger, poverty, homelessness, disease, increasing crime, unattended fires, and worse. Please prove that you care for your constituents, that we are your priority.

Thank you.

December 13, 2023, City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations, Public Hearing on Resolution 423

Testimony of Roy Pingel, pingelroy@gmail.com in support of Resolution 423

Good afternoon. Thank you Chairman Osse and all the Committee members for holding this hearing. My name is Roy Pingel. I'm from Queens and a member of the DC37 Retirees Association and Move the Money - NYC.

My partner and I have three young adult sons. We all are concerned about the city's delivery of essential services. My partner, a public school employee, is dismayed by the prospect of serious cutbacks. I'm concerned as a retired city worker about protecting my senior healthcare benefits.

We support Resolution 423 because it seeks to change the narrative of funding war to the question of what about our communities. According to the National Priorities Project, New York City residents' federal tax dollars accounted for over \$36 billion of the US military budget in 2023.

The Federal government spends well over 50% of its discretionary budget on endless wars and expensive weapons. Passing Resolution 423 would put the Council on record urging cuts to the bloated Pentagon war budget so the funds can be used for much needed services that are being cut.

As the Mayor calls for severe cuts to city agencies and services, now more than ever is the time for creative thinking and action to identify new revenues and under-utilized resources.

Let us leave no stone unturned in facing the fiscal challenges still to come. There are unturned stones in the Pentagon where there can be found billions of our dollars slated for war. We need to move that money to our communities.

This Resolution calls on changing the national focus from funding war to addressing our neglected cities.

I urge you committee members to vote for Resolution 423.

Testimony from Ruth Benn, Brooklyn, NY

Re: Resolution 423

It seems so obvious after 20+ years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan that war and weapons don't buy security — for the U.S. or for anyone else in the world. Now we have Russian threatening use of nuclear weapons, and Israel (with U.S. weapons) and armed Hamas fighters killing indiscriminately with no plan for lasting peace in sight. The U.S. is the largest weapons dealer in the world and needs to be held to account for helping to back a world at war, which is also a major reason why so many desperate people are leaving their homes and trying to find safety in the U.S.

U.S. elected officials and taxpayers should be screaming about the misuse of our money.

The NYC City Council members know the services that are lacking and how a new round of budget cuts would affect every neighborhood in this city, but the poor most of all. The National Priorities Project “trade-offs” chart demonstrates starkly what we could have by investing in the Pentagon instead of people.

For **Military**, taxpayers in **New York, New York** are paying **\$36.46 billion**. Here's what those tax dollars could have paid for instead:

- **255,155** Registered Nurses for **1 Year**, *or*
- **2.91 million** Public Housing Units for **1 Year**, *or*
- **834,704** Jobs That Pay \$15 Per Hour with Benefits for **1 Year**, *or*
- **285,206** Elementary School Teachers for **1 Year**, *or*
- **211,467** Clean Energy Jobs Created for **1 Year**, *or*
- **2.58 million** Head Start Slots for Children for **1 Year**, *or*
- **1.84 million** Military Veterans Receiving VA Medical Care for **1 Year**, *or*
- **1.04 million** Scholarships for University Students for **4 Years**, *or*
- **14.68 million** Children Receiving Low-Income Healthcare for **1 Year**, *or*
- **121.46 million** Households with Wind Power for **1 Year**, *or*
- **6.41 million** Adults Receiving Low-Income Healthcare for **1 Year**, *or*
- **133.91 million** Households with Solar Electricity for **1 Year**

Pass Resolution 423 and send an official NYC demand to Washington, DC that we want new spending priorities that fund life and not death. Thank you. #

Sally Jones
Testimony (long version) In Support Resolution 423
Move the Money from War to Our Communities

Dear Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations:

My name is Sally Jones. I am here to support Resolution 423, the Move the Money Resolution. I've lived in Staten Island since 1979 in the same home, not far from the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, across the street from the landmarked Curtis High School. For 45 years, I worked in the technology sector – as a software developer, manager, and business analyst. I've been active in local community groups for the last 44 years, and for the last 21 years, involved with Peace Action of Staten Island and Peace Action New York State.

I want to thank each of you on this committee for having this hearing on Resolution 423, the Move the Money Resolution.

I didn't think that much about the Pentagon budget before I got involved in Peace Action in 2002. It wasn't until I joined with millions of others in trying to stop the Iraq War that I realized the amount of money the U.S. spends on its military and nuclear weapons. It is staggering to realize that half of our discretionary federal budget is allocated to war. That has added up to over \$8 Trillion since the beginning of the War in Afghanistan, according to the Watson Institute at Brown University.

Then I learned how difficult it is to challenge this spending in Congress. Peace Action (which began in 1957 as the Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy) has been challenging military spending for most of its 56 years. Every Senator and Representative has incentives to keep the money flowing to military contractors and military installations in their districts. The Pentagon has offices in the U.S. Capitol that gives them easy access to elected officials and their staff. The major weapons manufacturers are lobbying too and working hard to win the contracts for more, and more sophisticated weaponry. The Congress is so pro-military they even authorize money for projects that the Pentagon doesn't want.

It is hard for all of us to grasp the enormity of the numbers that are spent by the federal government on the military – or even relate to it.

But we do relate to the effect of cutbacks on the services we rely on in the cities and towns we live in: when the library closes on the weekend, when the parks and streets are dirtier, when seniors and young teens have no place to go, when there are no pre-K options, when prisons become revolving doors. Then we notice. The Mayor tells us there is no money and these cutbacks are necessary.

That's when I raise my hand. Hey, guys, there actually IS a lot of money available. But it is going to fuel war around the world. Hey, why don't we just MOVE some of that money to keep the lights on in NYC and other towns around the country. Resolution 423 is a way for us all in NYC to raise our hand and say MOVE THE MONEY FROM WAR TO OUR COMMUNITIES. I urge this committee to support Resolution 423.

Sally Jones

Staten Island, NY 10301

sallyfeatherstone@gmail.com

FOR THE RECORD

Good Afternoon. My name is Sam Koprak, I am a Brooklyn resident, a former bioscience researcher and currently a substitute teacher for the DOE. I come to this hearing to express my alarm over the massive budget cuts being enacted by the Adams administration that will wreak havoc on city services. The initial cuts of \$550 million for the DOE will significantly strain resources and punish the students who are already dealing with overcrowded classes and decaying school infrastructure amongst other serious issues.

But why do we need to face this at all? Resolution 423 addresses this malfeasance by calling for hearings to address the pathological underfunding of vital needs dictated by the demands of a bloated military budget that in 2024 will approach nearly \$1 trillion dollars, derived from the discretionary budget, supplementals and interest costs from previous wars.

In 2010, I helped organize a school presentation on the federal discretionary budget with HS seniors at a school I work in frequently. The program was led by Jo Comerford, who was at that time executive director of the National Priorities Project, an organization that conducts research on the ramifications of federal budget allocations. We told the students present in the room that each one of them would be called on to stand up when asked to represent about \$10-12 billion in federal spending for major components of the federal budget that Congress votes on annually. Jo went through the auditorium and addressed the nearly 90 students present. She initially requested that 3-5 students stand up for such categories as education, housing, transportation, science research, healthcare, etc.. Finally she asked the remaining 50 or so students to stand up as representatives of the Pentagon budget. As the students looked around and witnessed this gross disparity, a young woman who was standing in the education group cried out, "this is f***** up," and burst into tears. That day still haunts me. These students quickly learned about the power of the military-industrial complex. We all need to as well! That is why we need to pass Res. 423 and pressure our federal representatives to act on behalf of their constituents to fund human needs!

Sam Koprak, skoprak@gmail.com

Brooklyn NY 11217

Testimony to Council on Cultural Affairs, Libraries & International Intergroup Relations
Wednesday, 12/13 @1:00PM

My name is Sylvia Rodriguez Case. I am with Peace Action NYS. I live on West 106 Street in District 7 - just a couple of blocks from our Council Member Shaun Abreu.

I want to thank this committee for holding this hearing.

I support Resolution 423 – *Move the Money – NYC*. We must move money from war to our communities! I attended the *Care Not Cuts* Rally on Monday and many of you spoke out strongly about the severe problems with the NYC budget cuts being planned by Mayor Adams. The horrendous cuts to human needs in NYC.

Passing this resolution will say to President Biden and the U.S. Government that NYC, the largest city in the U.S. – with more than two times the population of second largest city, Los Angeles – is calling for money to be moved from ***War to the Human Needs of Our Citizens.***

The U.S. military is grounding all Osprey Helicopters after one of these aircraft crashed off the coast of Japan on November 29th killing all 8 U.S. airmen aboard. More than 60 people have been killed in Osprey accidents to date. At a cost of about \$84 million per Osprey helicopter, the procurement cost is somewhere around \$56 Billion. It appears the Osprey is a failure, but the U.S. government has continued to throw more money at this project.

How can the U.S. government spend almost 60% of our discretionary spending on the defense budget and ignore the human needs of its citizens? \$858 Billion! The Pentagon has not passed any of the audits conducted in the past 6 years. The U.S. Department of Defense has \$3.8 Trillion in assets. The auditors found that half of DOD's assets cannot be accounted for.

My daughter, now a teacher in Washington DC, attended NYC public schools up until college, and was very well educated. I am not sure that will be true going forward for NYC students. Mayor Adams is cutting the education budget. NYC Public Schools will suffer from these cuts.

Yesterday, as I took the subway at 57th Street, I saw a young woman sitting on the floor at the bottom of the subway entrance with her two young children with a cup out for donations. One child was about 3 years old and the other was a wailing infant about 9 months old. Why does NYC not have the ability to help this mother? I see so many asylum seekers laying on the cold pavement in the rain, without shelter.

This is wrong.

Please make a strong statement to the President and the Congress that we must ***Move the Money from War to Human Needs!***

Please vote to pass Resolution 423!

Thank you.

Sylvia Rodriguez Case
sylrodcase@gmail.com

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████████████████████

NYC, NY. 10025

In Support of Move the Money NYC Resolution 423

I'm a veteran, so I'm going to focus mainly, but not exclusively, on what Carlina Rivera's **Move the Money Resolution 423** means to veterans.

Veterans were once willing to sacrifice everything, even their lives, believing that the wars they had to kill and die for were just, noble and necessary. Only later did many Korean War veterans, Vietnam War veterans, Afghanistan War veterans, Iraq War veterans and even WWII veterans realize, that there is no such thing as good war, nothing that justified killing, maiming people, animals and even destroying entire countries. They realized that, like the American public, they had been lied to and betrayed by those in positions of power who profit from war.

NYC pays more than \$36 billion a year in taxes that go to the military and directly to fund war. President Biden wants \$14 billion of that going to supply Israel with more bombs, more explosive tank shells, and weapons that will continue to rain death upon the people of Gaza and the West Bank. That's besides the \$3.8 billion every year that goes to Israel. Meanwhile, there are 85,000 homeless people in NYC, including over 22,000 children, and over 16,000 veterans living in poverty and 990 homeless veterans. Not only do these tax dollars not support ending homelessness, they are instrumental in helping to cause these poverty issues, especially for veterans, but also for all of us.

Listen carefully to how NYC tax money that funds war after war after bloody war could benefit society instead.

\$36 billion could pay **255,155** registered nurses for **1 year**, *or provide 2.91 million* public housing units for **1 year**, *or create 834,704* jobs that pay \$15 per hour with benefits for **1 year**, *or provide our children with 285,206* elementary school teachers for **1 year**, *or provide 211,467* clean energy jobs for **1 year**, *or pay for 2.58 million* Head Start slots for children for **1 year**, *or pay for 1.84 million* military veterans to receive VA medical care for **1 year**, *or create more than 1 million* scholarships for university students for **4 years**, *or pay for 14.68 million* low-income children to receive healthcare for **1 year**, *or provide 121.46 million* households with wind power for **1 year**, *or pay for 6.41 million* low-income adults to receive healthcare for **1 year**, *or provide 133.91 million* households with solar-generated electricity for **1 year**.

These are statistics but they represent real flesh-and-blood human beings. That's the positive applications for this taxpayer money. We could effectively address all NYC's problems and still have money left over!

Resolution 423, if passed, could move significant funds away from the U.S. military budget – missiles, tanks, depleted uranium and cluster bombs (recently delivered to Ukraine). This is

weaponry that kills and keeps killing for decades, even after the war is over. If we pass and implement Resolution 423, this money can fund social services to support the unmet basic human needs of NYC residents.

U.S. citizens are conditioned 24/7 to “support the troops,” to be patriotic, to wave the flag, to support U.S. wars. We have been involved in war for all but 17 years since the inception of this country. That’s over 93% of the time. Think about that. What does that say about us? And to think our tax dollars fund this instead of serving the community. Are we a peace-loving country? You don’t create peace by waging war.

Let us briefly address what U.S. taxpayer money from all across this country, not only from NYC, really does:

Korea – over two million Korean men, women and children and 36,000 U.S. troops killed; Vietnam – over three million Vietnamese men, women and children and 56,000 U.S. troops killed; Afghanistan, one of the poorest countries, reduced to an even worse state and up to an estimated 200,000 civilian killed, along with over 5,000 military contractors and U.S. troops who will never see home again; Iraq – at least 460,000 Iraqi lives snuffed out and 4,430 U.S. troops dead. And now, once again, like the lies we were told about Vietnam, and war after war, we are told we must support a U.S. and NATO proxy war in Ukraine, as well as the genocidal war Israel is waging in Gaza.

NYC tax monies are fueling immense profits for Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Northrup-Grumman, General Dynamics and other manufacturers of weapons that kill and destroy. In the meantime, these wars between nuclear powers threaten all of us: Life on earth could basically end with a nuclear holocaust, either by intention, mistake or miscalculation. This is not “the sky is falling” nonsense; it is very, very real.

Regarding the other imminent existential threat, climate change, the U.S. military machine is the world’s biggest climate change enabler. A 2019 report by social scientists from Durham University and Lancaster University in the UK shows the U.S. military is *“one of the largest climate polluters in history, consuming more liquid fuels and emitting more CO₂e (carbon-dioxide equivalent) than most countries.”*

Is this really what we want to be funding?

The great American prophet, Martin Luther King Jr., said at Riverside Church in 1967, *“A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.”* What King said then is even more relevant now. How long will NYC be part of this? King also cautioned us, *“We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late.”*

Pass Resolution 423, the Move the Money resolution.

December 13, 2023

My name is Theodore Reich. I reside and vote in District 2, the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

I am here today to urge the Committee to approve Resolution 423-2022.

This Resolution is a very mild urging of the Congress and President to reduce military spending to fund social services.

Reliable sources indicate that the actual annual military spending is \$1.5 trillion, far in excess of the close to \$900 billion budgeted spending.

According to the National Priorities Project, “nearly two-thirds of the federal discretionary budget goes to militarized federal programs, leaving just over a third for our communities – a sliver some lawmakers want to cut even further.” We all know this.

It is shameful when domestic priorities never get equal footing with military spending.

The Congress and President endlessly prioritize violence, the military and war over peace and human needs – education, affordable housing, public health, scientific and medical research, solutions to catastrophic climate change, homelessness, etc.

The mayor’s recent announcement of drastic cuts in all city services is a call for the City Council to act. It is high time for the mayor and the council to call for more support and funding from the federal government.

We are calling on you and the full council to please approve this modest call to Congress and the President to move significant funds away from the military budget.

xxx

**Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations Committee
of the NYC City Council**

Subject: Resolution 423-2022

Hearing date: December 13, 2023

Submitted by Thomas F Gogan

Thank you Chair Ossé for calling today's hearing; Thanks to your Committee members who have co-sponsored this resolution, including my District 39 Council Member Hanif.

My name is Tom Gogan. I'm a National Writers Union member and active in Veterans for Peace. Now retired, for decades I worked in and around New York City as a community and labor organizer, after a short stint with City government. For several decades I worked with low-income families, often immigrants, to help them save their homes and win repairs in both city-owned and privately-owned buildings in several neighborhoods. Later I became a union organizer in New York /New Jersey, as a staffer with CWA and UNITE. Later I worked to end the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This week's Finance Committee highlighted many of the big problems we now face. We need to oppose cutbacks, tax the millionaires and find other new revenue sources to soften the immediate blows. But longer-term funding for a raft of huge structural problems affecting all city residents -- and especially our hardest-hit immigrants and communities of color -- will require major funding and much political will to address.

One key underlying problem is our country's hugely expensive addiction to militarism: Eisenhower and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. were among the first to warn us that unchecked militarism would do untold damage to us all. They were so right!

US Military spending -- now approaching a trillion dollars per year -- is greater than the next ten countries combined! It fuels a self-fulfilling prophecy of endless war. And by the way, the Pentagon is the world's single biggest fossil fuel polluter. Giant military contractors, which depend on a revolving door of politicians, military men and financiers, are the big winners; most of these contractors depend almost totally on our tax dollars, complements of the US Congress.

Military jobs can wipe out whole civilian industries -- commercial shipbuilding, for instance. Just think of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. After World War 2 the job losses when the Navy left were so great that many communities around it were laid low for decades. New York's fiscal crisis in the 1970s was seeded by such industrial contraction.

Many who lived through that period paid a terrible price. Some didn't make it. Tupac Shakur once rapped that there's always plenty of money for war, but not for the poor.

-continued on p 2 -

New York City and State depend to a great degree on Federal funding our public services. A minimum of \$30 to \$35 billion of our NYC Federal taxes now goes straight to the Pentagon each year. Congress calls it a jobs program and says it's for our national security; but in reality we could create longer-lasting jobs and a lot more security in the civilian economy by doing more to help our communities survive and thrive. Instead we pay billions for bombs, drones and too many bases; for aircraft that don't fly and ships that too easily sink. And we sacrifice many lives, as if civilians and soldiers were little pawns on a global chess board. .

Our City Council must urge Congress to redirect a significant portion of our NYC tax dollars from the military to needed public goods and services which are mostly provided by government and non-profit groups. Passing Resolution 423 is a modest step in that direction, but it will put New York City in the lead on this.

Meanwhile we all must work to reverse the Mayor's cuts to our hard-won free childcare, K-12 schools and colleges; and to libraries, public hospitals and so much more/ Fair Fares; deeply affordable housing; job-training; youth and senior programs; help for the formerly incarcerated, for our new arrivals and for homeless people, including veterans.

Mental health services; our public workforce and public retirees; .composting and sanitation. The list goes on and on. We need tens of billions of our tax dollars returned to us in the near future to even begin to address the cascading series of crises that are hitting New York and could become an urban catastrophe of untold proportions.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors urged us to look at the problem of unchecked military spending back in June 2017. Let's do it! Involve our many communities via public hearings and other methods, at the Council level and the borough level too.

It's high time our *local* political representatives speak out on this, loud and clear.

We urge this Council to pass Resolution 423 this year! It's a necessary first step. Let' change the dominant narrative, as we work to move the money from war to our communities.

Thank you for your attention.

Thomas F Gogan


Brooklyn, NY 11215

Hello,

Thank you for holding the hearing for Reso 423. My name is Wesley Ian Lord and I want to express my strong support for the bill.

A little background about myself: I am an avid reader and enjoy walking to the neighborhood library to pick up books or use the printer or simply browse and hang out for a few hours. I don't buy many books because I believe in protecting the environment. I love that libraries encourage lending and communal ownership over individual hoarding.

On Saturday mornings, I can usually be found at my neighborhood GrowNYC site with two bags filled to bursting with the week's kitchen scraps. I prefer GrowNYC over the city composting because they do a better job sequestering carbon and are much friendlier. They have knowledgeable staff and volunteers and are transparent about their process.

Due to city budget cuts, these programs and services that I love—which number many, the above are only two examples—are being gutted or done away with. I felt gut punched when I saw a sign posted at my local GrowNYC site, announcing that the whole program would be winding down within two weeks. I thought, My God! How?

Imagine the additional gut punch when I discovered even main library branches in the city would no longer be open on Sundays (Sundays!), would begin limiting the number of books one could check out at one go, and would be cutting staff and services. Of course, I was devastated for myself, but even more than myself, my community.

I live in Sunset Park. We have many, many families here. On the weekends, the library is always filled with children and adults alike. It's a real family affair. We just got the new library opened and now we can't even enjoy it to the fullest.

If our taxes didn't go to an ever growing "Defense" fund where money keeps disappearing by the trillions to God knows whose pocket and by which death and destruction is exported across the globe, imagine what our city could look like! Investing in our communities internally is a strong defense tactic too—I'd argue the best defense tactic! More money going to education means more children who grow up with a strong foundation of knowledge and critical thinking and become well-informed, active participants in our communities. More money for environmental programs like community composting means our planet is healthier and our communities are healthier in the long-term. Keeping FDNY well-resourced means our communities are safer. Investing in a free MTA would mean all of our neighbors have equal access to movement in this city.

There is so much that our tax dollars could be used for to make our city a more fulfilling and supportive place for each and every one of us. We don't need more money for war. It's the last thing our city or the world needs. We need more money for actual human needs. We need human beings to be safe, sheltered, medically cared for, educated, informed, in environmentally conscious communities. That's what we need for a well-adjusted society. And this resolution is an important first step to getting there. I strongly urge you to continue the focus on human-well being by passing the bill.

I'm here both as a private citizen and as a Board member of Conscience & Peace Tax International, which is granted Non-Governmental Organization (or NGO) "special consultative status" with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. This confers rights to attend and make contributions to certain UN meetings, especially those concerned with human rights. I'm Conscience & Peace Tax International's NY UN representative to take part in the New York NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

I'm also a Conscientious Objector to war in any form and a public War Tax Resister. I cannot in good conscience pay for war, killing, rape, and the destruction of the Earth. That would make me complicit. If I pay for murder, I become a murderer. The USA's nuclear weapons violate the Nuremberg principles. I cannot assist that, claiming I was only following orders. I'd LIKE to have a Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill passed so I could pay my taxes in full, knowing that they'd go for all the good things, all the human needs, that our taxes pay for, WITHOUT violating my conscience. Anyone who'd like more information about this is welcome to contact me. My email is EEFWWW@yahoo.com. Please put your subject line in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS to stand out in my inbox.

The Move the Money resolution supports

lessening the ills that Federal taxes currently fund, as the USA has the largest military in the world though it faces no threat of invasion and makes more weaponry than any other country, selling it to others to spread destruction and misery. The Move the Money resolution states well what is wrong with this emphasis, as human needs suffer, and both Conscience & Peace Tax International and I support it.

I am a former New York City public high school teacher. It breaks my heart that our country squanders so much of its treasure on a wasteful, bloated military when so much need is crying out to us right here in our city. On any given night 67,000¹ New Yorkers are in homeless shelters, 21,000 of them children. And this doesn't even count all the children, like many of my former students, who were living doubled up, two families to an apartment, because so many lose their homes and must crowd in with relatives, where children may sleep in a living room with no place to do homework. The trauma, the dislocation, results in learning deficits that aren't made up. Some New York City students do their laundry at school because they've no other way to have clean clothes. And how many students did I have over the years, whose aunts, mothers, grandmothers were dying relatively young, younger than they should have, after a lifetime of poor medical care, because we're the only country in the developed world that doesn't have a system of healthcare for all. Meanwhile, we persist in throwing buckets of money at a military that has never once passed an audit and can't even keep track of its own things – something no school or city government could do with impunity. AND they squander money on contraptions, like F-35 fighter jet, that don't even work right—\$1.7 trillion for that contract². This is no way to run a country. Pass the resolution. Move the money.

1. Coalition for the Homeless
2. CNN

In Support of Move the Money NYC Resolution 423

I'm a Vietnam-era Veteran, and a lifetime member of Veterans For Peace, currently Secretary of the NYC Chapter.

Like many of my fellow vets, I use the world-class VA Healthcare system, which provides us with the best healthcare anywhere. The VA Healthcare system is currently in the process of being privatized, hospitals are being closed, and care outsourced, another betrayal of the promises made when we volunteered to serve our nation in time of crisis.

The United States spends more now on Militarism than it ever has – more than the next ten countries combined including China, Russia, Iran, etc.

Military spending doesn't happen in a vacuum; each dollar spent on defense is a dollar that could instead be spent on healthcare, education, housing, sustainability. How can we find more resources every year for the Department of Defense, the only federal agency that can't even pass an audit, while we cannot find the money to pay for hungry children to eat lunch?

The great 4 Star General hero of WWII Republican President Dwight Eisenhower famously stated:

“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.”

Is this really what we want to be funding?

The great Civil Rights Activist Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual doom.”

The Federal Budget is the most concrete and measurable expression of the values and priorities of the United States. What the federal budget expresses today, over \$900 Billion wasted on warmaking and destruction, while urgent human needs are being neglected, is an insult to human dignity.

Pass Resolution 423, the Move the Money Resolution

Testimony of zool Zulkowitz to the New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations in support of Resolution 423

As an associate member of Veterans for Peace, I have participated for several years with the Granny Peace Brigade in a Penny Poll.

We give passersby in our parks or at Union Square a bag of pennies. We set up a table with plastic tubes marked Education, Environment, Healthcare, Housing, Infrastructure, Parks, Transportation, and Military.

Then, we ask folks to spend their pennies as they would have our national government spend our tax dollars.

Year after year, this simple poll shows that NEW YORKERS OVERWHELMINGLY PREFER THEIR TAX DOLLARS TO BE SPENT ON MUNICIPAL SERVICES, on education, environment, healthcare, housing, infrastructure, parks, transportation and NOT ON THE MILITARY.”

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: AYA HAYASHI

Address: [REDACTED] Bronx, NY 10463

I represent: PEOPLE'S THEATRE PROJECT

Address: 700 W. 192nd St. New York 10060

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ELI ALAR Elhanan

Address: [REDACTED] 4th Ave Bklyn

I represent: VAP/CAP

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARCIA Newfield

Address: [REDACTED] W 92 St NY 10025

I represent: Move The Money

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/13/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sam KOPRAK

Address: _____

I represent: Brooklyn For Pence

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lance Polivy

Address: 31 Chambers St

I represent: NYC Dept of Cultural Affairs

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andrea Louis

Address: 31 Chambers St

I represent: NYC Dept of Cultural Affairs

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elizabeth Venditto

Address: _____

I represent: Museum of Jewish Heritage - A

Address: Living Memorial to the Holocaust

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alton Murray

Address: 31 Chambers St

I represent: NYC Dept of Cultural Affairs

Address: "

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KATHY LANDAU

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lindsey Malickel

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: Dec 13, 2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Regina Bar

Address: [REDACTED] Portland Ave.

I represent: Louis Armstrong House Museum

Address: 34-56 107th St. Queens, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Monroe Allison

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Brooklyn for Peace

Address: 388 Atlantic Ave.

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

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kileen Barde

Address: [REDACTED] NYC 10301

I represent: Peace Action of SI

Address: PO Box 201, SI NY 10301

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12-13-2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sally Jones

Address: [REDACTED] SI NY

I represent: Peace Action of Staten Is.

Address: PO Box 201 SI NY 10301-0201

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jane Tara Currie

Address: [REDACTED] Bklyn

I represent: Move the Money - NYC

Address: 388 Atlantic Ave Bklyn 11217

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Charlotte Phillip

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

I represent: Brooklyn 1st Place

Address: 388 Atlantic Ave Brooklyn NY

11217

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: Dec 13, 2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: BRENDAN FAY

Address: [REDACTED] ASTORIA, NY 11105

I represent: NYCAN

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ANTHONY DONOVAN

Address: 120 EAST 4TH

I represent: MTM

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/23

Name: Amos MacHamil (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

Brooklyn NY
11205

I represent: Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation

Address: 405 W. 55th St @ 9th Avenue

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 223

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12-13-23

Name: Robert Keilbach (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

Que Village NY

I represent: Veterans for Peace

Address: Same

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: TABAR, KAUFF (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: Vets for Peace

Address: 100 West 4th St
APT 34

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/2022

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marion Phillips Cunningham

Address: [REDACTED] Central Park West [REDACTED]

I represent: NYC, NY 10022 MOVE THE MONEY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mary Nolan

Address: [REDACTED] President St

I represent: MOVE THE MONEY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cathryn Williams

Address: [REDACTED] NY NY 10128

I represent: Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation

Address: 405 W. 55th St. NY NY 10019

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 423 Res. No. →

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LINDA NOVENSKI

Address: [REDACTED] W 37th St [REDACTED]

I represent: MTM + Richard D. Wolff

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marian Rozan

Address: [REDACTED] 1-D

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 20734226 Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Angel Hernandez

Address: 2900 Southern Blvd, Bx, NY 10458

I represent: New York Botanical Garden

Address: 2900 Southern Blvd, Bx, NY 10458

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

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ROBERT GREENBERG

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/3/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SYLVIA RODRIGUEZ CASE

Address: [REDACTED] W 106 ST [REDACTED] NYC

I represent: ~~PEACE~~ Peace Action NYS MIM-NYC

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ann Fawcett Ambia

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn NY 11228

I represent: Brooklyn For Peace

Address: 388 Atlantic Ave, Brooklyn, NY

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Theodore Reich

Address: [REDACTED] Columbia St

I represent: myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 4224 Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Matthew Weinstein

Address: [REDACTED] Underhill Ave 11238

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Steven Kramer

Address: West 169 Street NYC 10032

I represent: 1199 Retirees

Address: 498 7th Ave NYC

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12-13-23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: THOMAS F GOGAN

Address: _____

I represent: NATIONAL WHITEAL UNION + VETS FOR PEACE CH. 34

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Kate Madigan (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: [REDACTED] Lafayette St.

I represent: The Public Theater

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/12/23

Name: Ray Pingel (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: [REDACTED] Loubet St, Forest Hills 11375

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/23

Name: Laura Liben (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: Move the money

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LUCY SEXTON

Address: 160 SIXTH AVE

I represent: NEW YORKERS FOR CULTURE

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 432

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: VERA BERRY

Address: LOGAN LANE

I represent: VOCALNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hillary Exler

Address: 15 AVE NYC 10009

I represent: SELF

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. ~~423~~ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12-13-23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Laura Castro

Address: Ocean Parkway

I represent: ~~UFT~~ Retired teacher - UFT
member

Address:

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MAMUN UR RASHID

Address: East 2nd st

I represent: Compassionate Soul

Address: 118, Beverlax Rd. Brooklyn - NY 11218

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12-13-23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alice Storm Jetter

Address: Seaman Ave NY 10036

I represent: NYC Metro Raging Grannies, Granny Peace B.

Address: Brigade

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: [REDACTED] (PLEASE PRINT) Robin Schatell

Address: [REDACTED] GRAND ST

I represent: MOVING CULTURE PROJECTS

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 423 Res. No. 423

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: (PLEASE PRINT) Regina Weaver

Address: [REDACTED] 7th AVE. 7D

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/13/2022

Name: (PLEASE PRINT) LISA GOLD

Address: _____

I represent: ASIAN AMER. ARTS ALLIANCE

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dohini Sompura

Address: _____

I represent: American Museum of Natural History

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12-13-2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Susan HARGOOD

Address: _____

I represent: International Studio & Curatorial Program

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 9 Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gloria Brandyman

Address: 5th Street

I represent: Mthe Money / Retire Advocate UFT

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/14/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Constance R. Miller

Address: _____

I represent: Myself

Address: 27 St. NYC 10003

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DOROTHY M. ZELLNER

Address: W 94 St

I represent: Move The Money

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: FRANCES GEYELLE

Address: [REDACTED] Central Park

I represent: Anti-Corruption / Halt Slogans

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 423

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kelly Smith

Address: [REDACTED] East 6th Street [REDACTED] 10007

I represent: NYS Poor People's Campaign

Address: We are large but we don't

have an office

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