

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL  
AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND  
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP  
RELATIONS

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December 13, 2023  
Start: 1:12 PM  
Recess: 4:58 PM

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY  
COMMITTEE ROOM 16TH FLOOR

B E F O R E: Chi A. Ossé, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Eric Dinowitz  
Amanda Farías  
Shahana K. Hanif  
Crystal Hudson  
Rita C. Joseph  
Farah N. Louis  
Francisco P. Moya  
Carlina Rivera

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

David Freudenthal  
Government Relations Director  
Carnegie Hall

Iona Cole  
Director of Social Impact Programs  
Wild Music Institute of Carnegie Hall

Catherine Williams  
Director  
Ailey Arts and Education and  
Community Programs

Amos Mechanic  
Instructor  
Alvin Ailey Arts and Education

Regina Bane  
Director  
Louis Armstrong House Museum

Alton Murray  
Deputy Commissioner  
NYC Department of Cultural Affairs

Lance Polivy  
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NYC Department of Cultural Affairs

Andrea Louie  
Assistant Commissioner  
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NYC Department of Cultural Affairs

Lucy Sexton  
New Yorkers for Culture & Arts

Lindsay Malliekel  
New Victory New 42

Kathy Landau  
Executive Director  
Symphony Space

Elizabeth Venditto  
Director of Institutional Giving  
Museum of Jewish Heritage

Dohini Sompura  
Director of Government Affairs  
American Museum of Natural History

Lisa Gold  
Executive Director  
Asian American Arts Alliance

Susan Hapgood  
Director  
International Studio and Curatorial  
Program

Kate Madigan  
Government Relations Coordinator  
Public Theater

Angel Hernandez  
Director of Government Relations  
New York Botanical Garden

Robin Chatel  
Representing independent cultural  
producers

Dr. Aya Esther Hayashi  
Development Director  
People's Theatre Project

Roy Pengal  
Member of Move The Money NYC

Mary Nolan  
Member of Move The Money NYC

Tom Gogan  
Member of the National Writers Union

Leah Johnson  
Executive Vice President  
Chief Communications Marketing and  
Advocacy Officer  
Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts

Tarak Kauff  
Member of Veterans for Peace

Ted Reish  
Resident, Lower East Side

Gloria Brandman  
Member of Move The Money NYC

Charlotte Phillips  
A Brooklyn resident

Marian Ronan  
Resident of District 40 in Brooklyn

Marcia Newfield  
Retired CUNY adjunct lecturer

Marion Phyllis Cunningham  
Member of Move The Money

Matthew Weinstein  
Resident of Brooklyn

Jane Tara Currie  
Downstate Co-Chair  
Peace Action New York State

Sally Jones  
Member of Peace Action of Staten Island

Anthony Donovan  
Member of Peace Action  
Member of Veterans for Peace

Linda Novensky  
Resident of New York City

Sam Koprak  
Substitute Teacher, NYC DOE

Laura Castro  
Former New York City high school teacher  
Member of UFT

Alice Sturm Sutter  
Retired nurse practitioner

Dorothy Zellner  
Resident, Upper West Side

Georgia Weaver  
New York City Resident

Ann Fawcett Ambia  
Member, Brooklyn For Peace  
Member, Fight Back Bay Ridge

Sylvia Rodriguez Case  
Member, Move The Money, New York City  
Member, Peace Action New York State

Brendan Fay  
Member NY Campaign to Abolish Nuclear  
Weapons  
Member Pax Christi

Bob Kielback  
Member of Veterans for Peace  
New York City Chapter

Frances Geteles  
Clinical psychologist  
Member, Jails Action Coalition

Monroe Allison  
Member, Brooklyn For Peace

Dr. Elazar Elhanan  
Founding member of Combatants for Peace

Laura Lipin  
Retired Music Teacher

Kelly Smith  
Resident of East Village

Neil Berry  
Resident of Staten Island

Donju Min  
Manager, Institutional Giving Operations  
New York Historical Society

Hannah Mackler  
Director of Government and UJA Relations  
92nd Street Y, New York

Potri Ranka Manis Queano Nur  
Artistic Director and Founder  
Kinding Sindaw Heritage Foundation

Melody Capote  
Executive Director  
Caribbean Cultural Center African  
Diaspora Institute

Lauren Miller  
Advancement and Alliance Director  
Bushwick Starr

Gregory Calvin  
Resident of Ridgewood, Queens

Marisol Duran  
Resident, District 17, Bronx

Hikma Abdulghani  
Resident of Brooklyn

1 COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND  
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

8

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon, everybody and  
3 welcome to the committee on cultural affairs. If you  
4 can please place phones on vibrate or silent mode.  
5 Thank you Chair. We are ready to begin.

6 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm  
7 New York City Councilmember Chi Ossé, Chair of the  
8 Committee-- Can everyone hear me? Okay, great. I'm  
9 a little under the weather, so I have the mask. But  
10 I did not want to postpone this hearing because it's  
11 a very important one. I am Chair of the Committee on  
12 Cultural Affairs (thanks) Libraries and International  
13 Intergroup Relations. My pronouns are he/him/his.  
14 Welcome to our oversight hearing on arts and cultural  
15 organizations outreach into New York City  
16 communities.

17 I want to apologize that we're not in a bigger  
18 room today. I did advocate on all of our behalf so  
19 that we could all fit across the street. However,  
20 it's a very busy time of year for the City Council.  
21 So there's another busy hearing happening across the  
22 street.

23 Today, the Committee will be hearing on two  
24 resolutions. The first is a preconsidered resolution  
25 sponsored by the speaker, Councilmember Adrienne



1  
2 Adams, condemning recent attacks on members of the  
3 Sikh community in the city of New York, and seeking a  
4 swift end to any discrimination against Sikh New  
5 Yorkers. The second resolution is sponsored by  
6 Councilmember Rivera, Resolution number 423, calling  
7 on Congress and the president to move significant  
8 funds away from the military budget in order to fund  
9 social services and to hold in-depth public hearings  
10 on the basic human needs of city residents that are  
11 unmet because of government appropriations for the  
12 Pentagon.

13 Now, let me welcome my colleague, Councilmember  
14 Rivera to provide brief remarks on her legislation.

15 COUNCILMEMBER RIVERA: Thank you so much. Good  
16 afternoon. I'm councilmember Carlina Rivera,  
17 representative of the vibrant and-- Is that okay?  
18 Sure, it's not the loudest mic I've spoken into, but  
19 can everyone hear me okay? I'll speak a little--  
20 I'll project a little bit more.

21 Well, again, I'm councilmember Carlina Rivera,  
22 representative of the vibrant and active communities  
23 of the East Side. I'm incredibly thankful for that.  
24 I want to thank the Chair for bringing this  
25 resolution to a hearing, and to the Move The Money

1 Coalition, who have dedicated themselves to  
2 advocating for peace and increase in appropriate  
3 spending. Resolution 423 calls on Congress and the  
4 president to divest funding from the military budget  
5 and instead prioritize providing critical social  
6 services to American citizens nationwide. The bill  
7 also calls for in-depth public hearings on the basic  
8 needs of residents, needs that are going unmet  
9 because our federal government spends too much on the  
10 military and not enough on everything else.

12 The United States allocated \$801 billion to  
13 military spending in fiscal year 2021, more than the  
14 next nine largest economies combined. New York's  
15 ability to fund essential social services is directly  
16 tied to how much money the federal government  
17 allocates to us. The public housing authority,  
18 NYCHA, received nearly 70% of its budget last year  
19 from the federal government. Without federal money,  
20 New Yorkers could lose the Low Income Home Energy  
21 Assistance Program, access to the Summer Youth  
22 Employment Program, Meals On Wheels, and domestic  
23 violence victim support programs like NYC Hope.

24 This resolution is simple. We call on the  
25 federal government to fund programs and services that

1 will uplift the American people. People know what  
2 makes them feel safe: Excellent health care; stable,  
3 permanent, and good paying jobs; quality schools; and  
4 decent, affordable housing. A 2022 national survey  
5 showed that 56% of Americans support cuts to the  
6 defense budget. Right now, in New York City vital  
7 services are being cut. While a democratically  
8 controlled Congress has given the military more money  
9 than even President Biden proposed. Moving the money  
10 would make such a significant impact on the lives of  
11 working class people in New York City and across the  
12 country. Thank you.

13 [APPLAUSE]

14 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you, Councilmember  
15 Rivera. Now to the topic of our hearing and let me  
16 start by providing a little background. The New York  
17 City Department of Cultural Affairs provides funding  
18 for more than 1000 arts and cultural organizations  
19 across the five boroughs of New York City. That is a  
20 very wonderful thing. DCLA provides funding for most  
21 of funds for the programs through the Cultural  
22 Development Fund, or CDF, in a competitive grant-  
23 making process. DCLA also provides funding for the  
24 34 cultural organizations known collectively as the  
25

1  
2 Cultural Institutions Group or CIG, which is made up  
3 of museums historical, societies, performing arts  
4 centers, botanical gardens, and zoos, some large some  
5 small that operate in city owned facilities and on  
6 city owned parkland.

7       Recently, Cultural Development Fund grants have  
8 come under scrutiny for what some advocates believe  
9 is insufficient outreach to underserved communities  
10 in New York City, and for an inequitable distribution  
11 across the five boroughs.

12       For example, of the 125 arts and cultural  
13 organizations newly funded by Cultural Development  
14 Fund grants in fiscal year 2023, four were in the  
15 Bronx, four in Staten Island, fifteen in Queens,  
16 forty in Brooklyn, and sixty-two (or half of them) in  
17 Manhattan.

18       As it turns out, some of our city's larger arts  
19 and cultural organizations present events and  
20 activities in underserved neighborhoods throughout  
21 the five boroughs in an effort to reach those  
22 residents who might find it difficult to get to the  
23 organization's main location. Whether that is  
24 because of financial constraints, transportation  
25

1 issues, disabilities, age, English language  
2 proficiency, or something else.  
3

4 For example, the CIG institution states that this  
5 kind of outreach is in fact part of their public  
6 service mission. Some CIG institutions and Cultural  
7 Development Fund grantees are indeed filling a need:  
8 That is a need to reach out to underserved  
9 communities and to underserved populations. It is a  
10 need that was identified as long ago as 2017 in  
11 CreateNYC, the comprehensive cultural plan developed  
12 for New York City, and as recently as this fall, by  
13 advocates in our arts and cultural community.

14 We are pleased to have representatives from some  
15 of those organizations with us today. We have asked  
16 two organizations, Carnegie Hall and Alvin Ailey  
17 American Dance Theater, to provide what we call  
18 expert testimony. Carnegie Hall will be talking  
19 about their citywide program, which presents free  
20 world class concerts to diverse audiences of all ages  
21 and cultures in all five boroughs. Throughout the  
22 citywide program, Carnegie Hall also partners with  
23 other cultural organizations such as The Louis  
24 Armstrong House Museum, and the Schomburg Center for  
25 Research and black culture, to bring programming to

1  
2 underserved communities. Alvin Ailey American Dance  
3 Theater's Ailey Dance for Active Aging (that's a lot  
4 of A's) Program (I love-- We love alliteration.  
5 It's awesome.) reaches out to older adults in the  
6 community centers and residential facilities by  
7 offering dance classes that uniquely invoke the  
8 choreographic work of Mr. Ailey himself.

9 Let's take a few minutes to watch Carnegie Hall  
10 and Alvin Ailey in action. Believe me, you're going  
11 to love this. Now I would like to ask the hosts of  
12 the hearing to play the videos please.

13 [VIDEO BEGINS]

14 [MUSIC]

15 KHALILAH BATES: Our audiences have come to know  
16 that-- know what they're going to get when we say  
17 Carnegie Hall Citywide concert is going to be at the  
18 Schomburg Center. That's one of the reasons why we  
19 just love our partnership with Carnegie Hall  
20 Citywide.

21 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Could we turn it up a little  
22 bit?

23 [VIDEO CONTINUES]

1  
2 KHALILAH BATES: [inaudible] as well. We have a  
3 lot of [inaudible] but we're creating new experiences  
4 in this partnership.

5 Just being able to bring new people to this  
6 institution, it that allows them to engage, to find  
7 out something more, like the introduction is music.  
8 But they come back. And so it helps to steward them  
9 to here and to see what we have to offer.

10 MIMI JONES: [inaudible] is a neighborhood that  
11 [inaudible]. There's so much beauty here. To be  
12 able to see people and feel the energy live. That  
13 right there, that energy is a cyclic-- We recycle  
14 it. It goes TO people and it comes back to us. So  
15 it just allowed us to just be dead center in the  
16 neighborhood and make music and rock out.

17 MEREDITH WATERS: Our partnership with Carnegie  
18 Hall Citywide has really allowed us to present  
19 artists that we wouldn't normally have access to.  
20 Music is important. Art is important. Being  
21 challenged is important. And we are working together  
22 to serve the people of New York City, keep them in  
23 dialogue with, you know, a language that everybody  
24 understands. And I'm glad to be a part of that.

1  
2 CITYWIDE AUDIENCE STUDENT: I just moved to New  
3 York City last year for school, but I can already  
4 feel the community. The sense of community in this  
5 city is amazing. And I think that music is a really,  
6 really big part of that.

7 GREGORIO URIBE: What I love about the engagement  
8 with citywide is that, as an artist, it sort of  
9 forces you to be ready to interact, ready to act, and  
10 also react to-- if there's somebody who, you know,  
11 just ends up sort of joining in and clapping on the  
12 side. And, you know, I like the idea of making those  
13 folks feel like they are part of the performance.

14 COLIN JACOBSEN: Carnegie [inaudible] a part of  
15 New York City in this greater sense, actually going  
16 all over and creating a moment of artistry that is  
17 given to the city, a free concert to the city. That  
18 is clearly a statement about wanting art to thrive  
19 and be vibrant and be alive, and for everyone.

20 EMCEE: We're so happy to be here to gather to  
21 celebrate arts and culture of our great borough and  
22 our great city. Thank you for continuing to come  
23 out, show up for each other, show our community, and  
24 show up for artists.



1  
2           BRANDEE YOUNGER: I'm going to send you the CD,  
3 okay?

4           These are my people. That's what it's all about.

5           [VIDEO ENDS]

6           [APPLAUSE]

7           CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: I think we have one more  
8 video, host. Maybe go to the sound? Maybe bring the  
9 bar up on bottom left?

10          [VIDEO STARTS]

11          CATHRYN WILLIAMS: AileyDance for Active Aging is  
12 a program that is an expansion of our program for  
13 youth. It's an important program for Ailey, because  
14 it takes our reach out into the community, reaching  
15 the older adult population who are so in need of  
16 engagement activities.

17          AMOS MACHANIC: When you start to do arts and  
18 education and working with the Active Aging  
19 community, you really start to get a feel for what  
20 Mr. Ailey's talking about when he says bringing dance  
21 to the people.

22          AARON THOMAS: So the structure of the class,  
23 what we do, we always start with a check-in, where we  
24 get to see how the participants are feeling.

1  
2       From there, we go into a warmup. We start with a  
3 seated warmup. And then from there, we transition  
4 into a standing warmup.

5       After that, we do a word wall, which gives them  
6 prompts just to get their minds thinking, get some  
7 creative juices flowing.

8       Right now, what we're doing is blood memory  
9 poems. They share their experiences growing up from-  
10 - anywhere from a young child into their teens, into  
11 their adulthood. And then we put those blood  
12 memories into creative poem dances.

13       SALLY MAMDOUH: When split in groups, it's not  
14 only that we look for the words associated with the  
15 poem, but we also dig deep inside our experience.  
16 Like, what does it mean?

17       CAROL GORDON: People have shared the most  
18 intimate stories. It's really surprising. It  
19 really, I think, allows us to release things that are  
20 sometimes pushed way down inside ourselves.

21       BARBARA MCLANAHAN: Interpretation of a storyline  
22 through movement, that had a lot of impact on me.

23       THEARA WARD: Some people are losing their  
24 memories, but the recall is important in making those  
25 mental and kinesthetic connections.

1  
2 CATHRYN WILLIAMS: Because we are a dance  
3 company, there's repertory that we can talk about.  
4 And so we are working with AileyDance for Active  
5 Aging to be able to have the participants learn what  
6 we call adapted excerpts. The participants change  
7 how they view dance because they have felt it in  
8 their bodies.

9 SANDRA POMERANTZ: The fact that we're doing  
10 parts of Revelations is unbelievable, that we have  
11 this opportunity to do this.

12 AMOS MACHANIC: Because it's not just about  
13 dance, but a huge part of it is community and for  
14 them getting a sense of their voice, one that their  
15 voice is valid.

16 JOSEPH GIRVEN: They feel that they are creating  
17 something, creating a community. That they've done  
18 something they haven't done in years.

19 BARBARA MCLANAHAN: The success of this, it  
20 depends on the people who run it, who lead it. And  
21 these two are extraordinary, I think.

22 ADELLE GORDEON: They have that atmosphere of,  
23 "You are an important part of what we're doing, and  
24 you are perfect!" That they've given us this whole  
25 spirit.

1           THEARA WARD: I will cherish this particular  
2  
3 experience because I really feel like they're part of  
4 me. They're part of my life.

5           AMOS MACHANIC: And it's made me look at our  
6 seniors, our senior community, in a totally different  
7 way.

8           SHIRLEY ROD: I'm 96 years old, and I feel very  
9 much younger after I've danced and been there.

10          ELLEN EHRLICHIOSIS: I set my appointments after  
11 I know what Alvin Ailey does, because I will not give  
12 up Alvin Ailey.

13          THEARA WARD: To get them from questioning their  
14 movement ability to literally seeing them move as an  
15 ensemble says a lot about the community here. It  
16 says a lot about the Ailey structure, and, you know,  
17 our mission. Dance comes from the people and should  
18 be given back to the people. And we saw that  
19 exemplified here.

20          SHIRLEY ROD: Oh, it's a wonderful feeling. I  
21 feel like I'm part of his group, you know.

22          JOYCE DINUNZIO: I can move! (laughs) I can  
23 move. At 79 years old, I can really move.

1           SPEAKER:  Go back to my childhood and see, yeah,  
2  
3 I wasn't able to dance at the younger age, but look  
4 at me now.  I'm 65 and I'm dancing (laughs).

5           KYUMI KIM:  They gave light, covering all  
6 generation, including us.  That part is most  
7 thankful.  They give us the light.

8           [VIDEO ENDS]

9           [APPLAUSE]

10          CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ:  Thank you for those two  
11 videos, Carnegie Hall and Alvin Ailey.  Now we're  
12 moving on to the dance portion of our hearing.  So  
13 everyone get on your two feet.  I hope you memorized  
14 the choreography.  I didn't.

15          Those videos are two extraordinary examples of  
16 engaging work that our arts and cultural  
17 organizations do to reach out to communities  
18 throughout our great city, and I applaud them for it.

19          We are going to begin this hearing with their  
20 testimony today, but first I want to acknowledge my  
21 colleagues on The Committee who are present.

22          Councilmember Dinowitz, Councilmember Louis,  
23 Councilmember Hanif, Councilmember Joseph, and  
24 Councilmember Farías.  And online we have  
25 Councilmember Hudson and Councilmember Moya on Zoom.

1  
2 I would also like to thank my staff and the  
3 committee staff for their work and preparing today's  
4 hearing, Naomi Hopkins, my Chief Of Staff, Maya  
5 Vutrapongvatana, my Policy And Budget Director,  
6 Christina Yellamaty, the Committee's Legislative  
7 Counsel, Regina Paul, the Committee's Legislative  
8 Policy Analyst, and Sandra Gray, the Committee's  
9 Financial Analyst.

10 Now I would like to address some housekeeping  
11 items before we begin with the testimony.

12 Today is an in-person hearing with the option of  
13 virtual testimony for the public. The Committee will  
14 be accepting registrations for testimony throughout  
15 the hearing. Anyone who is attending in person and  
16 who wishes to testify in person should see the  
17 Sergeant at Arms (Sergeant at Arms, raise your hand;  
18 there he is) to fill out a witness slip even if you  
19 registered in advance online.

20 Though it is unusual to do so, we will begin  
21 today's hearing with testimony by members of our  
22 cultural community, beginning with Carnegie Hall and  
23 Alvin Ailey representatives and then moving to  
24 Regina-- Regina Bain from the Louis Armstrong House  
25 Museum.

1  
2       The testimonies will be followed by councilmember  
3 Q and A's. Then we will move to testimony from DCOA,  
4 followed by Councilmember Q&A. And finally, to  
5 additional to additional public testimony, we will  
6 limit councilmember questions and answers, including  
7 comments to five minutes. During the public  
8 testimony portion of the hearing, witnesses from the  
9 public will be limited to two minutes.

10       As a reminder to all witnesses, please state your  
11 name prior to your testimony for the record. The  
12 committee will also be accepting written testimony  
13 for up to 72 hours after the hearing. Once you hear  
14 that "bing" on the clock. That means that your  
15 testimony is over. Again, we do read through your  
16 written testimony. There are a lot of folks today,  
17 so let's-- let's make sure that we keep to our time.

18       Let me ask our Committee Counsel to call the  
19 first panel of witnesses from Carnegie Hall, Alvin  
20 Ailey, and Louie Armstrong House Museum.

21       Christina take it away.

22       COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, our first panel will be  
23 David Freudenthal, Iona Cole, Catherine Williams,  
24 Amos Mechanic and Regina Bane.

1           MR. FREUDENTHAL: Chair Ossé, members of the  
2  
3           Committee, I'm David Fruedenthal, Government  
4           Relations Director at Carnegie Hall. My gratitude on  
5           behalf of us all for-- to you all-- for-- for the  
6           opportunity to highlight Carnegie Hall's work in this  
7           space. Thank you to-- to your-- to your staff, to  
8           the committee staff and to all of you for your  
9           attention.

10           Carnegie hall has been (I'm sorry, you didn't  
11           hear the voices, but you all saw the pictures a  
12           little bit) has been at this work in partnership  
13           with-- with organizations around the city for-- for  
14           many decades. And, you know, Carnegie Hall Citywide  
15           brings remarkable mainstage artists and rising stars  
16           outside of our four walls, to audi-- with free  
17           concerts to all ages through-- and the core of this  
18           are really substantive, long-term partnerships with--  
19           with cultural partners all around the city:  
20           libraries, parks, museums, houses of worship, public  
21           plazas. You know, to really get out past 57th Street  
22           and Seventh Avenue, and to try to make what-- what we  
23           have available, what we can do, what we're good at,  
24           available to others. And truly, we are stronger  
25           because of the-- of the partnerships. Carnegie Hall



1 is a-- is a smarter, more responsive, more effective  
2 organization because of the partnerships with these  
3 remarkable cultural partners around the city. I  
4 mean, from our perspective, Citywide, and as the  
5 Chair spoke to so well, is a really effective way to  
6 center arts in neighborhood-driven community-building  
7 efforts, creating opportunities for civic engagement,  
8 and for supporting local small businesses. As I  
9 said, you know, we-- we work closely with the  
10 partners to develop culturally-- culturally  
11 responsive programming that's relevant to the  
12 communities we do-- that-- with whom we're working.  
13 We-- We bring the talent, the strength of our brand.  
14 We help to market the program, and-- and both  
15 organizations are stronger by-- by this engagement  
16 that reinforces-- this engagement-- their work with  
17 their own communities that-- that-- and also we--  
18 the-- Through our marketing, we bring the fans of  
19 Citywide to-- to these spaces, so it's sort of-- it's  
20 an opportunity for that cultural organization to, you  
21 know, to offer a program, you know, serving their  
22 constituency. Then it brings a whole bunch of new  
23 people that they wouldn't necessarily know into their  
24 communities.  
25

1           This year, we're going to be in 37-- 37 concerts  
2 with 19 venues. About 30,000 people are going to be  
3 served by it. And there are more than 90,000 that  
4 that experience it through the stream concerts. We--  
5 We invite members of the committee, your council  
6 colleagues, and agency community liaisons to table at  
7 the community concerts.  
8

9           It's also been an opportunity for us to-- to  
10 share important resources IDNYC registration renewal,  
11 info for newly arrived migrants and their families,  
12 participatory budgeting, and other community events.

13           This work is made possible because of the  
14 Council's consistent support for arts and culture.

15           The commitment to funding the arts and culture is  
16 a compound investment, and economic opportunity in  
17 economic resiliency and growth, workforce  
18 development, community healing, education, and public  
19 safety.

20           Look, I-- I can't be up here without making a  
21 pitch for the for the budget piece of this. I join  
22 my colleagues in the Cultural Institutions Group, at  
23 the CIG, and the entire cultural sector to ask that  
24 DCLA be spared in the next two round of cuts of the--  
25 that the administration has proposed in the PEG, so

1 that we can continue to serve all New Yorkers.  
2  
3 Concerts that were on the table are not happening. I  
4 mean, you know, we are losing programming that is  
5 going to be very, very hard to restore.

6 My-- My gratitude-- And I would just say that--  
7 and this-- this free public programming is a-- is a  
8 much bigger-- is one piece of a very big public  
9 service commitment that Carnegie Hall has in schools,  
10 in justice settings, it-- you know, serving New  
11 Yorkers all around the city. I thank you for the  
12 opportunity to testify.

13 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Before the next person  
14 testifies: David, how does one get to Carnegie Hall?

15 MR. FREUDENTHAL: The end of the R.

16 [LAUGHTER]

17 We-- You know, the truth is we-- There's lots  
18 of--a ton of free programming at the Hall, family  
19 programming, all our early-- early childhood stuff.  
20 We do a lot of work in New York City schools and in  
21 sort of developing remarkably, you know, young  
22 talent. There's sort of lots of ways-- One of our--  
23 Actually my colleague is going to talk a little bit  
24 about-- about this work in terms of creating

25

1 opportunities for-- for young New Yorkers who are  
2 interested in music industry.  
3

4 MS. COLE: Good afternoon, everybody. My name is  
5 Iona Cole. I'm part of Carnegie Hall's Wild Music  
6 Institute. That's Carnegie's education and social  
7 impact arm. And I serve as the Director of Social  
8 Impact programs there. So, as David mentioned, we  
9 really strive to provide and create artistic--  
10 equitable artistic opportunities for New Yorkers in  
11 every borough. And as part of this effort, in  
12 partnership with ACS, the Administration for  
13 Children's Services, Carnegie Hall's Future Music  
14 Project creates a space for young people between the  
15 ages of 14 and 19 years old in juvenile justice  
16 settings, and helps them to develop as artists, as  
17 critical thinkers, as collaborators, and as  
18 individuals.

19 So our teaching artists at Carnegie Hall support  
20 young people in creating, producing, and performing  
21 music using songwriting as a vehicle through which  
22 they can explore their creativity, develop musical  
23 skills, and collaborate with their peers.

24 So in addition to direct service workshops that  
25 are customized to the unique needs of secure settings

1 and non-secure settings, young people in non-secure  
2 are able to-- and the staff are able to come to  
3 Carnegie Hall to share their music that they perform--  
4 - that they produced at events there for their family  
5 members and for peers.  
6

7 And starting in January, we will also be adding  
8 monthly-- a monthly concert series for staff in youth  
9 in secure detention to help to support a safe and  
10 engaging environment for everyone there.

11 And another example where we are striving for  
12 equitable economic opportunities: With support from  
13 this year's Council's youth programs initiative is  
14 the B-Side. The B-Side is a free intensive program  
15 for New Yorkers between the ages of 14 and 22 years  
16 old that are interested in the business of the music  
17 industry, with a specific focus on young people from  
18 under-resourced communities. The B-Side (and the B  
19 is for business and also the other side of the  
20 record, but the young people are too young to know  
21 that the other side was called the B side, so I'm  
22 reminded about my age every time I'm with them)--

23 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: I didn't know what that was.  
24 Good to know now.

1  
2 MS. COLE: Yes. They are-- the participants,  
3 they-- they are in an interactive experience where  
4 they learn about the inner workings of the music  
5 industry with an eye towards-- for us, an eye towards  
6 increasing the number of young professionals of color  
7 into entering the music industry.

8 So the curriculum is designed and facilitated by  
9 teaching artists and music industry executives, while  
10 guest speaker panels, field trips guide participants  
11 through many of the roles and career paths across the  
12 industry.

13 So lastly, this this year-- this coming year  
14 program activities are going to include lessons,  
15 presentations from guest speakers and artists, field  
16 trips to record labels, to music tech companies, to  
17 local recording studios, panels and interactive  
18 discussions; and for many of our young people just  
19 jam sessions, and performances, and concerts.

20 This is a paid experience. Participants receive  
21 a stipend, transportation and meals.

22 So through the B-Side, Carnegie really is drawing  
23 on our experience of creating youth development  
24 programs, and hopefully meaningful youth development  
25 programs in order to deepen impact, and provide young

1  
2 people with the tools they need to thrive, to lead,  
3 to transform-- and in this case to transform the  
4 music industry.

5 So applications for the 2024 cohorts are open  
6 until January 4th. Fliers are available. Please  
7 share with your constituents and encourage teens to  
8 apply. They don't need to be musicians. They just  
9 need to be curious, and between the ages of 14 and  
10 22. And it would be nice if they like music, too.

11 So thank you. Thanks for the opportunity this  
12 afternoon to speak.

13 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

14 [APPLAUSE]

15 MS. WILLIAMS: Shall I go? Great. Yes. There  
16 we go. Can you hear me? Good afternoon Chairman  
17 Ossé and members of the Committee. My name is  
18 Catherine Williams. I'm the Director of Ailey Arts  
19 and Education and Community Programs.

20 Thank you for giving me and my colleague, Amos  
21 Mechanic, the opportunity to speak with you this  
22 afternoon. And I do just want to make a note that  
23 Amos and I are happy to come back at any time and do  
24 a little mini-Revelations workshop for the committee.

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So just let us know when and where and we will be there.

CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: I mean, why don't you testify, and just do it while testifying?

[LAUGHTER]

I mean, the world is your stage.

MS. WILLIAMS: Many City Councilmembers may be familiar with Ailey's robust pre-K through grade 12 youth programs. Ailey dance for PAWS youth programs which serve up to about 8000 youth annually across all five boroughs.

I'm here today to speak about Ailey Dance for active aging. A video is worth 1000 words, and I hope that you enjoyed it and received a little bit of the meaning of this program for our older adult population. This program was brand new the Ailey launched in 2018. It is its newest program. It reaches older adults, ages 50-plus, in older adult centers and in residential homes throughout New York City.

So we leave Manhattan, we leave 55th and 9th, and go to the centers where older adults congregate, live, experience other activities.



1           This program extends Ailey's belief that (and you  
2           heard it twice in our video) dance came from, come  
3           on, dance came from the people and must always be  
4           delivered...? Back to the people! And that includes  
5           older adults. Ailey Dance For Active Aging is also  
6           an inclusive program and engages older adults with  
7           physical and mental challenges through dance classes  
8           that support both physical and cognitive stimulation,  
9           as well as encourages self expression and social  
10          engagement through building community, thus reducing  
11          older adult isolation.

12           Ailey has reached to date 400 older adults across  
13          15 sites across New York City. With the help from  
14          the New York City Council, we are looking to expand  
15          Ailey Dance For Active Aging to additional sites in  
16          your districts so that more older adults can reap the  
17          benefits of this unique program. We are grateful for  
18          the support from New York City Councilmembers who  
19          have supported Ailey Dance For Active Aging through  
20          City Council discretionary funding including Su Casa  
21          and Support Our Seniors. We've been able to serve  
22          older adults in The Bronx, Queens, and Manhattan. We  
23          think City Councilmembers Eric Bottcher, Julie Menin,  
24          Selvina Brooks-Powers, and Pierina Anna Sanchez for  
25

1  
2 their support, and hope that the rest of The Council  
3 will consider their support as well, and recommend  
4 sites in your district that could benefit from this  
5 transformative experience for older adults.

6 Thank you. My colleague...

7 MR. MECHANIC: Good afternoon Chairman Ossé and  
8 members of The Committee. My name is Amos Mechanic,  
9 and I am an instructor for Alvin Ailey Arts and  
10 Education, and a former member of the Alvin Ailey  
11 American Dance Theater.

12 I have been teaching in the Ailey Dance For  
13 Active Aging program, conducting dance residencies in  
14 older adults centers and residential homes for the  
15 past five years since its beginning. Thank you for  
16 this opportunity to speak with you today about  
17 Ailey's newest program Ailey Dance For Active Aging.

18 Ailey Dance for active aging is very special to  
19 me because it is right on par with Mr. Ailey's  
20 mission to bring dance to the people. I find great  
21 joy, immense joy working with this population of  
22 older adults, and often walk away from classes  
23 feeling that I have received just as much as I have  
24 been given.

1  
2       Ailey Dance For Active Aging is not just about  
3 dance, but it is about building community, hope, and  
4 confidence. Participants walk away from our classes  
5 with a sense of belonging, and a sense that they  
6 matter and that their stories matter and that their  
7 life has meaning. It is wonderful to see individuals  
8 blossom as they explore and reignite their  
9 creativity.

10       Unfortunately, the older adult population is a  
11 population that is often overlooked and forgotten.  
12 Ailey Dance For Active Aging serves that human need  
13 in all of us to be seen, to be appreciated, and to  
14 know that we all matter. Witnessing the change from  
15 individuals when they first start our classes to the  
16 end of our sessions is nothing short of inspiring.  
17 Participants in the program have expressed comments  
18 such as, "I feel more alive after I come here," or,  
19 "I forget my age when I'm in these classes," or, as  
20 you heard on the video, "I schedule my week around  
21 these classes. I will never miss my Ailey Dance  
22 classes."

23       I join Catherine in thanking New York City  
24 Council members who have supported Ailey Dance For  
25 Active Aging. Your support shines the light,

1 honestly, on a community that is such a vibrant part  
2 of our city. With your continued support, we ensure  
3 that Mr. Ailey's vision of bringing dance to the  
4 people stays alive.  
5

6 Thank you so much for your time.

7 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

8 [APPLAUSE]

9 MS. BANE: Hello, I'm Regina Bane, Executive  
10 Director of the Louis Armstrong House Museum in  
11 Corona, Queens, district of Councilmember Francisco  
12 Moya.

13 This fall, we partnered with Carnegie Hall  
14 Citywide to bring amazing vocalist Brianna Thomas to  
15 Queens, to Corona.

16 As an organization standing in the legacy of jazz  
17 genius, 30-year New York City resident, and America's  
18 first black popular music icon, Louis Armstrong,  
19 artistic excellence matters. And as Armstrong  
20 performed at Carnegie Hall many times, this  
21 partnership has synergistic poetry, bringing The  
22 Hall's artists to our neighbors in Queens.

23 Since the opening this summer of the new 14,000  
24 square foot, \$26 million, 25-years-in-the-making,  
25 state-of-the-art Armstrong center, championed by

1  
2 Queens College and the Louis Armstrong Educational  
3 Foundation, and supported by this body, we have held  
4 20 world-class performances and over 40 events for  
5 thousands of visitors from Queens, from throughout  
6 the city, and for the global community of Armstrong  
7 fans who traveled to New York to visit his home.

8       These events brought us in partnership with  
9 Carnegie Hall, the Newport Jazz Festival, Jazz at  
10 Lincoln Center, Das Minsk Museum in Germany, the  
11 Neighborhood Housing Services of Queens, Elmcour Youth  
12 & Adult Activities, Queensboro Dance Festival, the  
13 Summer Youth Employment Program, Armstrong Elementary  
14 School, Armstrong Middle School, Frank Sinatra High  
15 School, and 12 additional public schools, Queens  
16 Community Board 3, New Yorkers For Culture and The  
17 Arts, justice arts programs like Carnegie Hall across  
18 New York, organizations for this year's Juneteenth  
19 initiative, volunteer docents, youth interns,  
20 including 14-year-old Ruby who lives on the block.

21       This year, we celebrated the 80th anniversary of  
22 Armstrong's-- of the Armstrong's moving to Queens,  
23 the 20th anniversary of the House Museum, and now the  
24 new Armstrong Center. We look forward to serving  
25

1  
2 alongside our partners and communities for many years  
3 to come.

4 Thank you.

5 [APPLAUSE]

6 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Not everyone who gets up here  
7 and testifies gets a round of applause afterward.  
8 I'm just letting you know. You should see these  
9 public safety hearings. It's a different story.

10 [LAUGHTER]

11 Mr. Freudenthal and Ms. Cole, I want to start  
12 with-- with you both. Thank you for your  
13 testimonies. And also, you know, we've all received  
14 information about the wide range of organizations  
15 that you work with across the city, from the Brooklyn  
16 Museum in Brooklyn, down to the Historic Richmond  
17 Town in Staten Island.

18 How of these organizations, and all of the  
19 organizations that you've partnered with, benefited  
20 from the program?

21 MR. FREUDENTHAL: Oh, thank you for the question,  
22 Mr. Chair. You know, I think we-- you know, I think  
23 we all benefit. I-- It's a-- Regina's testimony  
24 really spoke to the way that-- that, you know-- that  
25 both organizations are-- are elevated, are stronger,

1 and are better able to fulfill our public service  
2 mission through the partnership. You know, we each  
3 have something that we are bringing to the party  
4 here. You know, we-- the really-- you know, the  
5 intensive work-together to identify art and artists  
6 that is going to be resonant for, you know-- for the  
7 communities with, you know, that we're-- that the--  
8 that the partner is serving. You know, we really--  
9 Like, we bring, like the best from our stages. And  
10 it's really about, you know, what-- what the  
11 priorities for the partner are.

12  
13 And then-- You know, and then we're-- You know,  
14 we're kind of then putting our full force of our--  
15 and we pay for that, obviously, you know? We're  
16 paying for the-- for the artists. But the-- But the  
17 partner is putting a lot in too. I mean, they're--  
18 you know, there's all the production components of  
19 this. You know, everybody is-- it has to be all in.

20 And then we are helping to market. You know, we  
21 do a ton of promotion around these. And there's  
22 like-- There are citywide devotees that, and they  
23 just go everywhere. They go to all of the-- of the  
24 Citywide concerts. So they're getting all these new  
25 folks in, and it's like-- it's-- You know, we-- I

1 mean, each of these partners are different, and they  
2 have different needs and priorities. But, you know--  
3 But, for us, we are more effectively able to-- to  
4 serve and reach more New Yorkers and communities,  
5 folks that may never come to Carnegie Hall, and they  
6 hear about other things we're doing. We're able to  
7 provide this kind of-- all those services that I  
8 spoke to, spoke about earlier, you know, at that--  
9 that point, and-- and I, you know, I believe that we--  
10 - you know, we are both strengthened by that work  
11 together.  
12

13 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you. What are some  
14 obstacles that you have found in administering this  
15 program?

16 MR. FREUDENTHAL: So, money is always a  
17 challenge.

18 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Sure.

19 MR. FREUDENTHAL: This is a-- You know, this is--  
20 is an expensive program that is-- gets very little  
21 public support, and we are kind of fundraising like  
22 crazy for this.

23 The-- You know, there's a pretty deep commitment  
24 on the part of the-- of the partner, and those are  
25 long term partnerships for us. And, you know-- And



1 the partner has to have the capacity and the ability  
2 to sort of, you know, help to bring audiences in, all  
3 the logistical stuff. You know, and so they're--  
4 You know, they are-- they are things on their-- on  
5 their side that are-- that are challenges.

6  
7 Um, you know, I would say that one thing was  
8 interesting is that this was the first program that  
9 Carnegie Hall reopened with-- in-- you know, during  
10 COVID. Because we were able to do outdoor concerts  
11 and things that we weren't really doing long before  
12 The Hall was reopened. So we were-- We did a ton  
13 online. And, you know, and the programs that Iona  
14 talked about were really focused in terms of digital  
15 programming, serving those in the highest need  
16 situation.

17 But in terms of live programming, this was a  
18 really, really good opportunity, both for us and for  
19 the partners to be, you know, back-- bringing people  
20 together in safe ways, and kind of part of the of the  
21 city getting back on its feet.

22 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Sure. And would Carnegie Hall  
23 be able to run this program without DCLA funding?

24 MR. FREUDENTHAL: So-- So what I would say about  
25 that, is that-- that the-- we are harmed by, you

1 know, by the-- significantly harmed by the cuts that  
2 are proposed, that would have already occurred, and,  
3 you know, these much deeper cuts that are that are  
4 proposed. And we are already cutting concerts. So I  
5 don't know what's going to happen to this, you know,  
6 to this-- this program, but things are already off--  
7 you know, off the table.

9 And the city support-- Carnegie Hall, leverages  
10 its city support many, many times. But the city  
11 support, I would say is really key to the to the  
12 public compact that we have in terms of serving New  
13 Yorkers, New Yorkers in high need situations of all  
14 ages. And you know-- and that-- that money  
15 leverages and incentivizes a ton of private  
16 fundraising that we do to be able to provide these  
17 services.

18 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And you testified that these  
19 programs are also opportunities for civic tabling,  
20 such as IDNYC, signups, and without funding these  
21 concerts and tabling may not happen, I'm guessing.

22 MR. FREUDENTHAL: That's right. If you-- you  
23 know, it's easy to-- for something to go away and  
24 much harder for it to come back.

25 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Sure.

1  
2 MR. FREUDENTHAL: That's the-- That's the real  
3 risk about the-- You know, you break it, it's-- and  
4 it's hard to rebuild it.

5 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Mm-hmm.

6 MR. FREUDENTHAL: That's the deal.

7 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: The mayor stated that every  
8 city agency, including DCLA, will be subjected to  
9 PEGs, because we need funding to support asylum  
10 seekers. Why is the citywide program and tabling  
11 important for New Yorkers, especially for our asylum  
12 seekers?

13 MR. FREUDENTHAL: So the opportunity to-- for--  
14 Well, a couple of answers to that. The one is that,  
15 you know, free programming around the city, you know,  
16 easily accessible programming is super important.  
17 The community partners, you know, places like, you  
18 know, the amazing Louis Armstrong House, you know,  
19 have their connections to their communities, and are--  
20 - and are engaged with reaching those-- those new New  
21 Yorkers. And kind of the ability to offer free  
22 programming, you know, is-- is a key way to, to  
23 invite people in to be part of-- to be part of New  
24 York in a very, very low impact way, you know? So

1 that-- you know, it's a key service that that can be  
2 offered.  
3

4 And the tabling is a particularly, you know,  
5 easy, direct way to connect people to services that  
6 they might not know about it. "Oh, I'll come for a  
7 concert. Oh, but I can sign up for IDNYC. Great."  
8 Like-- It's like, you know, you're-- There's lots  
9 of ways The City is trying to reach folks, but  
10 they're not necessarily hearing it, right? And so  
11 this is a little bit of bait. It draws people in,  
12 and they can be aware of all the resources that The  
13 City is, you know, pretty good at offering, and  
14 connecting them to that. And all of that is at risk.

15 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you, Mr. Freudenthal,  
16 and thank you, Ms. Cole. Thank you for all the work  
17 that you do.

18 Ms. Williams and Mr. Mechanic, about how many  
19 dance classes are taught at community centers and  
20 residential facilities per year?

21 MS. WILLIAMS: Through our program?

22 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Yes.

23 MS. WILLIAMS: Gosh, I don't have that-- I don't  
24 have that statistic at my fingertips. But, I would  
25 say 30 times 10, 300 dance classes?

1           CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: That's a lot, right?

2           MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, yeah.

3           CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And around how many seniors  
4 participate in the program citywide?

5           MS. WILLIAMS: Each year, at each site there is--  
6 currently we're in about nine sites, and we have  
7 class sizes, increasing post COVID. In COVID, many  
8 places kept the attendance very low for social  
9 distancing. But we have about 20 to 25 older adults  
10 in each one of our classes, and we partner with our  
11 sites, and they set the limit there. Sometimes the  
12 limit is dictated by the size of the space we have to  
13 work in. We need ample space for people to move.  
14 But don't worry, we would make it work right here.

15           [LAUGHTER]

16           CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Have any senior centers  
17 reported any waitlist for the program?

18           MS. WILLIAMS: Yes.

19           CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Okay. And have there been any  
20 plans to expand the program to all five boroughs?

21           MS. WILLIAMS: Yes.

22           CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: That would require funding I'm  
23 guessing?

24           MS. WILLIAMS: Yes.

1           CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ:  And DCLA funding?

2           MS. WILLIAMS:  Much appreciated, yes.

3           CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ:  Sure.

4           MS. WILLIAMS:  It gives us the opportunity to  
5 reach communities that may not be as aware of us, or  
6 wouldn't necessarily reach out to us and say, "Can  
7 you come out to, you know, Far Rockaway?  Staten  
8 Island?"  We're in conversation there.  We have  
9 offered programs through our summer festival, which  
10 Ailey fundraises for, Citywide Festival, Ailey Moves  
11 NYC, the past two summers and a part of that are  
12 workshops for older adults exclusively, bringing in  
13 new partners and new interest.

14           CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ:  Mm-hmm.  Would--  Would Alvin  
15 Ailey be able to run this program without funding  
16 from The City?

17           MS. WILLIAMS:  We would have to, as my colleague  
18 said from Carnegie Hall--  The Ailey Organization,  
19 development department, would have to do fundraising  
20 in order to keep it going.  And they do quite a bit  
21 of that already.

22           So, it's a coupling of institutional donations,  
23 foundation donations, along with the City  
24 Councilmember money and DCLA funds.  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: All right, thank you so much  
3 for your testimony and for answering my questions.

4 Miss Bane, you stated in your testimony that--  
5 I'll give you a second. You stated in your testimony  
6 that Louis Armstrong House Museum worked with  
7 Carnegie Hall for their Citywide Program, how has  
8 this partnership and beneficial to the Louis  
9 Armstrong House Museum?

10 MS. BANE: It brings world class artists to our  
11 block, to our community, to Corona. It brings them  
12 for free, and free for our audiences, Corona, and  
13 that's important. And it brings new audience members  
14 as well who are familiar with Carnegie Hall, and what  
15 that means, and what they know there'll be receiving,  
16 because this is a program with Carnegie Hall. All of  
17 those things are extremely beneficial to us.

18 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: You are one of the co-  
19 facilitators of the Culture@3 call, which has many of  
20 our cultural organizations represented. What are  
21 some concerns you have heard from Culture@3  
22 participants about outreach for some of these-- these  
23 programs?

24  
25

1 MS. BANE: Yes. So Culture@3 is a space for the  
2 nonprofit leaders of-- of New York institutions. As  
3 such is not an organization, so I can't speak on its  
4 behalf--

5 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Sure.

6 MS. BANE: --but I can reflect what we've heard.  
7 And there-- I think there are other members from  
8 Culture@3 who are in this space.

9 We heard on a call yesterday, which was attended  
10 by Commissioner Laurie Cumbo, by Associate  
11 Commissioner, Andrea Louie, and we are deeply  
12 grateful for that access, for that presence, for that  
13 listening, for that response.

14 And what-- what they heard, what we heard, what I  
15 heard on that call was a deep challenge, deep  
16 challenge because of budgetary concerns that are  
17 causing cuts in programs, cuts and staff. And-- and  
18 what that-- why is that significant for the City of  
19 New York? Because the services that are offered by  
20 these institutions help families, help individuals,  
21 are an economic driver for the city, and are  
22 sometimes part of the reason why families move here,  
23 why family stay here, because they appreciate the  
24 thriving, throbbing nature that comes much of it from  
25



1  
2 the arts. And so we see that is an investment, not  
3 only in these individual institutions, but in-- but  
4 in the future of New York.

5 And so that's what I heard on the call yesterday  
6 is deep concern because of-- of how cuts are  
7 affecting the institutions and the communities they  
8 serve.

9 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Sure. Thank you for that. In  
10 your opinion, how can DCLA and The City support  
11 smaller organizations, and organizations that serve  
12 underserved communities in expanding their outreach?

13 MS. BANE: Yes. I'm deeply grateful for all of  
14 the support that happens right now. We know that  
15 outreach is marketing, and it's-- it's getting word  
16 out in traditional ways. It also means standing on  
17 the block and saying hello to your neighbors. That's  
18 the type of outreach that we have to do, because  
19 we're in a comm-- we're in a neighborhood. In order  
20 to speak to the people in the house next door, you  
21 have to speak to the people in the house next door.  
22 That takes staffing. It takes people who are-- are  
23 versed in the languages, the literal languages, but  
24 also the heart languages of diverse peoples. And  
25 that has to be supported through funds. And so we're

1  
2 deeply thankful for all that DCLA does. And we need  
3 to continue through full staffing and through the  
4 programs that we do.

5 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you so much before I let  
6 you all go (unless you want to stay for the rest of  
7 this hearing, which you're more than welcome to do),  
8 do I have any questions from my colleagues up here?  
9 Nope?

10 Well, thank you so much. Now let me ask our  
11 witnesses from DCLA to come forward and the Committee  
12 Counsel will administer the affirmation to the  
13 witnesses who may then begin their testimony.

14 Thank you so much.

15 Give them another round of applause.

16 [APPLAUSE]

17 A question from the public has to wait until the  
18 the end of the--

19 You're more than welcome to ask them a question.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hi. Good afternoon. Please  
21 raise your right hand. Do affirm to tell the truth,  
22 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth before The  
23 Committee and to respond honestly to Councilmember  
24 questions?

25 ENTIRE PANEL: I do.

1 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, you may begin.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Good afternoon Chair  
3 Ossé and members of The Committee. And before I  
4 begin my testimony on can I ask you to make a motion  
5 to have Regina read it? Her voice was so fantastic  
6 [LAUGHTER] and I think she will make us all feel  
7 better, and it was like listening to an NPR  
8 conversation, she would improve it.

9 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: She does have a great voice.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: She has a fantastic  
11 voice. But I will get on with it. Good afternoon  
12 Chair Ossé and members of The Committee. I'm Alton  
13 Murray Deputy Commissioner for the New York City  
14 Department of Cultural Affairs. I'm here to testify  
15 regarding today's topic: arts and culture  
16 organizations outreach in New York City communities.

17 I'm joined by DCLA'S is General Counsel, Lance  
18 Polivy, and-- and our Assistant Commissioner for  
19 Public Service, Andrea Louie. In New York City, arts  
20 and culture are deeply woven into our community. The  
21 energy, identity, and vibrancy of our neighborhood  
22 are inseparable from the creative expression and  
23 cultural activities of the residents who live and  
24 work here. That's why DCLA's support for New York  
25

1 City cultural community is grounded in a commitment  
2 to local programming and public engagement.

3 We see the impact. It's in our institutions  
4 opening their doors to wide-- actively engaging  
5 diverse audience, and in organizations working in  
6 community across the city, meeting New Yorkers where  
7 they are.

8 One of the primary ways that the agency supports  
9 New York City's vast cultural community is through  
10 our Cultural Development Fund, which provides funding  
11 to over 1000 nonprofits each year. Administered  
12 through a peer review process, the CDF centers public  
13 service in its guidelines. In fact, it is the single  
14 most important criteria for applications. Panelists  
15 are explicitly asked the way their organization  
16 provides programming with consideration toward  
17 accessibility, affordability, equity.

18 Applications may demonstrate this in one or more  
19 of the following ways: Explicit effort to engage  
20 diverse audience, such as programming across all  
21 cultural or culture, responsive project; or  
22 empowering historically underserved neighborhoods  
23 with resources; increased affordability through  
24 discount programs scholarship, sliding scale prices,  
25

1 or other subsidies; integrating or implementing  
2 community input, a representative for advisory  
3 committee, or other methods of self determination;  
4 expanding accessibility such as providing reasonable  
5 accommodation; producing multilingual programs or  
6 materials; offering transportation or mobile  
7 projects; or providing other methods of equitable  
8 access.  
9

10 Through CDF we also maintain close partnerships  
11 with the Borough Arts Council to help ensure the CD  
12 funding reaches artist collectives and small  
13 organizations in every borough. In FY 23 DCLA  
14 provided-- provided nearly \$3 million for-- for the  
15 five boroughs' specific arts fund, supporting  
16 hundreds of individual artists, collectives, smaller  
17 nonprofits, doing public-oriented art programming  
18 across the city.

19 We've seen, Chair Ossé, a number of these  
20 celebrations, marking this important investment in  
21 working artists. So, we know you've seen the vast  
22 diversity of programming that this critical source of  
23 funding supports. As a result, the CDF investment--  
24 invests in cultural programming all across artistic  
25 disciplines, fostering programs that, at their core,

1  
2 promote public engagement in every corner of New York  
3 City.

4       Efforts to bring arts and culture to every  
5 community has been further advanced by our reforms to  
6 the CDF process, which prioritizes greater equity,  
7 increased investment in historically marginalized  
8 community. Reforms include increasing the minimum  
9 grant awards and expanding eligible-- eligibility for  
10 multi-year awards to all grantees regardless of their  
11 budget size. We also cast a wider net for panelists  
12 to include a broader range of cultural workers, board  
13 members, and artists.

14       Many members of The Council help distribute our  
15 calls for panelists among their constituents, and for  
16 that we're very thankful. Nobody knows your district  
17 better than you. And we are grateful for your  
18 partnership. 47% of the panelists were first-timers  
19 this year, a sign that we are succeeding in  
20 attracting new talent into the process. The CDF  
21 panel service is among the most critical way for New  
22 Yorkers to help inform and shape our city's support  
23 for its cultural community. We look forward to our  
24 ongoing-- to your ongoing support and collaboration  
25 in this effort.

1  
2 Through these reforms, last year, we had a record  
3 number of applicants, around 1400, and a record  
4 number of grantees, 1070, including 25 new  
5 organizations-- 125 new organizations, I apologize.

6 Reforms practically benefit small organizations,  
7 led by those-- led by or serving people of color. An  
8 example of cultural programs that received CDF  
9 funding in the latest round includes the Create  
10 Change Artists Development Program, which fosters  
11 connection between community artists. It's the  
12 flagship initiative for the Brooklyn Laundromat  
13 Project. The Theatre Development Fund Accessibility  
14 Program provides-- makes live theater accessible to  
15 guests with disabilities. They deliver opening  
16 caption and audio description for performances on and  
17 off Broadway, and provide accessible seating  
18 including accommodation for service-- service  
19 animals. They also offer autism-friendly  
20 performances of Broadway shows.

21 Tap For Students reaches k to 12 students with  
22 vision hearing loss-- vision and hearing loss through  
23 workshops in New York City schools, and-- and  
24 accessible Broadway performances.

1  
2       At the Universal Temple of the Arts in Staten  
3 Island Jazz Festival, students, community members,  
4 and world-renowned artists participate in concert and  
5 artist-led workshops to galvanize community  
6 participation in the fest-- in the festival. UTA  
7 also offers free jazz music assembly programs to  
8 schools across Staten Island.

9       Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center in the Bronx  
10 provide low class-- cost classes in music and dance  
11 for students aged 3 to 24. They also offer public  
12 performances such as Open House Street Festival,  
13 which brings the community together, and features  
14 performances and classes by guest artists.

15       The Asian American Art Alliance has a monthly  
16 town hall, which are a cornerstone for the Asian  
17 American creative community to promote creative  
18 projects, share resources and find collaborators.

19       Since 1965, the New York Philharmonic has  
20 presented free outdoor performances featuring the  
21 full orchestra and a roster of world-class guest  
22 artists in parks in each borough. Concerts also  
23 showcase local talent with an emphasis placed on  
24 student composers participating in the Philharmonic  
25 Education Program. Van Cortlandt Park programming



1 services to diverse from Bronx Community. In FY 23,  
2 they supported the parks Barefoot Dancing Series,  
3 featuring bachata, merengue, West African drumming,  
4 southwest Asian, and Mediterranean performances.  
5 They also serve Bronx teens with their urban ecology  
6 teen internship.  
7

8 The Lewis Latimer House in Queens operates the  
9 LatimerNOW Project, a community outreach research  
10 project connecting with community residents, schools,  
11 and organizational partners.

12 Though-- Through memoir-- memoir workshops, and  
13 STEAM workshops for families and students, and  
14 bilingual tours for the house in English, Cantonese,  
15 and Mandarin.

16 Cumbe in Brooklyn champions African and diaspora  
17 culture as a vibrant legacy for people of African  
18 descent.

19 Community engagement programing includes  
20 donation-based weekly classes for adults, creative  
21 movement classes for children. They develop and lead  
22 workshop programs and performances in local schools,  
23 senior centers, and community-based organization.

24 DCLA supports cultural and community engagement  
25 across all its funds and program. We have worked

1 with the 34 members of the Cultural Institution Group  
2 for years as part of our far-reaching DI efforts,  
3 partnering with cultural institutions to foster a  
4 cultural workforce that better reflects New York  
5 City's diversity, a more diverse workforce for the  
6 center, its work on requiring DI plans for members of  
7 the CIG, making them among the first cultural  
8 institution to adopt such plans in the country.  
9

10       The public program is central to the work of The  
11 City is central to The City's relationship with the  
12 34 members of the Cultural Institution Group. For  
13 example, eight of the CIG members including zoos,  
14 aquariums, Botanical Gardens, Natural History and  
15 Science Museum partner with the City Council and  
16 Department of Education on Urban Advantage, a  
17 tremendously impactful science education initiative  
18 that reaches tens of thousands of middle school  
19 students each year.

20       At Snug Harbor Cultural Center, the Chinese New  
21 Year Scholar Garden hosts a series of seasonal  
22 festivals and experimental workshops that activate  
23 the garden as a hub for intersectional cultural  
24 participation in the Chinese and Chinese-American  
25 traditions. The program includes the Autumn Moon

1 Festival, the Lunar New Year Celebration, Brush and  
2 Ink Workshop, Lantern-Making Workshop, tours,  
3 lecture, and other family activities.

4  
5 One of our favorite is the Carnegie Hall NeON  
6 Arts Program for the New York City Department of  
7 Probation to integrate arts programming to young  
8 people in seven community-based probation centers  
9 located throughout the city.

10 Through their public works program, public  
11 theater works with partner organization in all five  
12 boroughs and invests-- invites community members to  
13 take classes, participate in programming, and attend  
14 performances, and join in the creation of an  
15 ambitious work of practice-- participatory theater.

16 Public Works deliberately blurs the line between  
17 professional artists and community members, creating  
18 theater that is of, by, and for the people and I  
19 highly encourage everyone to see it. It is one of  
20 the most unique experiences you will ever have.

21 The BAM Senior Cinema, Seniors Social, and other  
22 dedicated programming, the organization work to make  
23 their campus a welcome and accessible a place for  
24 older New Yorkers as possible.

Queens Theater's far-reaching Theater For All Initiative commits to more-- commits to more fully reach artists and audience members with disabilities from within Queens and throughout the city.

Fostered through MoMA's PS1 Homeroom, their dedicated exhibition space for activation by community partners, the institution presents an integral, intergenerational storytelling project with Malikah, a global feminist grassroot collective committed to bringing safety and power through healing justice, self-defense and financial literacy.

The New York Botanical Garden, Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month Celebration offer on-site and virtual programs to spotlight the importance, contribution, and histories of plants and people making up this diverse community with educators, gardeners, and community partner-- partners.

DCLA capital program supports new construction and equipment purchases for organizations of all shapes and sizes, ensuring that our city's cultural facilities maintain a world-class and accessible-- maintain world-class and accessible access for all New Yorkers. In FY 24, the capital program contributed over \$222 million to nearly 80 cultural

1 capital projects across the five boroughs, including  
2 \$117 million from the Mayor, \$79.3 million from the  
3 City Council, and \$26.5 million from the five borough  
4 presidents.

5  
6 Our Materials For The Arts program is another  
7 major way DCLA supports nonprofits, educators and  
8 city agencies with public programming to engage New  
9 Yorkers across the city.

10 MFTA's 4700 members make up a huge community of  
11 public service providers rooted in cultural  
12 programming. MFTA collects 1.5 million pounds, 1.5  
13 million pounds of donated materials valued at over  
14 \$10 million, and distributed it to their members last  
15 year, free of charge as always, making it a real--  
16 making a real difference in the bottom line for  
17 programming possibilities for these organizations.

18 In addition to serving thousands of people each  
19 year from their warehouse in Long Island City, MFTA  
20 has been making efforts to meet even more New Yorkers  
21 where they are. Earlier this year, we teamed up with  
22 New York City Public School Arts Office and Snug  
23 Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island for-- for  
24 donation events that delivered supplies to dozens of  
25 local educators. This spring. We also launched MFTA

1  
2 After Hours, a new initiative that keeps the  
3 warehouse open for evening shopping so that more DOE  
4 teachers can visit the warehouse once the school day  
5 ends. In all over 10,000 students and 2,000 teachers  
6 and community educators were instructed by MFTA  
7 teaching artists last year.

8 MFTA also supplied groups aiming to help the most  
9 needed combat inequality. MFTA has been critical-- a  
10 critical source of supplies for the city agencies and  
11 nonprofits working to support asylum seekers arriving  
12 in our city.

13 This week, the team at MFTA is also dropping off  
14 donations of coats to the shed for an event they are  
15 hosting on Saturday to support asylum seekers.

16 DCLA's Public Art Unit, which commissions  
17 permanent public art and manages public artists in  
18 residency in the New York City Canvas Program also  
19 sponsors community engagement and its approach to  
20 creating public art. One recent commission, artist  
21 Vanessa German, who will be creating a permanent  
22 artwork for the Shirley Chisholm Rec Center in East  
23 Flatbush. Ms. German is going to create the Brooklyn  
24 Museum of Love And Wonder, embarking on a series of  
25

1 community engagement that will directly shape the  
2 final artwork.  
3

4       Few if any other programs that commission  
5 permanent public works engage in this level of  
6 community engagement. Inviting residents into the  
7 process is a meaningful way to generate investment in  
8 the results. Persons for art panels are another way  
9 we invite public into participating in the  
10 commission-- commissioning process. Panels include  
11 representatives from the Community Board, local  
12 leaders and other members of relevant communities,  
13 giving them a seat at the table for decisions that  
14 have a profound effect on our public realm.

15       New York City cultural groups aren't isolated  
16 institutions. They are institutions that are  
17 fundamentally part of New York City's communities.  
18 They are places of employment, enjoyment, and  
19 community connection. They are also community hubs  
20 that offer relief services, as we have seen after  
21 national disasters, notably the COVID-19 pandemic.

22       DCLA focuses on fostering diversity, equity, and  
23 inclusion in our cultural community, and in our own  
24 programs. It is, at the core, an effort to ensure  
25 that the city's cultural community continues to

1 reflect, connect, and serve our city's diverse  
2 residents.  
3

4 Thank you for the opportunity to present this  
5 testimony. I am happy to answer your questions after  
6 a sip of water.

7 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Haha. There you go. Thank  
8 you for your testimony. What is-- I'll give you a  
9 second to hydrate.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: What is the distribution by  
12 borough of current DCLA CDF grants?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: The distribution to  
14 your point is very proportional to the number of  
15 grantees we receive. You mentioned in your statement  
16 that 23% of the grantees were in Brooklyn and 60%  
17 were in Manhattan. That correlates to the number of  
18 applications we receive.

19 What we notice is that most of the applications  
20 come from Manhattan and Brooklyn, but when you look  
21 at all the grants that were administered, it's  
22 exactly to the percentage of applicants that we  
23 receive. What we would like to see is more  
24 applications from other boroughs. The way to address  
25 this problem is to encourage other boroughs to submit



1 applications. That way, it will shift the percentage  
2 of applicants and applications that we award. It's  
3 very good to be in partnership with you on this. You  
4 know your district better than anyone else. And so  
5 we're asking all the council members to continue to  
6 push the message to encourage your nonprofit partners  
7 in your community in your district to submit an  
8 application. It is the best driver to change the  
9 narrative.  
10

11 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Sure. And we know from your  
12 testimony from our hearing that we had together in  
13 September, that of the 125 arts and cultural  
14 organizations newly funded by CDF grants in fiscal  
15 year 2024, four were in the Bronx, four in Staten  
16 Island, 15 in Queens, 40 in Brooklyn, and 62 in  
17 Manhattan. How do you think those numbers represent  
18 equity in geographic distribution of new grants? And  
19 can you walk me through, I guess, based off your last  
20 answer, how you're continuing to work on expanding  
21 outreach within, you know, the other outer boroughs  
22 that do not have as much representation or grants  
23 from-- from CDF?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We recognize that  
25 there is a significant inequitable way of

1 distribution. One of the things that we will be  
2 doing in the agency is doing more in-person outreach.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Okay.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We always do our  
6 webinars. We will be adding 10 more outreach, which  
7 will include webinars, coffee table chats, and five  
8 in-person outreach efforts.

9 So we understand that it is proportional. We  
10 want to encourage more applicants to participate.  
11 And we're going to take it on ourselves to be more  
12 engaged in community personally, and ask The Council  
13 and the Borough Presidents' offices to encourage  
14 people to apply. The numbers will shift when the  
15 number of applications we receive improves from the  
16 outer boroughs.

17 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Great. And I know we've  
18 talked about this often. But you know, I'm always  
19 here to help, as well as my colleagues on The Council  
20 to provide announcements that-- that you guys are  
21 putting out there within our newsletters, with info  
22 that is located in our, you know, physical offices as  
23 well, so that we are doing our part and making sure  
24 that we're getting the word out.

1  
2 Under the Mayor's November plan, CDF is facing a  
3 \$2.6 million reduction. How will this impact DCLA's  
4 current outreach initiatives?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: In light of the  
6 fiscal constraints The City faces due to the end of  
7 the federal COVID stimulus, and the ongoing migrant  
8 crisis, and other financial challenges, we expect  
9 that we will be physically constrained in what we can  
10 do.

11 We are asking our constituents to champion the  
12 cause with state and federal government to ask them  
13 to provide the funding that we need so that we can  
14 continue the great programming that we've been doing  
15 for the previous years. It will have tremendous  
16 effect. We are being very judicious in how we make  
17 these cuts.

18 We are mandated by-- by our OMB Office to be  
19 very, very, very, very smart. So we are taking time  
20 to look at everything and try to make really, really,  
21 really smart decisions that will have the least  
22 effect on the grantees. Make no doubt about it: It  
23 will happen. We're just trying to do the best we can  
24 so that we can move forward with as little pain as  
25 possible.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Mm-hmm. Can you walk me  
3 through any real-world examples about how these cuts  
4 will impact organizations that are currently doing--  
5 who are currently doing expansions to their-- their  
6 programming, or trying to provide outreach to New  
7 Yorkers? Do you have any real-life examples of what  
8 these cuts and how these cuts will impact some of the  
9 work-- the programmatic work that they're doing?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Absolutely. Um,  
11 organizations? I can give you an example. The  
12 Brooklyn Academy of Music: They are reducing the  
13 amount of programs, and they do the Public Theater.  
14 They have-- A lot of organizations are reducing  
15 productions. There have been organizations that are  
16 laying people off. Even yesterday we were getting  
17 calls from organizations that are stressing to us  
18 that they are feeling the tension from these cuts.  
19 They are feeling the tensions from the change in our  
20 economic environment.

21 I think my Assistant Commissioner for Public  
22 Funding would like to say something.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER LOUIE: Just to confirm that,  
24 unfortunately, the Program Services Unit has not yet  
25 been able to release the notification award for FY

1  
2 24. So unfortunately, our organizations do not yet  
3 know the impact of the cuts. Certainly, at the  
4 Culture@3 call, which was referenced earlier in this  
5 testimony, or at this hearing, you know, there's a  
6 lot of concern in the field. And we are hearing  
7 that, and we are trying to move forward in the most  
8 mindful and strategic way possible for all concerned.

9 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Mm-hmm. How is DCLA working  
10 with organizations to advocate for state and federal  
11 funding, or provide them with support and applying  
12 for other grants?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We are meeting, we  
14 are meeting with our partners constantly, and having  
15 conversations. We are looking at ways that we can  
16 help with the outreach efforts to the state and  
17 federal government. So, we're very much part of the  
18 conversation, because we understand that everything  
19 will affect the way we do business. Every aspect of  
20 New York City will be challenged by this. So, we are  
21 passionate talking to our nonprofit partners and  
22 other government agencies of how we can figure out  
23 ways that we can help support the cause.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Do you know when you'll have a  
3 plan in terms of how to assist arts and cultural  
4 organizations who will be impacted by these cuts?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We are developing  
6 many plans. It's hard to say. A lot of it is  
7 rolling along slowly. We are now working on a plan  
8 for the creative sector so that we can help alleviate  
9 certain problems when they come to us with certain  
10 issues. "Culture at risk" we're calling it. So it's  
11 in development. We're looking at how we can coalesce  
12 all government agencies to help with this crisis.  
13 It's not fully baked, because everything is changing  
14 every day is different. So, we're in the process of  
15 deliberating what's the best approach.

16 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Sure, but I know the November  
17 Plan, and the announcement from the Mayor came out,  
18 you know, nearly three weeks ago in terms of, you  
19 know, these-- these cuts. And a lot of these  
20 cultural organizations are reaching out to my office,  
21 and the office of my colleagues about-- worrying  
22 about how these cuts will impact them. So, I'm just--  
23 - I would love to hear a timeline that DCLA has in  
24 order-- that you guys are working on in providing  
25 that assistance to some of these-- these cultural

1 organizations who are reaching out to us. Do you  
2 have any timeline in terms of when there will be any  
3 type of support, whether it's, you know, putting them  
4 in the right direction for applying towards state  
5 grants, federal grants, things of that nature?  
6

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We'll have to get  
8 back to you on that. It's a rolling conversation,  
9 and things change every day. And it's a  
10 philosophical discussion about what's the right thing  
11 to do. So, we're not at liberty right now to tell  
12 you but we will get back to you with it.

13 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Sure. And sorry to push  
14 harder, but in terms of "things are changing every  
15 day". Are things changing every day, in terms of,  
16 you know, these cuts may not come into fruition that  
17 we're potentially seeing? Or what specifically is  
18 changing every day?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Well, what is right?  
20 How do we make the right decisions? We are-- We  
21 have groups that have different expectations,  
22 different responsibilities. So, we're trying to be  
23 really, really, really judicious in the decisions  
24 that we make, so that we can serve the field and  
25 deliver for everyone with as little pain as possible.

1  
2           CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Okay. Moving on to my next  
3 round of questioning. So CreateNYC called out the  
4 importance of reaching New Yorkers with disabilities.  
5 I believe that was objective 3, "immigrants living in  
6 New York City"; objective 4, "older adult-- older New  
7 Yorkers"; so, objective 6, "and propose a variety of  
8 specific strategies for accomplishing these  
9 objectives." How do you feel these populations are  
10 faring based on the awarding of CDF grants?

11           DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We are supporting  
12 organizations that are doing great, great work in the  
13 community. Just to give you a few examples: CO/LAB  
14 Theatre Group, which works with disability  
15 individuals, which they offered theater classes,  
16 workshops, community events.

17           ID Studio Theatre works with the immigrants  
18 community. It's a South-based Bronx organization.  
19 They work with nonprofit immigrants. They also offer  
20 a social justice development program.

21           Cool Culture, which comes out of Brooklyn, New  
22 York. They do a fantastic program with underserved  
23 communities to get them into museums. It creates an  
24 opportunity for folks who would not go to The Met to  
25 have that experience. So, we believe that the



1 organizations that we support, they're in the rooms,  
2 on the ground, doing the work that we are supporting,  
3 and it's doing very well.

4  
5 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: In your testimony, you name a  
6 variety of ways DCLA has worked on outreach and  
7 expanding programming across the city. What  
8 obstacles have this-- have you, as DCLA faced in  
9 providing events and programs to underserved  
10 communities?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Well, funding is  
12 always an issue, right?

13 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Sure.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: You want to do more  
15 with more. But we have done things like increase the  
16 minimum funding for organizations who are working in  
17 this area. But the organizations themselves do a  
18 fantastic job. Just to give you an example, The  
19 Met's Teens Take The Met program, the organiza--  
20 These small organizations, they are out in the  
21 community inviting students into their buildings.  
22 Another example is on Project Art. It's an  
23 organization-- a small organization in Brooklyn. And  
24 they are advocating and partnering with New York City  
25

1 Public Libraries, where they are going in to the  
2 communities to do the work.

3  
4 Just to give you another example of The  
5 Caribbean-- the organization group is growing into a  
6 multifaceted organization that informs, educates, and  
7 entertains people about the Caribbean culture. I  
8 myself, I'm an immigrant from the Caribbean. So,  
9 it's always a pleasure to see my culture represented,  
10 and there are organizations who are doing that work.

11 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Uh-huh. And how has DCLA  
12 worked with other agencies? For example, libraries  
13 for their Cultural Pass Program, Department for the  
14 Aging for older adult outreach, the MTA for potential  
15 transit options for those with mobility needs. How  
16 has DCLA worked with some of these organizations to  
17 support other organizations and their community  
18 outreach?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We're very much  
20 actively involved in working with other  
21 organizations.

22 To give you an example, just yesterday, we  
23 partnered with DOT to host a webinar on the Open  
24 Streets Program to ensure that our cultural partners  
25 can partner in it. We work with the Department of

1  
2 Education on their after-school programs. And we  
3 also work with MFTA. We also recently worked with  
4 the NeON Project that's run by Carnegie Hall and the  
5 Department of Probation that my-- as my testimony  
6 stated, they are in seven probation centers, teaching  
7 young people arts and culture, and providing  
8 experiences for them.

9 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And how is DCLA working with  
10 larger organizations, like Carnegie Hall and Alvin  
11 Ailey to help them in supporting their outreach  
12 efforts?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: The larger  
14 organizations: They are driving their mission. We  
15 support them and they support smaller organizations.  
16 For example, Teen Takes The Met is a larger  
17 organization that drives a project that smaller--  
18 that smaller organizations can participate in, and  
19 offer tabling so that they can bring their experience  
20 to a larger community through this experience.

21 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Sure, for-- I guess, more  
22 specifically, how is the agency, DCLA, working to  
23 support larger organizations in supporting smaller  
24 organizations with expanding their reach in the city?  
25 Is there any agency support within that? Or is it

1 solely based off of funding, and then what does  
2 larger-- larger organizations do with their own  
3 audiences?  
4

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yeah. We fund  
6 programs that they describe, that brings other  
7 entities into their buildings. Funding is our  
8 greatest asset. So, we tried to be smart in the  
9 programs that we support. A lot of the organiz--  
10 larger organizations, especially the CIGs, they have  
11 robust programming to bring smaller organizations and  
12 underserved communities into their building. So, we  
13 identify programs that they are doing that meets our  
14 guidelines for equitable-- equitability, diversity,  
15 inclusion, and serving the underserved.

16 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And how is DCLA working with  
17 small organizations that may have a limited capacity  
18 for outreach in expanding their reach across the  
19 city?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: One of the reasons--  
21 One of the best ways we can do it -- and it comes  
22 right back to funding -- is through grants. We  
23 raised the floor from \$5,000 to \$10,000, which allows  
24 our small organizations to survive. They have to be  
25

1 in the game to order to offer these services. So  
2 that was one of the ways we did it.

3 We also create an opportunity for them to get  
4 multi-year grants. A small organization being secure  
5 to have funding over a three-year period is a great  
6 way for them to know that they will be around, and  
7 they can go out into the community and offer long-  
8 term support.

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Any questions from my  
11 colleagues? Councilmember Joseph?

12 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: Good afternoon.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Good afternoon.

14 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: I wanted to find out: The  
15 cultural institutions are extensions of public  
16 schools. They have a lot of programming. As  
17 Education Chair, I'm concerned what's the impact of  
18 these budget cuts with these intersections of  
19 education and cultural institutions?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: It-- There will be  
21 some impact. As you know, libraries are reducing  
22 their hours. Student groups will have some-- some  
23 challenges going forward. But we all have to meet  
24 this moment. And we are still trying to make really,  
25

1 really smart cuts to have as little significant  
2 adjustments as possible.

3  
4 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: Small cuts. That makes me  
5 nervous. That really makes me nervous.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: It's the environment  
7 we find ourselves in. So, we are a strong, resilient  
8 community, the cultural community in the city, and we  
9 will bounce back. This is tightening our belts and  
10 figuring out ways to be creative. And it is what  
11 makes New York special and New York City special.

12 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: So, is there any  
13 conversations with the Chancellor on how we're going  
14 to meet this moment, in terms of academic loss for  
15 our students? We're still dealing with that. So how  
16 does-- How does the impact-- Are you working with  
17 the chancellor to make sure we soften the impact?  
18 Because these institutions provide the support that  
19 the students need: Libraries, teen centers, access  
20 to technology, and all of that.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We haven't engaged  
22 in anything substantive. But we're happy to engage  
23 in those conversations. We're still so focused on  
24 making sure that we do the right thing by as many of  
25 our grantees as possible on the funding side. And

1  
2 then we will start focusing on the longer term, you  
3 know, solutions.

4 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. Thank you,  
5 Chair.

6 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Yeah. Before we wrap up, I  
7 guess, just to-- I felt inspired by Council-- the  
8 Councilmember's questions. But has there been any  
9 pushback, and I know that you have some limitations  
10 in working in the admin but, you know, the cultural--  
11 cultural-- DCLA and the cultural sector within our  
12 city budget, is responsible for less than 1% of the  
13 city budget, right? So even though these are smaller  
14 cuts, in the grand scheme of things, you know, these  
15 smaller cuts deeply impact all of our cultural  
16 organizations, most especially the smaller ones, when  
17 it comes to CDF grants. Has this been voiced to the  
18 Mayor about how this will really put a constraint on  
19 expanding and blossoming our cultural community? Or  
20 are these cuts just taken as is?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Have you met our  
22 Commissioner, Laurie Cumbo?

23 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Yes.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yes. She is very  
25 passionate about funding for the arts. I think she

1  
2 only lives, sleeps, and breathes arts and culture  
3 funding.

4 Of course, she is a big champion for saving us  
5 from the PEG, for adding more resources to our pot.  
6 But we understand the environment in which we find  
7 ourselves. And so, we are feverishly encouraging our  
8 constituency, our cultural partners to go out and  
9 advocate for a federal and state-- and state  
10 government to do more. But internally, Commissioner  
11 Cumbo and our agency, we-- Every chance we get we  
12 stressed how important these cuts and significant  
13 they will be to our grantees.

14 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: But just to double check:  
15 Nothing specifically yet about what to advocate for  
16 from the state and the federal government?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Really funding. Um,  
18 that's what we are always all talking about: How do  
19 we get the government to recognize that we are facing  
20 a crisis and-- on many levels and assist.

21 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Is that to, like, state  
22 elected officials or-- and federal elected officials  
23 or...?

24  
25



1  
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We're having  
3 conversations with our partners in government and our  
4 cultural communities.

5 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Okay. Guess what? That was  
6 my last question.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you for the  
8 opportunity. This is my first time doing this, and I  
9 appreciate you going so light on me.

10 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you so much. And now we  
11 are looking forward to hearing from members of the  
12 public. I know that we have both representatives of  
13 other arts and cultural organizations here today, as  
14 well as New Yorkers who would like to speak about  
15 Reso number 423. So let's start calling our panels  
16 of witnesses. Christina take it away.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, our first in person  
18 panel will be Lucy Sexton, Dohini Sompura, Kathy  
19 Landau, Lindsay Malliekel (I'm sorry if I  
20 mispronounced your name), and Elizabeth Venditto.

21 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: I really do have to keep it to  
22 two minutes today though guys, okay?

23 You should be in the next panel.

24 MS. SEXTON: Hi, my name is Lucy Sexton and I am  
25 with New Yorkers for Culture & Arts. Thank you for

1 hearing my testimony today. You know, we heard great  
2 stories and saw great images in the videos. I just  
3 want to say that I was a Su Casa teacher, which means  
4 that I had the pleasure of teaching in a couple of  
5 senior centers. One of the stories that I tell is--  
6 is I had given this-- I was teaching in Chinatown,  
7 entirely non-English-speaking. And I had given them  
8 as a prompt that they should tell a story about the  
9 time in their life they was most happy.  
10

11 This gentleman who hardly ever spoke, started  
12 crying. And he talked about that he had been working  
13 in factories since he was 14. And that these classes  
14 in this senior center, gathering with his peers were  
15 the happiest time he had experienced in his life.

16 I tell another story: When I was younger, I  
17 taught kids in the NYCHA housing in the East Village.  
18 And I-- we did dance with them. And they made up  
19 their own dances and we took them to local music  
20 places, and they got to perform. At the end of it,  
21 Miraby took my face in her hands, and she said,  
22 "You're coming back next year, right?" And I said,  
23 "Of course, of course." And the funding got cut.  
24 And I was not there next year. And it has haunted me  
25 for 30 years.

1  
2       That is what happens when you have all the great  
3 things that culture can do. And then the funding  
4 goes away as it is shrinking right now.

5       I would like to lift up also that we are funded  
6 by the Department of Cultural Affairs, but cultural  
7 organizations, you know, as we were just talking--  
8 Councilmember Joseph was talking about in with the  
9 DOE funds us. We also get money from the Department  
10 for the Aging. That's-- And we get money from The  
11 Department-- DYCD.

12       So when all of those agencies get cut, we are  
13 getting cut in many different places. So it winds up  
14 to more than a 5%, more than a 15% cut to us, because  
15 we depend on all of those income streams.

16       I will also say that, in terms of public funding,  
17 and where it's most important, it is most important  
18 with small organizations in low-wealth communities.  
19 They have less access to resources, and it is data  
20 proven that they are more dependent on public  
21 funding.

22       So, I join my colleagues and saying: Please, no  
23 more PEG cuts to culture. Thanks.

24       CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you so much, Lucy.

1  
2 MS. MALLIEKEL: Hello, I'm Lindsay Malliekel, and  
3 I work at the New Victory New 42. I want to thank  
4 you all for the opportunity to submit this testimony  
5 on behalf of the New 42 and the New Victory Theatre.

6 We take deep pride in fulfilling our mission  
7 which is to make extraordinary performing arts a  
8 vital part of everyone's life from the earliest years  
9 onward. Our research has really proven that early  
10 arts exposure can have a really positive impact on  
11 the socio-emotional development of young people. And  
12 yet many of the young people in New York City still  
13 face intense barriers to the arts and culture sector.

14 I want to talk about two programs specifically  
15 today. The first is our Bring Your Family Program  
16 and the other is our education program. The Bring  
17 Your Family Program is actually a partnership with  
18 NYCHA. Last year we-- we distributed over a thousand  
19 free tickets to over 228 distinct families. We did  
20 on site arts activities. And we're hoping to grow  
21 that as we go into this year and the next years.

22 We're hoping to continue to partner with  
23 Chelsea's Fulton and Elliott Houses, Bronx Butler,  
24 Patterson, and Mitchel Houses. We work with NYCHA  
25 and the Public Housing Community Fund to provide MTA

1 travel vouchers as well as concession vouchers.

2 These are all things that are dependent on public  
3 support, and they can only continue, let alone grow,  
4 if we continue to grow that support.  
5

6 The education program which brings dynamic free  
7 in classroom arts education to around 150 school  
8 partners each year, 70% of those 150 schools serve  
9 large populations of students who live in low-income  
10 housing and low-income neighborhoods. For many of  
11 those students, our educational program is the only  
12 in school arts education that they will receive  
13 access to. The only one.

14 When we think about what the impact of this kind  
15 of arts and cultural work is we want to think about  
16 what it does to the students who are in those  
17 schools, the thousands of students who can either be  
18 impacted or left behind.

19 Accessibility for all continues to be a core  
20 value of our organization and most of our  
21 organizations. And we want to thank you for  
22 continuing to support that work as we bring that joy  
23 and the power across the city.

24 MS. LANDAU: Hello, I'm Kathy Landau, Executive  
25 Director of Symphony Space. Thank you for welcoming

1 us all here and being our advocates. We are a  
2 performing arts and arts education organization at  
3 95th and Broadway, but our programs and our impact  
4 reach far beyond our immediate geography.  
5

6 This year, our audiences came to us from every  
7 borough across the city including all nine districts  
8 represented by this committee, all 50 states, and 71  
9 countries around the world. Our 151 staff members  
10 also represent every borough, and the more than 600  
11 artists we presented on our stage last year also come  
12 from all across the city. We are our people. And  
13 that is really important. And then there are our  
14 classrooms.

15 And this year our global arts program brought  
16 over 15,000 New York City public school students from  
17 50 schools on a journey of exploration and  
18 celebration in the history and cultures of Africa,  
19 Latin America, Asia, and Native America. And our  
20 literacy program, All Write!, served over 1,400 adult  
21 literacy students and celebrated its 30th  
22 anniversary. 340 of those adult students came from  
23 districts on this committee. So All Write! took  
24 place in 10 public libraries, on five CUNY campuses,  
25 2 DOE adult learning centers, and in 6 community

1 organizations throughout the boroughs, all completely  
2 free of charge.  
3

4 As for conveying our impact: I leave it to one  
5 of our students, Mary who said, "I was illiterate all  
6 my life. I didn't know where to start, or how to  
7 start. All Write! opened up a whole new world to  
8 me."

9 So that is what the arts do. Thank you for being  
10 there on our stages and in our classrooms. We are  
11 all opening up the world.

12 Thank you so much.

13 MS. VENDITTO: Good afternoon, Chair Ossé and  
14 members of The Committee. My name is Elizabeth  
15 Venditto. I serve as the Director of Institutional  
16 Giving at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, A Living  
17 Memorial to the Holocaust.

18 The museum educates visitors of all backgrounds  
19 about Jewish life before, during, and after the  
20 Holocaust. We teach New Yorkers about what unchecked  
21 hate and bigotry can do. Our exhibitions and  
22 education programs examine the richness of Jewish  
23 culture and history. Our work builds bridges between  
24 the city's communities and creates mutual respect and  
25 understanding.

1  
2       The museum makes arts and culture accessible to  
3 New Yorkers through free admission programs and our  
4 work inside City Schools. This year, we have served  
5 over 16,000 New York City public school students. We  
6 provide free museum admission to public schools. We  
7 also organize free transportation to the museum for  
8 schools with financial need, so that students in the  
9 outer boroughs have the same access to us as those  
10 located closer to our home in Battery Park.

11       CUNY students and IDNYC card holders also receive  
12 free museum admission, and we will host a CUNY day at  
13 the museum on March 15th.

14       Last year, we brought our work inside city  
15 schools through a new peer-to-peer Holocaust  
16 education program. The Holocaust Educators School  
17 Partnership trains local college students to teach  
18 lessons on Holocaust history in public school  
19 classrooms. Then the schools come to the museum at  
20 no cost for an exhibition tour led by those college  
21 students. The program served 2000 New York City  
22 public school students last year. It will serve  
23 10,000 students this school year.

24       Cultural organizations depend on city funding to  
25 provide quality community centered programming. I



1 join my colleagues in the Cultural Institutions Group  
2 and the entire cultural sector, and ask that DCLA be  
3 spared from the next two rounds of the  
4 administration's PEG cuts so we continue to serve all  
5 New Yorkers.  
6

7 Good afternoon Chair Ossé, members of the  
8 Cultural Committee. My name is Dohini Sompura, and  
9 I'm the Director of Government Affairs at the  
10 American Museum of Natural History. As one of the  
11 largest cultural institutions in the city, AMNH  
12 understands the importance of having our programming  
13 accessible to all communities throughout the city.  
14 Community programming allows the museum to extend its  
15 educational reach beyond traditional museum visitors,  
16 and provides opportunities for individuals who may  
17 not have access or the resources to visit us. We  
18 strive to engage underrepresented communities to  
19 spark curiosity and encourage a lifelong interest in  
20 science and the natural world through various  
21 community and educational programs, such as discovery  
22 days, cool culture, cultural paths, urban advantage,  
23 Lang science program and the science research and  
24 mentoring program. My testimony highlights a lot of  
25 these programs, but I wanted to highlight two

1 specifically, one being the discovery day, and one  
2 being the Urban Advantage Program that Deputy  
3 Commissioner Murray talked about a little bit  
4 earlier.

5  
6 Since 2014, AMNH has been a proud partner with  
7 the New York City Council to offer families at NYCHA  
8 developments opportunities to participate in AMNH  
9 discovery days program. The program was developed to  
10 serve communities who might not normally consider  
11 visiting a museum, or feel disenfranchised to visit  
12 the museum to do due to a variety of social factors,  
13 including cost, language barriers, physical  
14 geographic access, and/or limited access to formal  
15 education.

16 The program is designed for families from NYCHA  
17 developments to visit the museum and interact with  
18 museum have scientists and educators, explore  
19 exhibition halls and experience the ways in which the  
20 museum is an educational resource. AMNH hosts 8  
21 discovery sessions throughout the academic year,  
22 hosting as many as 100 individuals per session. We  
23 actually have one coming up on Saturday for Council  
24 District Six we have over 245 people registered to  
25 come to the museum, which is phenomenal.

1 Free transportation to and from the museum as all  
2 the light breakfast is offered. Each family also  
3 receives vouchers to encourage them to return back to  
4 the museum.  
5

6 [BELL RINGS]

7 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: I'm so sorry.

8 MS. SOMPURA: That's okay. Yes.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you to this panel. Our  
10 next panel will be Lisa Gold, Kate Madigan, and Susan  
11 Hapgood.

12 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Kate Madigan? There she is.

13 Okay, I'm just going to start. Good afternoon,  
14 Chair Ossé and members of the Council. Thank you for  
15 the opportunity to testify. I'm Lisa Gold, Executive  
16 Director of the Asian American Arts Alliance. And we  
17 are a 40-year-old organization that works to ensure  
18 greater representation, equity, and opportunities for  
19 AAPI artists and arts organizations. And I'm also a  
20 co-facilitator on the Culture@3 call. And I'm going  
21 to be the Henny-Penny who speaks the realness from  
22 that call yesterday, that there were people who said,  
23 "I don't think we're going to make it." There were  
24 people that have very, very small organizations.  
25

1 Immigrant, BIPOC-led organizations. One of them  
2 said, "I have not paid my artists since October."

3  
4 These are not wealthy organizations, as Lucy  
5 stated, organizations like ours from these  
6 communities BIPOC-led and serving. They don't have  
7 the support systems that predominantly white  
8 institutions have. They don't have the resources.  
9 They don't have the funds. And they do rely  
10 disproportionately on government funding from these  
11 sources. It is devastating. They are afraid they  
12 are not going to make it through these cuts. So I am  
13 begging you on part of my constituents and my  
14 community, that the DCLA be spared this. It's a  
15 small drop in the bucket compared to the overall city  
16 budget.

17 You know, the Department of Cultural Affairs--  
18 So, you know, our-- my community-- the AAPI committee  
19 makes up about 18% of the city population, yet we  
20 only receive less than 2% of DCLA funding. And the  
21 majority of that comes from the CDF. And, you know,  
22 cuts to that there they are disproportionately going  
23 to affect those organizations that the Commissioner  
24 cited as lifting up, that we are helping communities  
25 by-- by increasing their grants from \$5,000 to

1 \$10,000. Well, we don't even know if we're getting  
2 that money. I have friends that are teaching artists  
3 that haven't been able to work.  
4

5 This is like a broad impact. This is deeply  
6 affecting people's livelihoods, their communities.  
7 I'm like totally going off script here. I'm not even  
8 talking about like the-- the work that that A4 did  
9 during the pandemic. Like with small amounts of  
10 money, \$30,000, we impacted a quarter of a million  
11 people with anti hate programs and supporting the  
12 AAPI communities with active creative care.

13 [BELL RINGS]

14 Sorry. Okay.

15 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you, Lisa.

16 MS. HAPGOOD: Thank you. Thank you, committee  
17 Chair Chi Ossé, and Councilmembers for the  
18 opportunity to testify about cultural organizations  
19 outreach into our city communities. I am Susan  
20 Hapgood. I know many of you. And I am Director of  
21 the International Studio and Curatorial Program also  
22 known as ISCP, a nonprofit organization in North  
23 Brooklyn. We're getting ready to celebrate our 30th  
24 anniversary in 2024.  
25

1 We are embedded in a community of industrial  
2 businesses, warehouses, hardworking families, and  
3 artists workshops. We're a nonprofit housed in a  
4 former three-story printing factory. And our mission  
5 is to support the development of artists and curators  
6 from around the world and to introduce New York  
7 audiences to exceptional international and local art  
8 practices. We're open to all. We work hard to  
9 organize excellent contemporary art programming,  
10 year-round, free of charge. We definitely contribute  
11 to the cultural fabric of our neighborhood, to the  
12 stability, the safety and the education of our  
13 community. We attract visitors from all over the  
14 city. We have approximately 10,000 visitors per  
15 year, most from Brooklyn, and from many other  
16 countries too.

17  
18 The people who participate in our programs come  
19 from Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa as well  
20 as North America. Over the past year and a half, we  
21 have organized special events for nearby high  
22 schools, for public housing residents. We are two  
23 blocks from the Cooper Park NYCHA housing community,  
24 and all of our neighbors, making them feel welcome  
25 hosting special events for them alone.

1  
2           We are very actively reaching out to make sure  
3 that our many audiences know that our organization is  
4 doing programming for them. We want them to take  
5 advantage of all that's happening. We have a show on  
6 right now that is about the colonial era when the  
7 Dutch traded the island of Manhattan for an island in  
8 Indonesia. That was the sole control of nutmeg and  
9 trade of nutmeg, which was worth more than gold at  
10 that time.

11           I just want to add a note about potential budget  
12 cuts. Programming--

13           [BELL RINGS]

14           Well, you know what I was going to say.

15           [LAUGHTER]

16           All right, thank you.

17           MS. MADIGAN: Good afternoon. My name is Kate  
18 Madigan. I serve as the Government Relations  
19 Coordinator at the Public Theater. Nice to see you  
20 again. Thank you, Chair Ossé, for convening this  
21 committee hearing to deliberate on the critical topic  
22 of arts and cultural organizations' outreach into New  
23 York City communities. And thank you again to the  
24 Deputy Commissioner for shouting out the Public  
25 Theater in their testimony.

1           So, my first example of how we engage with the  
2  
3 community is free Shakespeare in the Park. The  
4 Public Theater is stewards of city-owned property in  
5 Central Park, and downtown at 425 Lafayette Street.  
6 We have reached 6 million people over the last 60  
7 years, and this season, 2023, we welcomed nearly  
8 80,000 New Yorkers and visitors from around the world  
9 to our productions. We continue to pursue ticket  
10 distribution strategies to reach a broadly diverse  
11 audience of New Yorkers incorporating COVID-era  
12 innovations to our model of ticket outreach to create  
13 as many access points as possible throughout the five  
14 boroughs. We have dedicated lines for senior  
15 citizens and persons with disabilities, and we are  
16 also working on expanding our accessibility access  
17 for New Yorkers in our Delacourt renovation programs.

18           And another one of our programs that outreach  
19 into the community is our Hunts Point Children  
20 Shakespeare Ensemble, which for more than a decade  
21 has offered hundreds of elementary and middle school  
22 students the opportunity to develop their confidence,  
23 knowledge, and creativity through the transformative  
24 experience of bringing Shakespeare's words to life on  
25 stage. This 2022/2023 Season approximately 50



1 students engaged in eight months of study of  
2 Shakespeare's timeless tragedy, Romeo and Juliet.

3  
4 This year culminated the students-- in the  
5 students crafting and performing a fully-staged  
6 production of the play on May 19, at the Bronx  
7 Academy for Multimedia, and the Teresa Lane Theatre  
8 in Manhattan on May 21st, for audiences totaling  
9 roughly 500 family members, friends, and teachers.

10 And I would like to also end with saying our  
11 mobile unit visits all five boroughs into local  
12 parks, and we bring that community programming free  
13 and we hope to continue to expand and at least keep  
14 it on the docket of free programming throughout the  
15 years to come.

16 So thank you so much for your time. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you to this panel. Our  
19 next panel will be Angel Hernandez, Robin Chatel, and  
20 Aya Hyashi.

21 MS. HERNANDEZ: Good afternoon. I'm Angel  
22 Hernandez, Director of Government Relations for the  
23 New York Botanical Garden. Thank you Chair Ossé and  
24 members of the Committee for having me here.

1  
2       With over 130 years of serving the people of the  
3 Bronx, our institution has created programs to  
4 address the needs of our city's ever-changing  
5 communities. NYBG has always played a major role in  
6 the Bronx as a cultural anchor, where not only our  
7 scientific collections and exhibitions should be  
8 deemed as our main strength. Our Bronx Greener  
9 Program, which celebrates 35 years continues to be  
10 one of the main outreach programs, where we provide  
11 horticultural education training, and technical  
12 assistance to Bronx residents, community gardeners,  
13 and urban farmers.

14       We're celebrating our latest partnership at  
15 Carol's Urban Community Farm located at NYCHA's  
16 Castle Hill Houses. Their grounds crew will hire a  
17 farm coordinator, pilot youth programs for four to  
18 six year olds, and to continue to build out farm beds  
19 for the community.

20       Addressing food insecurity in the Bronx, Bronx  
21 Green also coordinates the work of dozen of community  
22 gardens into six Bronx farm hubs to donate over  
23 25,000 seedling plants to Bronx Community Gardens.  
24 We also launched the Bronx Neighbors Program. During  
25 the first summer of quarantine back in 2020, where

1  
2 now we received over 120,000 Bronx residents to come  
3 at no cost to experience our engaging exhibitions and  
4 landscapes over the years.

5 NYPG also provides over 500 full-time positions  
6 in which half are Bronx residents, and 175 are DC-37  
7 union jobs.

8 Cultural organizations depend on city funding to  
9 provide the sort of quality community centered  
10 programming that I just described today and many  
11 more.

12 I join my colleagues in the Cultural Institutions  
13 Group and the entire cultural sector and ask DCLA to  
14 spare us for the next two rounds of administrative  
15 cuts, so we can continue this work in the Bronx  
16 Community and in New York at large.

17 Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

19 MS. CHATEL: Hello, good afternoon. Thank you,  
20 Chair Ossé and the rest of the Committee for having  
21 us and inviting me. My name is Robin Chatel, and  
22 I'm-- I'm representing independent cultural  
23 producers. And I had been working in the public  
24 realm for many years, since 2005, when I launched  
25 Riverside Park Summer On The Hudson Festival and

1 invited a diverse range of New York performing  
2 artists and arts organizations to perform on Pier I  
3 at 70th Street. And currently as moving cultural  
4 projects, I collaborate with cultural, educational,  
5 civic, and community organizations who want to  
6 activate their public spaces with arts and cultural  
7 programming. I also provide capacity building and  
8 technical assistance to guide these groups as they  
9 use the arts programming to bring people together and  
10 address persisting inequities in their neighborhoods.  
11

12 A recent project is-- I'm a programming  
13 consultant with City Parks Foundation for their Green  
14 Fund program, commissioning program, and were they  
15 asked over hundreds of their park-- parks-- small  
16 parks around the city if they would need support  
17 bringing in performing arts programming, and they  
18 said yes. I'm working with 29 groups, which is a  
19 really new step and spreading the arts to  
20 communities.

21 When-- in 2020, when indoor venues were shuttered  
22 during COVID. You know, I got to travel to every--  
23 all five-- all five boroughs. I was in East New  
24 York, from East New York, Brooklyn, to St. George  
25 Staten Island, from Astoria, Queens, to Manhattan's

1  
2 Upper West Side, and I worked alongside volunteer  
3 stewards of public spaces to help them create, and  
4 develop, and envision programming.

5 I produced and helped produce over 100 performing  
6 arts programs in public spaces all around the city.  
7 And this work was supported by initiatives from the  
8 Mayor's office, City Artists Core, the Open Streets  
9 and Open Culture permit which Mr. Rivera--  
10 Councilmember Rivera, and both of you have pushed  
11 through. And I've really been changed by this work.

12 You know, I'm when I work alongside community  
13 leaders and volunteers, stewards of public space, who  
14 really believe also in the transformative power of  
15 the arts, you know, to strengthen individual  
16 community bonds, and support emotional healthier  
17 playing just like I have believed my whole career as  
18 an artist.

19 [BELL RINGS]

20 I'm really humbled by their resolve and their  
21 commitment to connect their neighbors to cultural  
22 programming. And not only as passive participants,  
23 but really--

24 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Sorry, we do have to--  
25

1 MS. CHATEL: I'm sorry. Okay. I'm just-- I  
2 wanted to say that, you know, I don't get funded for  
3 this work. I know the Department of Cultural Affairs  
4 is funding organizations, and I am-- I'm the artists  
5 that I work with get that funding. Please continue  
6 that funding in order to really bring the arts to all  
7 five boroughs and to little neighborhoods and  
8 communities.  
9

10 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

11 DR. HYASJO: I'm ready when they are. Good  
12 afternoon, Councilmember Ossé and Committee members.  
13 Thank you for your advocacy and leadership on behalf  
14 of arts and culture in New York City. My name is Dr.  
15 Aya Esther Hayashi, and I am the Development Director  
16 at People's Theatre Project, also known as PTP.

17 PTP is largest performing arts organization in  
18 Manhattan north of Harlem, and a steering committee  
19 member for the Latinx Arts Consortium of New York.

20 We at PTP create theater with and for immigrant  
21 communities to build a more just and equitable world.  
22 As an immigrant and Latino-led organization, our  
23 neighbors of all ages, backgrounds, and immigration  
24 status in Washington Heights, Inwood, and the Bronx  
25 trust and rely upon us.

1  
2       At PTP theater is our tool in the work of social  
3 justice, amplifying and humanizing the stories of New  
4 York City immigrants. We create and produce original  
5 theater by immigrant artists of color through our PTP  
6 Academy and partnerships with 24 schools and CBOs.  
7 We serve over a thousand multilingual learners every  
8 year free of charge.

9       We are grateful for the support that we receive  
10 from the City Council and DCLA every year. This  
11 funding is essential to our ability to serve your  
12 constituents. Because of this, the PEG cuts  
13 announced last month concern us greatly. PTP And so  
14 many of our colleagues or arts organizations uptown,  
15 rely not just on DCLA funding but also funding from  
16 DYCD, DOE, and other city agencies. What is a tiny  
17 cut in the scheme of the overall city budget will be  
18 devastating, severely impacting our ability to  
19 provide service to our immigrant community,  
20 particularly our multilingual learners.

21       Today I join my colleagues in the cultural sector  
22 and ask that DCLA be spared from the next two rounds  
23 of the administration's PEG cuts. We are asking you  
24 to partner with us and work towards creative  
25

1 solutions. Surely, you can see that there is an  
2 abundance of creativity in this room and online.

3  
4 Consider that the impact of City Council funds  
5 will go so much further if invested in cultural  
6 workers who are a direct link to your constituents.  
7 We create safe and inclusive spaces for all New  
8 Yorkers. City funding is essential and  
9 transformative.

10 Thank you for your time and consideration.

11 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you to this panel. Our  
13 next panel will be Roy Pengal, Mary Nolan, Thomas  
14 Gogan, and Hillary Ekster.

15 Hillary left. Okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: You can begin when you're  
17 ready.

18 MR. PENGAL: Okay. Thank you. Good afternoon.  
19 Thank you, Chairman Ossé and all committee members  
20 for holding this hearing. My name is Roy Pengal.  
21 I'm from Queens and a member of DC 37 Retirees  
22 Association and Move The Money NYC.

23 My partner and I have three young adult sons. We  
24 are-- We all are concerned about the city's delivery  
25 of essential services. My partner, a public school



1 employee is dismayed by the prospect of serious  
2 cutbacks. I'm concerned as a retired city worker  
3 about protecting my senior healthcare benefits.  
4

5 We support Resolution 423 because it seeks to  
6 change the narrative of funding war to the question  
7 of "What about our communities?"

8 According to the National Priorities Project, New  
9 York City residents federal tax dollars accounted for  
10 over \$36 billion dollars of the US military budget in  
11 2023. The federal government spends over 50% of its  
12 discretionary budget on endless wars and expensive  
13 weapons. Passing Resolution 423 would put the  
14 Council on record urging cuts to the bloated Pentagon  
15 war budget so that funds can be used for much-needed  
16 services that are being cut.

17 As the Mayor calls for severe cuts to city  
18 agencies and services, now more than ever is the time  
19 for creative thinking and action to identify new  
20 revenues and under-utilized resources. Let us leave  
21 no stone unturned in facing the fiscal challenges to  
22 come. There are Unturned stones in the Pentagon  
23 where there can be found billions of our dollars  
24 slated for war. We need to move that money to our  
25 communities.

1  
2       The resolution-- This resolution calls on  
3 changing the national focus from funding war to  
4 addressing our neglected cities. I urge your  
5 committee members to vote for Resolution 423.

6       Thank you very much.

7       MS. NOLAN: Thank you for holding these hearings.  
8 My name is Mary Nolan, I'm with Move The Money. The  
9 Pentagon budget for 2024 is \$886 billion, and it has  
10 grown over the past several years. The US spends  
11 more on its military than the next 10 countries  
12 combined. The military budget accounts for over 15%  
13 of federal discretionary spending. 18% of every tax  
14 dollar you and I pay goes to the Pentagon.

15       The New York City on the other hand is asked to  
16 practice austerity. The New York City budget was  
17 \$110 billion in 2023. And Mayor Adams wants to cut  
18 it by 20%, or \$22 billion. These drastic cuts will  
19 hurt every single city agency, institution, and  
20 program.

21       Let's look at one that is dear to me as a  
22 lifelong educator. The 220 branches of the New York  
23 City Public Library system received 37 million  
24 visitors a year, they circulate nearly half a billion  
25 books and other materials, provide 7000 public

1 computers, and offer hundreds of thousands of classic  
2 programs and services to citizens of all ages, races,  
3 and classes or to every one citizen and non-citizen.  
4 They are a vital and impressive part of our civic  
5 infrastructure and education system. Yet Mayor Adams  
6 wants to cut the library funding by the same  
7 percentage as others. This will force libraries to  
8 close on Sundays (it's going to start next week in  
9 Brooklyn) and reduce spending on materials  
10 programming and building.

11  
12       Thereby the city will gain a meager-- the savings  
13 will save the city 0.02% of its budget, doing massive  
14 damage for minimal gain. Mayor Adams claims he has  
15 to make these drastic cuts to pay for the migrant  
16 crisis. But the crisis isn't about migrants. The  
17 problem is the obscenely large military budget.  
18 Redirecting even a small proportion of the \$896  
19 billion the Pentagon gets would make up and cover the  
20 22 billion Adams wants to cut.

21       We urge you to vote for Resolution 423, and help  
22 us shift our federal spending priorities and serve  
23 our communities. Thank you.

24       MR. GOGAN: Thank you Chair Ossé. I appreciate  
25 Carlina Rivera's leadership in this as well. I'm Tom

1 Gogan. I'm a member of the National Writers Union.

2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Press the mic.

3 MR. GOGAN: Let me try again. There we go.

4 Okay, thank you Chair Ossé. I'm Tom Gogan from the  
5 National Writers Union and a member of Move The Money  
6 New York City. Thank you for holding this hearing.  
7 I'm glad to see our lead sponsor, Carlina Rivera,  
8 with us today too.

9 I've been an organizer in the city for over four  
10 decades and now retired, but I've been spending a lot  
11 of time working on this issue.

12 This week's finance committee hearing on Monday  
13 highlighted the tremendous problems the city faces.  
14 And in terms of the immediate problem: Yes, we've  
15 got to find new resources, and that can come from a  
16 number of different sources. But the most-- the  
17 primary underlying problem, structural problem, is  
18 that we have a military budget that's out of control  
19 at the national level, and we need to get those  
20 resources down into our community.

21 President Eisenhower and Reverend Martin Luther  
22 King both warned us about the danger of an ever-  
23 expanding military budget and the military industrial  
24 complex. US military spending now is approaching  
25

1 almost a trillion dollars per year. It's greater  
2 than the next 10 countries combined. It fuels a  
3 self-fulfilling prophecy of endless war.  
4

5 And by the way, the Pentagon is the world's  
6 single largest polluter on the planet. Military jobs  
7 can also wipe out whole civilian economies. For  
8 example, commercial shipbuilding, right? Think--  
9 Just think of the Navy Yard in Brooklyn. It wiped  
10 out not only thousands of jobs at the end of World  
11 War Two, but our communities surrounding that area  
12 were really hard hit.

13 Many who lived through that period paid a  
14 terrible price, a price that was paid again during  
15 the fiscal crisis that began in the mid 70s. New  
16 York City and State depend to a great degree on  
17 federal funding for public services and  
18 infrastructure. We're paying something like \$30 to  
19 \$35 billion a year of our federal taxes that goes  
20 straight to the Pentagon thanks to bilateral  
21 congressional action. That has to change. Our City  
22 Council must urge Congress to redirect a significant  
23 portion of our New York City taxes from the military  
24 to needed public goods and services which are mostly  
25 provided by government and nonprofit groups.

[BELL RINGS]

Passing Resolution 423 is a modest step in that direction, but it will put New York City in the lead on this.

CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

MR. GOGAN: Meanwhile, we must all work to reverse the Mayor's cuts. I don't need to do the whole litany of services, but I will mention: homeless veterans? We now have over 2000 of them on our city streets. And there are so many needs in all of our hardest-hit communities that we all know where they are around the city. Thank you so much. I have written testimony I want to submit.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you to this panel. We're going to move to a remote panelist. And then we'll return back to in-person testimony. Leah Johnson, you may begin when the Sergeant starts your clock may begin.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

MS. JOHNSON: Thank you. Good afternoon Chair Ossé and members of the committee. I'm Leah Johnson. I'm Executive Vice President and Chief Communications Marketing and Advocacy Officer at Lincoln Center for

1 the Performing Arts. I am also a member of the  
2 Cultural Institutions Group.  
3

4 We are one of 11 arts and arts education  
5 nonprofits on the 16-acre Lincoln Center campus.  
6 Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts is  
7 consistently exploring new ways to confront barriers  
8 to entry and better reflect, uplift, and rejoice in  
9 the vibrant communities of New York City in all  
10 aspects of our artistic and civic work.

11 The vast majority of Lincoln Center for the  
12 Performing Arts programming is either free or choose-  
13 what-you-pay starting at \$5. After a successful  
14 pilot in 2022, we have seen sold-out houses drawing  
15 in diverse audiences. During Summer For The City,  
16 for a third year, our campus was transformed in New  
17 York City's largest free Summer Festival. This year  
18 we welcomed 380,000 people to campus with 75% of  
19 audiences new to Lincoln Center, 54% identifying as  
20 BIPOC, and 25% of the attendees from Bronx, Brooklyn,  
21 Queens, and Staten Island.

22 Serving audiences living with disabilities is  
23 built into our venues, programming, and all aspects  
24 of audience experience with comprehensive access,  
25 accommodations for performances, chill out spaces,

1 visual directions, alternatives to standing in line,  
2 and welcome staff trained and inclusive practices.

3 We have programming such as our-- such as our Lincoln  
4 Center Moments for older adults, access ambassadors  
5 providing year long school partnerships, and Passport  
6 For The Arts for young people with disabilities, and  
7 our Big Umbrella Festival for young people living  
8 with autism and their families.  
9

10 We have a multi-pronged multilingual engagement  
11 strategy to reach communities throughout the New  
12 York-- throughout New York City with targeted ads.  
13 We've also-- We've also participated in--

14 [BELL RINGS]

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

16 MS. JOHNSON: Thank you so much for this time.

17 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

19 Moving back to in person testimony, our next panel  
20 will be Theodore Reich, Eileen Bandell, Tarak Kauff,  
21 and Gloria Brandman.

22 MR. KAUFF: Hello, I'm Tarak Kauff. I'm a member  
23 of Veterans for Peace. I'm going to focus mainly,  
24 but not exclusively on what Carlina Rivera's Move The  
25 Money, Resolution 423 means to veterans.



1  
2       Veterans were once willing to sacrifice  
3 everything, even their lives, believing that the wars  
4 that they had to kill and die for were just, noble,  
5 and necessary. Only later did many veterans realize  
6 that there is no such thing as a good war. Nothing  
7 that justified killing and maiming people, animals  
8 and even destroying entire countries. They realized,  
9 like the American public, that they had been lied to  
10 and betrayed by those in positions of power, who  
11 profit from war.

12       New York City, get this, pays more than \$36  
13 billion a year in taxes that go to the military and  
14 directly to fund war. President Biden now wants \$14  
15 billion of that to go to supplying Israel with more  
16 bombs, explosive tank shells, and weapons that will  
17 continue to reign death on the people of Gaza and the  
18 West Bank. That's besides the \$3.8 billion every  
19 year it goes to Israel.

20       Meanwhile, there are 85,000 homeless people in  
21 New York City, including over 22,000 children, and  
22 over 16,000 veterans living in poverty, and over 1000  
23 homeless veterans. Not only do these tax dollars not  
24 go to supporting endless homelessness, they are  
25

1 instrumental in helping to cause these poverty  
2 issues, especially for veterans, but for all of us.

3  
4       These are statistics, but they represent real  
5 flesh-and-blood human beings. They-- There are  
6 positive applications for all this tax money. We  
7 could effectively address all New York City's  
8 problems and still have money left over.

9       Resolution 423, if passed, could move significant  
10 funds away from the US military budget. And this is  
11 weaponry that kills and keeps killing for decades,  
12 even after the war is over. If we pass Resolution  
13 423 years, this money can fund social services to  
14 support the unmet basic human needs of New York City  
15 residents.

16       I only have a couple of seconds.

17       I want to say this one thing that--

18       [BELL RINGS]

19       I'm sorry. I'm going to say this. The Great  
20 American Prophet Martin Luther King said at Riverside  
21 Church in 1967: "A nation that continues year after  
22 year to spend more money on military defense than on  
23 programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual  
24 death." He also said: "We are confronted with the  
25 fierce urgency of now in this unfolding conundrum of

1 life and history, there is such a thing as being too  
2 late." Pass 423.

4 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you very much

5 MR. REISH: Good afternoon my name is Ted Reish.

6 I reside on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. And  
7 I'd like to first thank the Committee for having this  
8 hearing this afternoon, and I wanted to specially to  
9 thank our council member Carlina Rivera for  
10 introducing this Resolution 423 just over a year ago,  
11 although we had an earlier version that died in the  
12 Council, because the then Chair of the Committee  
13 would not put it on the agenda.

14 So I'm here today to urge the Committee to  
15 approve resolution 423. This resolution is actually  
16 very mild. Urging-- It's a very mild urging of the  
17 Congress and the President to reduce military  
18 spending to fund social services.

19 Reliable sources indicate that the actual annual  
20 military spending is one-and-a-half trillion dollars,  
21 far in excess of the close to \$900 billion budgeted  
22 for military spending. Again, according to the  
23 National Priorities Project, nearly two thirds of the  
24 federal discretionary budget goes to militarized  
25 federal programs, leaving just a third for our

1  
2 communities, a sliver some lawmakers want to cut even  
3 further. I think we all know this.

4 It is shameful when domestic parties never get  
5 equal footing with military spending. The Congress  
6 and President endlessly prioritize violence, the  
7 military and war over peace and human needs.  
8 Education, affordable housing, public health,  
9 scientific and medical research, solutions to  
10 catastrophe-- to catastrophic climate change,  
11 homelessness, et cetera.

12 [BELL RINGS]

13 The Mayor's recent announcement of drastic cuts  
14 in all city services is a call for the City Council  
15 to act. It is high time for the mayor and the  
16 Council the call for more support and funding from  
17 the federal government.

18 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

19 MR. REISH: All you've got to do is listen to the  
20 earlier testimony. Cutting the budget. Cutting the  
21 budget. Nobody knows where their money's going to  
22 come from.

23 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

24 MR. REISH: Thank you.

1  
2 MS. BARDELL: Good afternoon. My name is Eileen  
3 Bardell. I live on Staten Island, and I am a member  
4 of Peace Action of Staten Island. I am grateful to  
5 have the opportunity to address the City Council  
6 today to express why I believe it is important that  
7 Resolution 423 is passed by the City Council.

8 As we witnessed the seemingly endless wars going  
9 on all over the world, the suffering of children is  
10 happening right before our eyes. This is what war  
11 does. As long as our tax dollars are used to  
12 continue these wars, we bear a responsibility for the  
13 results.

14 But we don't have to travel abroad to learn about  
15 the plight of innocent children. According to some  
16 statistics one in five children in Staten Island is  
17 food compromised. Nationwide, it is estimated to be  
18 one in six.

19 Without access to affordable and nutritious food  
20 or child's ability to learn and begin to build a  
21 successful future is severely undermined. Food  
22 insecurity continues to rise, especially within black  
23 and Latino communities. Homelessness: In an article  
24 written by Tony Clawson and published 10/26/2022,  
25 more than 104,000 public school students in New York

1 City were homeless during the last school year. One  
2 in 10 children lived in shelters, in cars, in  
3 abandoned buildings, or outside because of rising  
4 rents and housing shortages.  
5

6 Abroad or right here at home, this is what  
7 happens when Congress spends our tax dollars for  
8 defense spending instead of taking care of people's  
9 needs. Thank you.

10 MS. BRANDMAN: Okay. Hi, I'm Gloria Brandman.  
11 I'm in the UFT and I work with Move The Money. And  
12 I'd like to thank the Committee for holding this  
13 hearing, especially those of you that are still  
14 listening.

15 I served in New York City public schools for over  
16 30 years. I'm also in a caucus called Retiree  
17 Advocate. We are in the retired teachers chapter of  
18 the UFT, and we are one of the 60 supporting  
19 organizations of this bill.

20 I also was a special educator, and I'm going to  
21 talk a little bit about how this important reso is to  
22 the education of all of our students, especially  
23 those with disabilities.

24 The students and families that I was privileged  
25 to work with needed extra services to succeed in

1 school and in their lives. Many came on school  
2 buses. They needed paraprofessionals to get to  
3 school and also in the classrooms. Smaller class  
4 size, additional teaching supports were also  
5 necessary. And of course, extra programs such as  
6 art, after school, preschool, and computer technology  
7 help ensure happy and thriving children. These are  
8 all slated to be cut by the Mayor.

10 City officials had said that the DOE will be cut  
11 by \$547 million this fiscal year and \$600 million  
12 next year. Why should any of our students be  
13 deprived of what they need to succeed in the richest  
14 country in the world? These cuts should not be  
15 necessary because the money is clearly here. Last  
16 year, Congress voted to approve up to \$877 billion in  
17 military spending for 23. And in 24, 56% of the  
18 federal discretionary budget will go to the military  
19 buildup. Who benefits? Military contractors, weapon  
20 manufacturers. Not our children, our seniors, our  
21 poor working people. No.

22 So Resolution 423 mandates the City Council call  
23 on Congress and the President to move significant  
24 funds away from the military budget in order to fund  
25 programs to benefit us.

[BELL RINGS]

So New York City can set an example for the entire country and especially set an example for our children.

CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you so much.

MS. BRANDMAN: Do the right thing and pass this resolution. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you to this panel. Our next panel will be Charlotte Phillips, Marian Phyllis Cunningham, Marian Ronan, and Marcia Newfields.

CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: You know what Tupac said: "They got money for the war, but they can't feed the poor."

CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: You may begin whenever.

MS. PHILLIPS: Hi, I'm Charlotte Phillips, a Brooklyn resident, and I want to thank the committee for holding a hearing on this important and very 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'm also the Chairperson of Brooklyn For Peace.



1           Among the reasons that I retired from clinical  
2  
3           practice was so that I could focus my energy on  
4  
5           working for the reallocation of national resources  
6  
7           away from military buildup and toward the well-being  
8  
9           of children.

10           I am very disappointed by the Mayor's recent  
11  
12           announcement of a 5% cut in all New York City  
13  
14           services. I'm especially alarmed by the proposed  
15  
16           decrease in resources allocated to Health+Hospitals,  
17  
18           as well as to the Behavioral Health Emergency  
19  
20           Assistance Response Division, which provides mental  
21  
22           health services.

23           As a pediatrician on the front line, I was seeing  
24  
25           on a daily basis how often these services are needed,  
26  
27           and can make the difference between life and death.  
28  
29           But the real question is: Why are these cuts even  
30  
31           necessary? Why shouldn't the New York City Council  
32  
33           push Mayor Adams in line with the US Conference of  
34  
35           Mayors to call for more funding from the federal  
36  
37           government.

38           In 2022, the US spent \$877 billion, more than the  
39  
40           next 10 countries combined, on military buildup. In  
41  
42           fiscal year 2024, 56% of the federal discretionary  
43  
44           budget will go to military build up. And this is a  
45

1  
2 time when our country is not at war, when the  
3 greatest threats to our security from the climate  
4 crisis, not from any foreign military power.

5 Resolution 423 would mandate that City Council  
6 call on Congress and the president to move  
7 significant funds away from military buildup into  
8 vitally needed social services and to hold in-depth  
9 public hearings on the basic human needs of city  
10 residents that are unmet.

11 I urge this committee and the council as a whole  
12 to pass resolution 423.

13 Thank you for your time and attention.

14 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you very much.

15 MS. RONAN: My name is Mary.

16 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Mary, you're going to have to  
17 press the button. Thank you.

18 MS. RONAN: Sorry.

19 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: No worries.

20 MS. RONAN: My name is Marian Ronan, and I'm a  
21 resident of District 40 in Brooklyn and a member of  
22 Brooklyn For Peace, and I'm here to strongly support  
23 Resolution 423.

24 Let me begin by saying I am a grandmother of four  
25 and I am terrified about their futures because of

1 climate change and other environmental destruction.

2 Consider what we could do with even 10% of the  
3 current US military budget of \$877 billion. How  
4 about continuing the community composting that is  
5 scheduled to end this month? And consider the  
6 greenhouse gas emissions that continuing that  
7 composting could prevent.  
8

9 Secondly, I grew up in an uneducated, working  
10 class family, and I now have a PhD. One thing that  
11 contributed enormously to this was the many hours I  
12 spent reading at our local public library. But now  
13 because of inadequate federal funding for migrants,  
14 New York is cutting back on library hours and days.  
15 How much of that 877 billion military budget would it  
16 take to care for those migrants and keep our  
17 neighborhood libraries fully open?

18 Finally, let me say that I am a practicing  
19 Catholic. Now, there's been a lot of talk recently  
20 about religious freedom, bakers not being required to  
21 bake gay wedding cakes and so forth. Well, the head  
22 of my church, Pope Francis, has declared that not  
23 only the use of nuclear weapons, but even the  
24 possession of them is immoral. But it is projected  
25 that our country will spend three quarters of a

1 trillion dollars on nuclear maintenance and upgrading  
2 over the next 10 years. And I am obligated to pay  
3 taxes for these immoral weapons. What about my  
4 religious freedom?  
5

6 Please pass resolution 423. Demand that our  
7 federal government move the money from militarism to  
8 our people's needs.

9 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

10 MS. NEWFIELD: It's on right? Okay. I'm Marcia  
11 Newfield. I'm a retired CUNY adjunct lecturer I  
12 taught English for 30 plus years at BMCC and was the  
13 VP for part-timers at the Professional Staff Congress  
14 for 13 years. PSC is the union that represents  
15 30,000 faculty and staff at CUNY.

16 Now, CUNY needs so much support. Even though a  
17 jewel of a city, it's 25 colleges providing  
18 opportunities for 500,000 students each year, most of  
19 whom go on to work in the city and pay taxes. It has  
20 been underfunded for years. I know the City Council  
21 has increased funding for the community colleges  
22 which are in its charge, and we are grateful but we  
23 need more.

24 Austerity is the common excuse. But there is no  
25 excuse for this undervaluing the \$838 billion or even

1 more military budget is so excessive, we could lop  
2 off a mere 10% and attend to so many community needs.  
3 For example, the national ratio of counselors to  
4 students is 1 to 1000. At CUNY, it's one to 2700.  
5 Adjuncts who teach 77% of the courses have no job  
6 security or insurance after retirement. Our current  
7 contract demands include intellectual property rights  
8 and greater equity between titles.  
9

10 At Move The Money, an outgrowth of US labor  
11 against the war, we are connected to an even deeper  
12 impulse to redirect the impulse to war. As Aldous  
13 Huxley wrote decades ago, "War is not a law of  
14 nature, nor even a law of human nature. It exists  
15 because men wish it to exist. And we know that it  
16 doesn't have to be that way."

17 [BELL RINGS]

18 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you so much.

19 MS. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you. Wait, is it on?

20 Yes. Thank you for Chairman Ossé and members of your  
21 committee for hearing testimony on this resolution.  
22 My name is Marion Phyllis Cunningham. I'm a member  
23 of Move The Money committee. I'm a retired licensed  
24 professional nurse and a nurse educator, and I'm a  
25 community health activist.

1  
2       As a person devoted to the health of people and  
3 their communities, I'm here to testify about some of  
4 the reasons money allocated for the militarization in  
5 this country should be redirected to providing for  
6 the needs of people and communities.

7       There are many determinants of health that  
8 intersect, affecting both personal health and  
9 community health. I shall list some determinants  
10 that I'm aware of impacting on personal health and  
11 the health of New York City.

12       I'm concerned about the political and social  
13 determinants. There are many inequities that  
14 intersect with each other and also aspects of life:  
15 Economic stability and prevention-- and the  
16 prevention and amelioration of poverty must be  
17 addressed by adequate employment, safe housing,  
18 availability of a healthy foods, accessible and  
19 acceptable quality healthcare, including homecare  
20 services for the infirmed and elderly, mental health,  
21 preventive and treatment care, and quality education  
22 including early childhood development.

23       New York City must make provisions for these  
24 services.

1  
2       Concerning the community adequate and affordable  
3 transportation safe neighborhoods, free of crime and  
4 violence, opportunities for recreation, community  
5 centers, encouraging civic inclusion and  
6 participation, services for the aged, repair and  
7 upkeep of the city's infrastructures, including  
8 streets, sewers, lines, lighting, lightings, subways,  
9 et cetera, and excellent sanitation are all factors  
10 in maintaining healthy community.

11       Racism and discrimination are prevalent in New  
12 York City, and both require active protective  
13 services. The dismantling of mass incarceration,  
14 condition in prisons and treatment, including health  
15 care of those incarcerated must be addressed.

16       [BELL RINGS]

17       When cities can't find enough money for housing,  
18 healthcare, child care, quality education and  
19 infrastructure, while Congress finds plenty of money  
20 for weapon makers and endless wars, the money has got  
21 to be moved to address the needs of the people living  
22 in the United States. Please pass Resolution 423

23       CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you. Can I ask you a  
24 question? Can I ask you a question? Where did you

25

1  
2 guys all meet each other? Like when did this-- When  
3 did you find-- the Move The Money?

4 MS. CUNNINGHAM: I think we've all been involved  
5 in social justice movements for at least 50 or 60  
6 years.

7 [APPLAUSE]

8 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And when-- And when did the  
9 organization-- when did you found Move The Money  
10 though?

11 MS. PHILLIPS: In 2018.

12 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: In 2018. Okay. And you just  
13 all found-- you were all connected prior to that?  
14 No?

15 [MANY VOICES SPEAKING]

16 MS. PHILLIPS: Some of us-- many of us were with  
17 US Labor Against The War.

18 MS. CUNNINGHAM: And some of us came out of SNCC,  
19 the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

20 [MANY VOICES SPEAKING]

21 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Please turn on the mic so that  
22 we can get it on the record.

23 MS. CUNNINGHAM: Oh, I said-- and many-- some of  
24 us came out of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating  
25 Committee, which addresses the ability of things--



1 amenities that should be given every person to  
2 develop their full potential. And I-- we're from  
3 many, many different organizations.  
4

5 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Sure. And are there roots--  
6 do you have any roots or affiliation groups on  
7 college campuses? Like where is...?

8 MS. PHILLIPS: Well, US Labor Against The War,  
9 which formed after the Iraq War, it was a CUNY--  
10 well, CUNY and other organizations as well. It  
11 attracted a lot of people, and faculty, and staff,  
12 and students. And so that was a seminal group, and  
13 that-- that included the students, you know, so  
14 people got-- but then, after that war kind of phased  
15 out--

16 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Sure.

17 MS. PHILLIPS: Some of us want started to realize  
18 that the money-- the military money-- the war was  
19 over, but the military kept going more, and more, and  
20 more, and that's the problem. I mean, that's what  
21 we're looking to ameliorate.

22 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: I'm just amazed by how  
23 organized you all are, even in terms of, you know,  
24 you come out a lot, and testify a lot, and that's  
25 impressive. You know, not a lot of groups can say

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the same, and I'm wondering if there's, you know,  
effort of, you know, seeing this expanded, right?  
Because I think more people need to be advocating for  
what you're advocating for.

MS. PHILLIPS: Well, we realize that it's-- it's  
all connected. We realized that the deprivation, the  
homelessness on the streets.

CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Totally.

MS. RONAN: You know, we realized that that could  
be fixed.

CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Right.

MS. PHILLIPS: It's not inevitable.

CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Yeah, I mean, I think-- Yeah,  
thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Phyllis was on the Freedom Rides  
going down south in 1962.

MS. PHILLIPS: No. Not Freedom Rides. I just  
went down in the summer of 1964.

MR. WEINSTEIN: 64. Well...

MS. PHILLIPS: After the Freedom Rides.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Well, you've been at it for a  
long time.

1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Our next panel will be  
3 Matthew Weinstein, Jane Tara Currie, Sally Jones, and  
4 Anthony Donovan.

5 [BACKGROUND VOICES]

6 MR. WEINSTEIN: Hi everybody, everybody. I'm  
7 Matthew Weinstein. I'm 77. I think what Chairman  
8 Ossé was questioning was the average age of the  
9 people in this room. We are veterans of a peace  
10 movement that goes back to the 1960s. I was very  
11 active on the Brooklyn College campus in the WEB  
12 DuBois Clubs, a socialist organization back then, and  
13 I've been active ever since.

14 I can't believe I'm still having to fight this  
15 fight. In fact, it's worse than ever.

16 But today, I want to talk about trash. And  
17 besides a peace advocate, I'm also a community  
18 activist. I'm active in my block association. I  
19 live in Prospect Heights in Brooklyn. I was born,  
20 raised, worked, studied, and lived in Brooklyn my  
21 whole life. And trash is a health issue for every  
22 person that lives in the city. And I care about my  
23 neighborhood and my neighbors. And I connect that  
24 with my outlook about 423, and the spending

1  
2 priorities, the misguided spending priorities in  
3 Congress.

4       So my neighbors call me the Sanitation  
5 Commissioner, because they see me walking around  
6 picking up litter in our tree beds, soda cans, candy  
7 wrappers that people throw in there, because there  
8 are no trash baskets in my neighborhood anymore.  
9 They have removed thousands of them from our city.  
10 They are now removing them from commercial, busy  
11 commercial strips as well.

12       So this is the richest city in the world, as some  
13 people have noted, but our filthy streets do not  
14 reflect that. And now with the Mayor ordering these  
15 draconian cuts, the amount of trash on our streets  
16 will grow exponentially. Parks will be subject to  
17 the same cutbacks, and our parks, which working class  
18 and poor people depend on because they don't have a  
19 backyard will be recreating in parks. And I live  
20 right a block from Prospect Park, I know how dirty  
21 that gets when they are cutbacks.

22       Our city can have good things are people can have  
23 vital services delivered.

24       [BELL RINGS]

1  
2           Instead of receiving one round of cutbacks and  
3 layoffs. I want to see this City Council, and I want  
4 to see Chi Ossé, leading a march along with Carlina  
5 and speaker Adams (I don't think the Mayor will join  
6 you) to march around that capitol building and tell  
7 them to get their act together and spend money to  
8 feed the people, and stop-- and put the Pentagon on a  
9 starvation diet. That's what I want to see. Please  
10 pass 423.

11           CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And I definitely hear you on--  
12 you said something about what I was getting at in  
13 terms of the specific demographic or whatever in the  
14 room.

15           I'm sure-- There's a lot of people, a lot of my  
16 friends, you know, who look different than a lot of  
17 us, who are in here who-- You know, just  
18 intergenerational, interracial, you know, who are  
19 really protesting a lot right now against the war  
20 that we're seeing take place in Gaza. And I'm sure a  
21 lot of these folks have, you know, a lot to learn  
22 from-- from folks who have been doing this for-- for  
23 wars prior to the one that we're experiencing now,  
24 right? And I think that-- I'm just curious, like,  
25 how we can amplify your message if people are curious

1 about, you know, what, what-- Because not every--  
2 People who are in the streets today, you know, they  
3 are they are protesting against what's happening, but  
4 you guys mobilize them to get a resolution to be  
5 brought to the City Council, right? And then you're  
6 here to testify, and it'll be voted on next week,  
7 right? That's pretty impressive stuff, right? I  
8 don't think a lot of people know...

10 MR. WEINSTEIN: It's very difficult. We struggle  
11 against something that we refer to as the silo  
12 effect. Every movement is in a little silo not  
13 connected.

14 I mean, it was heartbreaking today to listen to  
15 these people in, these artists, these cultural  
16 affairs people. It's heartbreaking. But there's--  
17 there's no realization of what has to be done in  
18 order to change things.

19 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Right.

20 MR. WEINSTEIN: And that's what was missing. And  
21 I hope that putting the city on official record,  
22 urging substantial cuts to that elephant in the room  
23 that sits there that nobody ever wants to mention.

24 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Right.

25

1  
2 MR. WEINSTEIN: Military spending. A trillion  
3 dollars a year while our cities go down the tubes.  
4 You can see it all around you. You see it in the  
5 trash. But you see everywhere else in our schools,  
6 our subways. Just look around.

7 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Yeah. But even deeper than  
8 that. I mean, I think 66% of the American population  
9 advocates for, or wants to see a cut in military  
10 spending, right? That's the majority of the  
11 population in the United States. The reason both  
12 parties are not doing that is because of the defense  
13 lobby, right?

14 MR. WEINSTEIN: For sure.

15 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: So I'm wondering what-- I  
16 would love to hear, and we can definitely talk about  
17 this off-hearing about what the strategy is there.  
18 Because it's-- as much as we advocate and push these  
19 resolutions, our elected officials are sometimes  
20 bought out by, you know, people who have millions and  
21 billions, and make millions and billions from war.

22 MR. WEINSTEIN: We agree with you. You've got to  
23 get the money out of politics.

24 MS. CURRIE: Good afternoon and thank you Chair  
25 Ossé, and other committee members for holding this

1 hearing on Resolution 423. My name is Jane Tara  
2 Currie. I'm a native-born New Yorker currently  
3 residing in Brooklyn. I serve as the Downstate Co-  
4 Chair of Peace Action New York State and an organizer  
5 with Move The Money New York City.  
6

7 I will leave it to my colleagues to present  
8 testimony with the facts, figures, and details on the  
9 many human needs which are underfunded, while weapons  
10 manufacturers reap enormous profits from department  
11 of defense contracts. You may be in agreement with  
12 those analyses, but still question the importance of  
13 passing Resolution 423, a resolution about the  
14 Pentagon budget, over which the council has no direct  
15 control.

16 My testimony will focus on the answer to that  
17 question.

18 Our Mayor has announced that he must implement an  
19 austerity budget cutting money from vital and already  
20 underfunded social services, like schools, libraries,  
21 parks, and hospitals. He says he must do this  
22 because New York City just doesn't have the money to  
23 sustain these services.

24 How is it that the largest and richest city, in  
25 the largest and richest country in the world, doesn't



1 have enough money to run its schools effectively? To  
2 a great extent. This is because our national  
3 leadership has chosen to allocate about 60% of the  
4 federal discretionary budget to the Pentagon, a  
5 department which has never been able to pass an  
6 audit.  
7

8 Our city leadership needs to say loudly and  
9 clearly that this is theft. The city should not  
10 quietly do its best with the inadequate funding it  
11 has. The Mayor and Council must assert that there  
12 was plenty of money around, it's just not being  
13 allocated to our cities and localities to provide the  
14 social services that the people of every other which  
15 country in the world has. The US Council of Mayors  
16 made such a declaration back in 2017.

17 [BELL RINGS]

18 Use your megaphone. The megaphone of the City  
19 Council will be heard nationally use it to say it's  
20 time to rethink what we mean by national security.  
21 Move The Money from war to our community.

22 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

23 MS. JONES: My name is Sally Jones. I am here to  
24 support Resolution 423. I've lived in Staten Island  
25 since 1979. I've been involved with Peace Action of

1  
2 Staten Island and Peace Action New York State for the  
3 last 21 years. I want to thank each of you on this  
4 committee for having this hearing.

5 I didn't think much about Pentagon budget before  
6 I got involved in Peace Action in 2002. It is  
7 staggering to realize that half of our discretionary  
8 federal budget is allocated to war. That has added  
9 up to over \$8 trillion since the beginning of the war  
10 in Afghanistan, according to the Watson Institute at  
11 Brown University.

12 Then I learned how difficult it is (as you  
13 mentioned) to challenge the spending in Congress.  
14 The Pentagon has offices in the US Capitol, giving  
15 them easy access to elected officials and their  
16 staff. The major weapons manufacturers are lobbying  
17 hard in the halls of Congress too. Congress even  
18 authorizes money for projects that the Pentagon says  
19 it doesn't want.

20 It is hard for most of us to relate to the  
21 enormity of this budget, the military budget, but we  
22 do relate to the effect of cutbacks on city services.  
23 When the library closes on the weekend, when the  
24 parks and streets are dirtier, when seniors and young  
25 teens have no place to go, and on, and on.

1  
2       The Mayor tells us there is no money, and these  
3 cutbacks are necessary. That's when I raised my  
4 hand. Hey guys, there actually is a lot of money  
5 available, but it's going to fund war around the  
6 world. Resolution 423 is a way for all of us in New  
7 York City to raise our hand and say, "move the money  
8 for more to our communities." And I urge this  
9 committee to support this Resolution 423 Thank you so  
10 much.

11       MR. DONOVAN: Thank you. I was I was hoping the-  
12 - the Carnegie Hall fellow would stay because-- to  
13 answer your question, because that's-- but really  
14 that whole group that spoke to us about the arts,  
15 they are-- they are kind of our testimony, for sure.  
16 That's why we're here.

17       Dorothy Day, used to say the world will be saved  
18 by beauty. And that's what the arts represent, and  
19 by the education, so-- and she knew, and she, as most  
20 of you know, set out here in City Hall Park to  
21 protest our militarism.

22       I wish Carlina was here. But God bless her for  
23 putting this bill, this resolution up. It's for her  
24 child, and for those who have grandchildren or all  
25 the childs that we are here. My name is Anthony

1  
2 Donovan, by the way, I'm sorry, with Peace Action,  
3 Veterans for Peace, and Catholic Worker. Catholic  
4 Worker.

5 By the way St. Joe's feed the hungry every day,  
6 no questions asked. They are there. [APPLAUSE]  
7 Yeah. Every day throughout the entire pandemic they  
8 fed. No, ID needed, whatever.

9 So, yeah. I went to the annual summit down in DC  
10 for the Nuclear Deterrence Summit where all the arms  
11 manufacturers gather. I've never seen a more  
12 confident bunch this year in my life. These arms  
13 manufacturers have never needed to ask for money.  
14 They are in the hiring mode. We are right now in a  
15 huge nuclear arms race.

16 Our city Mayor Adams, put out a PSA, a Public  
17 Service Announcement, telling New Yorkers how to  
18 prepare for the big one. That's our city. So yeah,  
19 thank you so much for holding this. We cannot  
20 prepare for the big one. There is no preparation for  
21 that. So thank you for knowing that.

22 And trillions-- And by the way, when we speak  
23 about these vast amounts of money, that's the money  
24 that we know about.

[BELL RINGS] It is mostly undisclosed. Gosh,  
time went fast. God bless you. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you to this panel. Our  
next panel will be Linda Novensky, Sam Kopak, Alice  
Sturm Sutter, and Laura Castro.

CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: You may begin whenever.

MS. NOVENSKY: Is it? Okay. Hello, my name is  
Linda Novensky. Thank you to the Council for having  
us. I'm reading a statement for Professor Richard D  
Wolf, an economist, who could not be here.

"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 Housing Affordability public  
schools, transportation systems, healthcare, and  
services for the elderly are all in or near crisis  
situations. Social conditions are deteriorating and  
they are both threaten city life today and for the  
next generation.

"The huge growing inequality of wealth only makes  
matters worse, improving the quality and quantity of  
public services throughout the city can make a major

1 difference, slowing the deterioration, and at best  
2 reversing it. Similar conditions afflict other major  
3 metropolitan centers, while parallel declines have  
4 long undermined smaller cities and rural areas across  
5 the US.

6 "Globally, the US dominance of the world economy  
7 since 1945, is now over. A new world economy has  
8 emerged in which the US no longer dominates. A  
9 second economic block has arisen that now exceeds the  
10 US block in terms of its annual total output of goods  
11 and services.

12 "Since 2020, the GDP of the US and its major  
13 allies, the G7 has been less than the GDP of China  
14 and the BRICS, Brazil, Russia, India, and South  
15 Africa, and the gap between them keeps growing.

16 "The US must now learn to live in a multipolar  
17 world to negotiate shared power with its global  
18 partners. And one way to do that is to reduce its  
19 military footprint, to show the world its commitment  
20 to share power, rather than to try in ever more  
21 desperate wars to dominate."

22 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

23 MR. KOPRAK: Okay, thank you, Counsel for hearing  
24 us out. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Sam  
25

1  
2 Koprak. I'm a Brooklyn resident, a former bioscience  
3 researcher, and currently a substitute teacher for  
4 the New York City DOE.

5 I come to this hearing to express my alarm over  
6 the massive budget cuts being enacted by the Adams  
7 Administration that will wreak havoc on city  
8 services.

9 The initial cuts of \$550 million for the DOE will  
10 significantly strain resources and punish the  
11 students who are already dealing with overcrowded  
12 classes and decaying school infrastructure, amongst  
13 other serious issues.

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

21 In 2010, I helped organize a school presentation  
22 on the federal discretionary budget with high school  
23 seniors at a school I work in frequently. The  
24 program was led by Jo Comerford, who was at that time  
25 Executive Director of the National Priorities

1 Project, an organization that conducts research on  
2 the ramifications of federal budget allocations.

3  
4 We told the students present in the room that  
5 each one of them would be called on to stand up when  
6 asked to represent about \$10 to \$12 billion in  
7 federal spending for major components of the federal  
8 budget that Congress votes on annually. Jo went  
9 through the auditorium and addressed the nearly 90  
10 students present. She initially requested that three  
11 to five students stands up for such categories as  
12 education, housing, transportation, scientific  
13 research et al. Finally, she asked the remaining 50  
14 or so students to stand as representatives of the  
15 Pentagon budget.

16 [BELL RINGS]

17 As the students looked around and witnessed this  
18 gross disparity, a young woman who was standing in  
19 the education group cried out, "This is effed up,"  
20 and burst into tears. That day still haunts me.

21 These students quickly learned about the power of  
22 the military-industrial complex. We all need to.  
23 That is why we need to pass Res 423 and pressure our  
24 federal representatives to act on behalf of their  
25 constituents to fund human needs.



1 Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

3 MS. CASTRO: That's not really lit. Oh, now it's  
4 lit. Okay.

5 I'm Laura Castro, a former New York City High  
6 School teacher and a UFT member, here in support of  
7 423.

8 It breaks my heart that our country squanders so  
9 much of its treasure on a wasteful, bloated military,  
10 when there is so much need crying out to us here in  
11 our city. On any given night, 67,000 New Yorkers are  
12 in homeless shelters, 21,000 of them children, and  
13 this doesn't even count all the children, like many  
14 of my former students, who are living doubled up, two  
15 families to an apartment, because so many lose their  
16 homes and must crowd in with relatives, where  
17 children may sleep in a living room with no place to  
18 do homework. That trauma and dislocation results in  
19 learning deficits that aren't made up, because every  
20 year of learning is precious.

21 Some New York City students do their laundry at  
22 school because they have no other way to have clean  
23 clothes. And how many students did I have over the  
24 years, whose aunts, mothers, grandmothers, were dying  
25

1 relatively young, younger than a lot of people in  
2 this room, younger than they should have, after a  
3 lifetime of poor medical care? Because we're the  
4 only country in the developed world that doesn't have  
5 a universal health care system for all.  
6

7 And meanwhile, we persist in throwing buckets of  
8 money at a military that has never once passed an  
9 audit and can't even keep track of its own things;  
10 something no school or city government could do with  
11 impunity.

12 And they squander money on things like the F-35  
13 fighter jet that don't even work right. That was  
14 \$1.7 trillion for the life of that contract.

15 This is no way to run a country, let alone--

16 [BELL RINGS]

17 Let's pass the resolution and move the money

18 [APPLAUSE]

19 MS. SUTTER: I agree. I'm Alice Sturm Sutter.  
20 Thank you for the hearing. I'm a retired family  
21 nurse practitioner and public health nurse. During  
22 COVID, I volunteered with the New York City Medical  
23 Reserve Corps, and I volunteer now with SHAP, the New  
24 York Street Homeless Advocacy Program, and I urge the  
25

1 City Council to pass 423, Move the Money, direly  
2 needed.  
3

4 According to the Coalition for the Homeless, new  
5 York City's homelessness is at a highest level since  
6 the 1930s depression. In September 2023, there were  
7 87,907 homeless people, including 31,510 homeless  
8 children sleeping each night in New York City's main  
9 municipal shelter system. Families entering the  
10 shelter come from the poorest neighborhoods in New  
11 York City, mostly due to lack of affordable housing.  
12 Causes include eviction, severe overcrowding in  
13 housing, domestic violence, job loss, and hazardous  
14 housing conditions.

15 Each night thousands of unsheltered homeless  
16 people sleeping the New York City's streets, in the  
17 subway system, and other public areas. There is no  
18 accurate measurement. The numbers are estimated.  
19 Many have mental illnesses and other health problems,  
20 and I have come to know many sick and disabled and  
21 ageing homeless people, and were unable to find  
22 adequate living spaces. We meet many asylum seekers  
23 that are unable to find warm clothes, and they may  
24 soon lose their temporary spaces. And everyone's  
25 suffering with poor nutrition and hunger.

1  
2       So now we're facing drastic budget cuts proposed  
3 by the Mayor that will bring in even more pain to the  
4 New Yorkers who can barely afford basics. Thousands  
5 of housing service positions agency positions are  
6 being eliminated. The library hours, the compost  
7 programs education, childcare, City College  
8 assistance programs. City workers are losing their  
9 jobs. Cuts are planned for food pantries, domestic  
10 violence shelters, after school programs and the  
11 legal services for the neediest people.

12       Our city is--

13       [BELL RINGS]

14       Well, that's it. I didn't even get to the  
15 military, but other people did.

16       CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: I know. Thank you.

17       MS. SUTTER: But you got the message. Thank you.

18       CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Yes. Thank you very much.

19       [APPLAUSE]

20       COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next panel  
21 will be Dorothy M. Zellner, Sylvia Rodriguez-Case,  
22 Ann Fawcett Ambia, Constantia Romilly, and Georgia  
23 Weaver.

24       CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: You can begin whenever.

25

1  
2 MS. ZELLNER: My name is Dorothy Zellner. And I  
3 wasn't going to mention it, but I was a staff member  
4 of the Southern-- of the Student Nonviolent  
5 Coordinating Committee from 1962 to 1967, and went to  
6 Mississippi, scared to death the entire time.

7 I just want to talk about housing. I live in zip  
8 code 10025, Upper West Side. You may think we're all  
9 rich up there. We're not. This includes many  
10 working and middle-class families. Affordable  
11 housing is the problem.

12 Here are the numbers: An average cost of a  
13 studio apartment in this area is over \$3,000 a month,  
14 and an apartment big enough for a small size family,  
15 two bedrooms is over \$5,000 a month. How is it  
16 possible that an average working family can afford  
17 this kind of rent when the median income is \$120,000.  
18 That means everybody in the family who works, meaning  
19 that half of the families in my neighborhood earn  
20 less than that figure.

21 And as for new housing from 2010 to 2020, only  
22 15% of new housing units in the Upper West Side were  
23 for low-income New Yorkers. Guess how many new  
24 moderate and middle-class income units in this period  
25 were brought into the housing market? None. None.

1  
2 I refuse to accept the proposition that New York  
3 City exists for millionaires only, and neither do a  
4 majority of my fellow New Yorkers. One of the prime  
5 reasons for this problem is that the US spends much  
6 of our federal budget on the military, which my  
7 colleagues have already gone to in chapter and verse.  
8 Please tell the rest of the City Council and the  
9 people who unfortunately have left, that we should  
10 move money from the weapons of death to what we  
11 really need: among them, affordable housing for the  
12 vast numbers of people in the city, we love.

13 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

14 MS. WEAVER: I'm Georgia Weaver. I came to this  
15 organization through the union movement that did a  
16 lot of organizing. I appreciate Chairman Ossé and  
17 other people on the committee for calling these  
18 hearings very much.

19 Now, I see a lot of shows where people are  
20 sitting around talking about human needs. And it's  
21 sad, and it's tragic sometimes. I hear the  
22 inevitable chant that funds are not available.

23 No, we're not broke. No. How can I say such a  
24 thing? Because a huge pot of money is available to  
25 us in the military budget. That's the elephant in

1 the room that nobody wants to talk about, and  
2 apparently nobody wants to hear. And yet 66%, as  
3 Chairman Ossé told us, of the people of the United  
4 States are willing to see the military budget cut in  
5 place of human needs.  
6

7 That budget is one and a half trillion dollars,  
8 according to the National Priorities project. what's  
9 leftover is fought for by all these agencies who are  
10 trying to fulfill their mandates, and we hear them,  
11 and our hearts go out to them.

12 Education and Social Services only got \$298  
13 billion. I didn't say trillion. The federal budget  
14 took a plundering even further by lobbyists, and arms  
15 dealers, and arms manufacturers.

16 I think that New York City needs to lead the  
17 charge of all the people in the United States against  
18 this priority of war.

19 [APPLAUSE]

20 MS. AMBIA: Good afternoon. My name is Ann  
21 Fawcett Ambia. I'm in Brooklyn For Peace and Fight  
22 Back Bay Ridge. I'm a retired public interest  
23 attorney who worked as a staff attorney at DC 37  
24 representing New York city municipal workers and  
25 housing proceedings of all kinds.

1 Congress doesn't listen to us. As a body they  
2 tend to make decisions based on what's profitable for  
3 big business, and wars are profitable.  
4

5 Unfortunately, war profits have led the US to become  
6 the country with the largest percentage of its  
7 federal discretionary budget spent on the military  
8 and wars of any nation on Earth.

9 With that priority and spending leaves for social  
10 services programs has put the US far down the list  
11 internationally in every area from providing  
12 affordable health care, education, and housing to  
13 community services.

14 A few examples of what the spending priorities  
15 have recently meant for me personally, now single and  
16 living alone on one fixed income are: Having to  
17 fight with other city retirees to keep my employer-  
18 promised retiree federal Medicare from city plotting  
19 to save money by trying to privatize my health care  
20 into an inferior for-profit Medicare Advantage plan;  
21 having to fight to restore weekend service for the  
22 X28 Express bus that runs right near my home, so that  
23 I can get into the city without having to walk seven  
24 blocks back home from the nearest subway at night;  
25 getting through 2020 with the park nearest me filled



1 with garbage and broken benches both inside and along  
2 the perimeter, and with the children's playground  
3 equipment broken and covered in yellow caution tape.

4 Now with budget cuts pending from the end of  
5 COVID stimulus funds and ever-increasing war  
6 spending, these same things and more are on the line  
7 all over again. So much for the golden years.

8 However, I'm aware that I'm in better shape than  
9 many of my former municipal worker clients, whose  
10 lower pay leaves them with unsustainable retirement  
11 incomes that mean having to choose between essentials  
12 like buying food and medicine or paying rent.

13 [BELL RINGS]

14 For many of them, the Pending Budget cuts mean no  
15 internet access when libraries are closed, a harder  
16 time getting Access-A-Ride to get out anywhere, fewer  
17 senior citizen programs, and hunting for food  
18 pantries, and what's left in donations to the now  
19 defunded mutual aid organizations that sprang up  
20 during the pandemic.

21 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you. Thank you.

22 MS. AMBIA: Pass Resolution 423.

23 [APPLAUSE]

1  
2 MS. CASE: My name is Sylvia Rodriguez Case and  
3 I'm with Move The Money in New York City and Peace  
4 Action New York State. I live on West 106th street,  
5 and it's District 7, which is Shaun Abreu's district.

6 I want to thank this committee for holding the  
7 hearing. Thank you Chair Ossé. And I support the  
8 Resolution 423. We must move money from war to our  
9 communities.

10 I attended the Care Not Cuts rally on Monday, and  
11 many Councilmembers spoke up very strongly about the  
12 severe cuts to the budget that Mayor Adams is  
13 proposing, the horrendous cuts to human needs in New  
14 York City. Passing this resolution will say to  
15 President Biden and the US government that New York  
16 City, the largest city in the US more than twice the  
17 population of the next largest, LA, is calling for  
18 money to be moved from war to the human needs of our  
19 citizens.

20 The US military is grounding all Osprey  
21 helicopters after one of these aircraft crashed at  
22 the end of November killing all eight airmen. So  
23 far, 60 people, Airmen have been killed in Osprey  
24 accidents to date, at a cost of about \$84 million per  
25 helicopter, and the procurement costs are about \$56

1 billion, it appears that the Osprey is a failure, but  
2 the government the US government continues to throw  
3 money at it, at this project.  
4

5 How can the US government spend almost 60% \$858  
6 billion or so, of our discretionary spending on the  
7 defense budget and ignore the human needs of its  
8 citizens? The Department of Defense, the Pentagon  
9 has not passed any of the audits in the last six  
10 years. The US Department of Defense has \$3.8  
11 trillion in assets, and the auditors found that half  
12 of their assets could not be accounted for, almost \$2  
13 trillion.

14 [BELL RINGS]

15 Thank you and please pass Resolution 423.

16 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Our next panel will be  
18 Francis Geteles, Stephen Kramer, Monroe Allison, and  
19 Brendan Fay, and Robert Kielbach. I apologize-- I  
20 apologize if I mispronounced your name.

21 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: You may begin whenever.

22 Good afternoon Councilmember Ossé. Thank you so  
23 much for calling us and letting us have our voice to  
24 speak in support of Resolution 423. My name is  
25 Brendan Fay. I'm here as a member of NYCAN, the New

1  
2 York City Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and  
3 also Pax Christi, a Catholic peace group. And  
4 recently days, I've been appalled at the mayor's  
5 budget cuts, just like everybody else has said, to  
6 essential human needs in our city from libraries,  
7 schools, city parks, health care, housing, and  
8 hunger.

9 My husband, Tom Moulton, who's a pediatric  
10 Hematologist-Oncologist was just on New York One the  
11 other day talking about the impact of these cuts and  
12 others on children with sickle cell in our city. I'm  
13 just shocked when I tell people this, when New York  
14 can't do.

15 And yet, by the millions, the military spending  
16 continues to grow. There is no good bucks there.  
17 And for research, we've even learned that millions,  
18 indeed over a billion, of hard-earned New York City  
19 pension funds, of New York City workers, teachers,  
20 firefighters, healthcare, are currently being  
21 invested in nuclear weapons production. It's  
22 outrageous.

23 Yes, key to the services of the city or to  
24 federal grants the funding. We need a new economic  
25 imagination that prioritizes human needs and human

1 rights. It's not a time for scapegoating migrants  
2 and immigrants who in fact bring skills and gifts to  
3 our city, and strengthen the economy, and raise the  
4 children and clean the houses and the offices by day.  
5

6 I just came from participating in a week-long  
7 meeting at the United Nations on nuclear non-  
8 proliferation. I told stories of the New Yorkers,  
9 Dorothy Day and Byard Ruston, who organized a march  
10 in Washington 60 years ago in 1963, freedom and jobs.  
11 If he was here, he would be here in support of this  
12 resolution. And Dorothy Day, a founder of the  
13 Catholic Worker Movement.

14 [BELL RINGS]

15 Let a message go from this New York City, from  
16 this City Council, that we need to disarm our economy  
17 and build an economy for peacemaking, for health, and  
18 transport support Resolution 423.

19 Thanks very much.

20 [APPLAUSE]

21 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

22 MR. KEILBACH: Hi. I'm Bob Kielback. I'm a  
23 Vietnam-era veteran, a member of Veterans for Peace,  
24 New York City Chapter, and also a graduate of CCNY.  
25

1  
2 I use the VA Health Care System, which provides  
3 us with excellent care. The VA is currently being  
4 privatized. Hospitals are being closed. Our care  
5 has been outsourced: Another betrayal of the  
6 promises made when we volunteered to serve our  
7 nation.

8 The US wastes over \$900 billion per year on  
9 militarism, more than the next 10 nations combined,  
10 including China, Russia, and Iran. Every dollar  
11 spent on warmaking is money that could instead be  
12 spent on healthcare, education, housing, and  
13 sustainability.

14 It is unconscionable we can find more resources  
15 every year for the Department of Defense, the only  
16 federal agency, that can't even pass an audit, or we  
17 cannot find the money to pay for hungry children to  
18 eat lunch.

19 Is this really what we want to be funding? The  
20 great Forster to star general hero of World War Two,  
21 Republican President Eisenhower, famously stated,  
22 "Every gun that is made, every warship launched,  
23 every rocket signifies in the final sense, a theft  
24 from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are  
25 not clothed.

1  
2           The federal budget is the clearest expression of  
3 the values and priorities of the United States. Over  
4 \$900 billion wasted on warmaking and destruction,  
5 while urgent human needs are being neglected is an  
6 insult to human dignity, pass Resolution 43.

7           Thank you.

8           [APPLAUSE]

9           DR. GETELES: Hi, my name is Frances Geteles, and  
10 I'm a clinical psychologist, and I'm also part of the  
11 Jails Action Coalition and the Halt Solitary Campaign  
12 here in New York.

13          [APPLAUSE]

14          And the issue I want to address is the number of  
15 mentally ill people who are in our jails and prisons,  
16 and should not be there. Mental health should not be  
17 criminalized, as if, you know, they did it  
18 deliberately. You know, we know that that's not  
19 true.

20          The question is, how did that happen? Well, in  
21 the 50s and the early 60s, there were lots of mental  
22 hospitals in this state, psychiatric facilities that  
23 were dreadful. They were real hellholes. And  
24 ultimately, there was a movement to de-  
25 institutionalize people. There were two parts to

1 that agreement: one you would de-institutionalize,  
2 but the other part was you set up community-based  
3 care centers that would help the people to function  
4 better, and to build decent lives for themselves.  
5

6       Unfortunately, what happened, which seems to be  
7 too typical of governments, is they closed the  
8 facilities, put everybody out, but never put in place  
9 the community care facilities that were needed.  
10 We're not funding them very-- particularly here in  
11 the city. There's such a drastic under-availability  
12 of services of any kind, especially for people with  
13 serious mental illness problems. And the federal  
14 government at one point gave some money for nursing  
15 homes that included access for people with mental  
16 health problems.

17       [BELL RINGS]

18       But then a few years later, they decided, "Oh,  
19 no. We'll keep the nursing homes, but we won't  
20 accept the mentally ill anymore." So in other words,  
21 they stopped funding this drastic need that we have.

22       And so I agree that instead of them spending  
23 their money on bombs and war, they should be helping-  
24 - I mean, New York has a responsibility for providing  
25 decent care for people, and so does the federal



1 government. So, I want you to pass the resolution.

2 Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

4 MR. ALLISON: My name is Monroe Allison, I'm from

5 Brooklyn For Peace, and I want to thank you for

6 having us be able to speak. And what I'm going to be

7 talking about is the carbon footprint of the

8 military, and that-- what I'm going to be saying is

9 coming from someone who-- who gave a speech last week

10 at COP 28. Her name-- her name is Deborah Burton.

11 And what-- she is an expert on just what the carbon

12 emissions were. And the military itself doesn't say

13 what it is. So, she had to do an immense amount of

14 research to dig this-- this information out.

15 And she was speaking on behalf of some African

16 nations. And what these African nations were doing--

17 Africa has almost no electricity generated by

18 windmills or by solar power, because those require a

19 lot of upfront money. It's not-- It's not-- And the

20 countries are too poor to get it.

21 So what the countries had was this idea-- is that

22 NATO-- The United States is pressuring NATO members

23 to have 2% of their budgets go-- not of their

24 budgets, by their Gross National Product, go-- go

1  
2 towards military procurement, in which she was-- What  
3 she was trying to do is, rather than spend this money  
4 getting extra armaments (and she went through the  
5 destruction, what would happen if those extra  
6 armaments were made) is why not have it so that that  
7 money can be used for funds, which can be then lent  
8 to these countries, so that they can put in  
9 windmills, the battery storage units, and the solar--  
10 solar power?

11 And, and what she was saying is the information  
12 that is what she's giving is specifically related to  
13 NATO. And I'll be citing that-- those-- that  
14 information.

15 [BELL RINGS]

16 But it's a lot larger than-- than the US. But  
17 the whole-- all of Africa only uses-- the carbon  
18 footprint is only three and a half of the world's  
19 consumption. NATO's is 5.5. So-- So NATO-- Just  
20 what NATO was spending, this was before the war in  
21 Ukraine, was more than 50% more than all of Africa is  
22 doing now.

23 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Wow. Thank you.

24 [APPLAUSE]

25

1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, our last in-person  
3 panel will be Kelly Smith, Laura Libin, Alazar Al  
4 Hannon, Robert Greenberg, and Neil Berry.

5 DR. ELHANAN: Hello to the committee and to the  
6 Chairman. Thank you very much for hearing us. My  
7 name is Dr. Elezar Elhanan. And, I mean, I'm very  
8 touched by the discussion here today. As a CUNY  
9 Professor, I see every day what is the benefit of  
10 public spending. As a former veteran, I feel and see  
11 on my body what is the outcome of military spending.  
12 And, yeah, what's the difference between the two. I  
13 came here to speak today as an Israeli veteran on the  
14 request of Veterans for Peace. I am a founding  
15 member of Combatants for Peace, and a member of-- a  
16 board member of American Friends of Combatants for  
17 Peace, an organization bringing together combatants  
18 from both sides struggling together non-violently  
19 against the occupation.

20 As such, I was the recipient of at least a  
21 substantial portion of these military funding,  
22 military allocations. And counter to the habitual  
23 discourse, I'm here to say-- I came here to say that  
24 this does not provide us or anyone in any way with  
25 security. This is often the argument, and it's a

1 lie. It provides profit for them, weapon  
2 manufacturers, and it provides death to us and to  
3 our-- to the Palestinians that we live with. We  
4 found that Combatants for Peace. I myself, I lost my  
5 sister, Smadar, in a suicide bombing in 1997, and  
6 following that joined together with other bereaved  
7 Israeli families and bereaved Palestinian families to  
8 look for another way.

9  
10 That way, is the way of solidarity, the way of  
11 coexistence, the way of struggling together for an  
12 end of the occupation. You cannot do that through  
13 arming. You can do it only through joint activities.

14 [BELL RINGS]

15 I will finish with that. Our motto is: "When  
16 you look for peace through the sights of a gun, you  
17 cannot see the horizon, you definitely cannot see the  
18 bigger picture. You need to look at reality  
19 differently." And this is what I came here to say on  
20 behalf of Veterans For Peace. Thank you very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

22 [APPLAUSE]

23 Hi, my name is Laura Libin. And I'm a music  
24 teacher in New York City, well, recently retired,  
25 working with very young kids.

1  
2           What made me want to testify is recently I was  
3 talking to a relative. And, she just graduated,  
4 getting her degree in engineering. And she got her  
5 first job working for a very large company that makes  
6 arms. And I'm not going to say what it is because I  
7 don't want to get her into trouble. But she said  
8 that she's only been there since September, but she  
9 notices that they seem to have more money than they  
10 know what to do with. And she said that it's not  
11 well run, and she was surprised that it took a long  
12 time for her to get the information she needs for her  
13 projects. She was very disillusioned in that sense.

14           The very next day, I heard that 3K is starting to  
15 get cutbacks. It's a city program that's for three-  
16 year-olds to be in school together. And it's for all  
17 kids, which is unusual. As a music teacher, mostly  
18 I've taught in private schools with very, you know,  
19 rich kids versus public schools where they were more  
20 economically disadvantaged. And 3K is really open  
21 for everyone. And our neighborhoods, which are being  
22 gentrified, I think it's a wonderful thing that kids  
23 from different backgrounds can work together.

24           So on the one hand, they-- you know, more money  
25 than they know what to do with. On the other hand,

1 3k is getting cutbacks. That is why I support  
2 Resolution 423. And I hope you will vote for it.

3 [APPLAUSE]

4 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

5 MS. SMITH: Hi, my name is Kelly Smith. I didn't  
6 get the white T-shirt memo, so I wore my black T-  
7 shirt. I live in the East Village. I'm very sorry  
8 that Carlina left. She's been very supportive of  
9 helping the rebuilding of my church, the middle  
10 Collegiate Church of Vibrant Social Justice  
11 Interracial Congregation in the East Village.

12 I'm a Tri-Chair with the New York State Poor  
13 People's Campaign. We organize all over the state  
14 [applause], thank you, and nationally, and we have  
15 thousands of people here in New York City, which is  
16 where I do most of my organizing.

17 You've heard Dr. Kings quote, it's already been  
18 shared. You know, he-- he identified the war economy  
19 as one of the three greatest evils facing our  
20 country. The three greatest evils. It was poverty,  
21 it was racism, and it was the war economy.

22 I can only imagine what Dr. King-- I think I know  
23 what Dr. King would think today. We-- You know, as  
24 my colleague said here, that defense is supposed to  
25

1  
2 make us feel safer. It's supposed to make the world  
3 safer. Are we safer? Poverty is the fourth leading  
4 cause of death in this nation. Are we safer?  
5 250,000 people die every year from poverty. Are we  
6 safer? New York is the most unequal state in the  
7 nation. It's, like, embarrassing. You know, I moved  
8 here 30 years ago, and I was so struck by the  
9 vibrancy, and the energy, and the boldness. I joined  
10 the Poor People's Campaign because it was a bold  
11 vision.

12 We are working to bring organizations together.  
13 You asked earlier like, "Are we connected?" That's  
14 what the Poor People's Campaign does.

15 [BELL RINGS]

16 We bring people together. Let's be bold. I  
17 mean, is it actually really bold to ask for this  
18 reduction? But let's be bold. Let's make New York  
19 City a leader. This shouldn't be this hard. This  
20 shouldn't be this hard.

21 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

22 MS. SMITH: Please, we are asking you. Let's be  
23 the leader that New York City can be because others  
24 will follow.

25 [APPLAUSE]

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

3 Also, it's ridiculous that it's called the  
4 defense budget. In the US it's an offense budget.

5 MS. SMITH: Totally. Thank you. Thank you.

6 [APPLAUSE]

7 COMMITTEE CHAIR: That concludes our in-person  
8 testimony. And we will now be moving to remote  
9 testimony.

10 Our first remote panel will be Neil Berry, Donju  
11 Min, Hannah Mackler, and Potri Queano Nur.

12 Neil, you may begin when the sergeant starts your  
13 clock.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 MR. BERRY: My name is Neil Berry. I'm from New  
16 York. I'd just like to thank you guys for having  
17 this hearing today, and for allowing me to testify.  
18 423 needs to be passed, and I'm basically going to  
19 complain about-- or be concerned about Staten Island,  
20 and its inability, you have cultural, you know,  
21 equity and parity. Before we discuss that, I'd also  
22 like to talk about the fact that they brought in a  
23 new shelter, housing close to 200 adults and about  
24 600 children, without the input of the community.  
25 And this place is under-resourced as it is. It's not



1 fair to that community itself. It's mostly black and  
2 brown, and it is being underutilized and under-  
3 resourced, in the schools that-- they don't have  
4 seats in school as it is. And so this-- this  
5 military budget is, like, ridiculous. Like, the  
6 people who preceded me talked about, you know,  
7 there's problems here and abroad, and what are we  
8 doing? And these kids didn't ask to be coming here,  
9 to be poor, to stop blaming it on the asylum seekers.  
10 We know it's mismanagement of money.  
11

12 So, yeah, my first one is basically the  
13 mismanagement. We don't want to talk-- We don't want  
14 to duplicate the same problem with the asylum  
15 seekers. They are the same people too that came here  
16 two or three hundred years ago. They didn't have to  
17 have the problems in their country. They moved to a  
18 better place, as many of us have.

19 So this maybe complete my testimony. But I'm  
20 really concerned about that shelter on Staten Island,  
21 and those kids that are, like I said, do not ask for  
22 this kind of treatment. We are better than this as a  
23 nation, and we do have the resources, and the senate  
24 is controlling this. It's not fair. It's not just.  
25 Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

Donju, you may begin when the sergeant starts your clock.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

MS. MIN: Hello, and thank you for the opportunity to offer the this testimony on behalf of the New York Historical Society. My name is Donju Min, I serve at New York Historical as Manager of Institutional Giving Operations.

Today, I'd like to tell you about our efforts to expand our reach to all corners of the city with particular focus on communities typically underserved by cultural institutions, and also to emphasize the impact of the DCLA funding we receive.

The first step of our outreach is ensuring that our programming reflects the rich cultural fabric of our city. New York Historical aims to supplement content and cultural institutions and history textbooks by retelling critical chapters in our history through the perspectives of those often left out of the American narrative.

To give you an example of this work, I'd like to highlight one of our exhibitions currently on view,

1 Kay WalkingStick in the Hudson River School, which  
2 puts the contemporary Turkey artists Kay  
3 WalkingStick's landscapes, in conversation with a  
4 collection of Hudson River School paintings.  
5

6 So, the next step then is to promote our work to  
7 the broadest possible audience, and at the forefront  
8 of this commitment is our education initiatives. In  
9 recent years, New York Historical has served K  
10 through 12 schools in 50 City Council districts, with  
11 a particular focus on Title One schools. Our  
12 education staff work to conduct a thorough and deep  
13 outreach to all schools in all districts, and also to  
14 let them know that discounts and waivers are offered  
15 on a need basis for programs that aren't already  
16 offered for free.

17 In FY 23, 535 of the 672 schools we serve were  
18 located outside of Manhattan. We extend this  
19 commitment to outreach to all of our programs  
20 starting from our early childhood education  
21 offerings, and up to higher education opportunities  
22 and programs for the general public. For example,  
23 our citizenship projects, which provides lawful  
24 permanent residents seeking citizenship with free  
25 civics classes to prepare them for the US

1 naturalization test. In the last fiscal year 84% of  
2 participants in this project lived in the outer  
3 boroughs.  
4

5 [BELL RINGS]

6 So thank you once more for the opportunity to  
7 offer this testimony. We realize that our work would  
8 not be possible without the support of the City  
9 Council and the Department of Cultural Affairs. And  
10 we thank you and your fellow City Councilmembers for  
11 your exceptional service.

12 [APPLAUSE]

13 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Hannah Mackler,  
15 you may begin when the sergeant starts your clock.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 MS. MACKLER: Hi. Thank you to the committee for  
18 the opportunity to testify about cultural outreach.  
19 I'm Hannah Mackler, Director of Government and UJA  
20 Relations at the 92nd Street Y, New York, 92NY.

21 We're a community and cultural center based on  
22 the Upper East Side, but we reach patrons, schools,  
23 and communities in all five boroughs. For example,  
24 our school engagement in the arts department connects  
25 about 6500 students annually with artists of the

1 highest caliber through school. There is school-  
2 based instruction and live events at 92NY.  
3

4 23 schools from 15 council districts are already  
5 enrolled in this year's Discovery Series, which  
6 offers 18 sessions of curriculum-based dance and  
7 music education to elementary school students.

8 We were disappointed about the PEG cuts,  
9 especially affecting CDF funding, and ask that there  
10 be no further cuts. This funding is vital to  
11 programs like The Discovery Series.

12 We also ask there'd be no cuts to cost of  
13 funding, which last year enabled 92NY to provide  
14 impactful cultural programs at nine schools in  
15 Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx.

16 Another program to mention, Team Producers,  
17 offers a two-year paid internship in the arts at 92NY  
18 to high school juniors and seniors. In these and  
19 other ways, we're reaching students where they are  
20 and enabling them to experience art at a cultural  
21 organization outside their neighborhood.

22 In a similar vein, in March 2024, we're thrilled  
23 to be reviving Teen Art Week, a citywide celebration  
24 of the arts for teens by teens. Leading cultural  
25 organizations across all five boroughs will present

1  
2 free admission, classes workshops, performances for  
3 teens. In 2019 and 2020, 80% of teen registrants  
4 were first-time visitors to an institution.

5 So, we're helping teens take advantage of the  
6 vast cultural resources of the city in their own  
7 neighborhoods, and other boroughs. We are enabling  
8 them to expand their own cultural understanding and  
9 artistic skills and explore their interests. So,  
10 thank you for your support and we urge you to  
11 continue supporting NYC cultural organizations.

12 [APPLAUSE]

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Poetry, you may  
14 begin when the sergeant starts your clock.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

16 You may begin.

17 MS. NUR: Hello, assalam alaikum wa rahmatullah  
18 wa barakatuh. Thank you very much for allowing me to  
19 speak today. My name is Potri Ranka Manis Queano  
20 Nur. I'm Artistic Director and Founder of the  
21 Kinding Sindaw Heritage Foundation. Otherwise, I'm  
22 also a registered nurse who came here to America,  
23 recruited to become part of the solution for the  
24 pandemic before in the 1990s of HIV and AIDS, and  
25 also served on the front the front line of COVID-19.

1 I'm a cultural worker. I brought with me the  
2 indigenous living tradition of the Southern  
3 Philippines, and that is what the Kinding Sindaw's  
4 mission is: To put that into the mark of USA, the  
5 visibility of the indigenous people of Southern  
6 Philippines, and also the indigenous people that are  
7 here in the diaspora in America, particularly in the  
8 Queen's area.  
9

10 Kinding Sindaw has served New York for 31 years,  
11 and we have been low-budget. We are a very small  
12 organization. We have been helped by organizations  
13 like Asian American Arts Alliance and CACF. And up  
14 to now-- that my crisis right now is I not able to  
15 pay my staff since October. I'm putting out my own  
16 overtime money to pay the staff, just to continue our  
17 mission.

18 Our mission is very critical for the American  
19 history, Asian American Pacific Islander history.  
20 Our stories that we put up, we have produced 14 main  
21 shows that La MaMa has given us a space as a  
22 resident. And they are all historical events, but  
23 it's not present in American history. When USA was--  
24 took over from the Spaniards, and you were sold to  
25 USA for \$20 million dollars on December 10, 1898.

1  
2       After that, the Mission School was placed in our  
3 area, and everything that was used among the natives  
4 here in USA was applied.

5       [BELL RINGS]

6       SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

7       MS. NUR: Thank you. And what I'm asking is,  
8 please consider not to cut the 15%, particularly for  
9 the arts and culture, because this is the one that  
10 carries the spirit of New York, our industry, our  
11 mental health, and our anti-Asian hate crime programs  
12 that is carried by our culture, arts, and literature.

13       SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

14       CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

15       [APPLAUSE]

16       COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next remote  
17 panel will be Melody Capote and Lauren Miller.  
18 Melody you may begin when the sergeant starts your  
19 clock.

20       SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

21       MS. CAPOTE: [TO OTHERS:] I just got called. I  
22 just got called. [BACKGROUND VOICE:] Okay. [TO  
23 COUNCIL:] I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

24       [BACKGROUND VOICES]



1 MS. CAPOTE: I'm doing well-- Oh God. Okay.  
2  
3 Sorry. Can you hear me?

4 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Yes, we can hear you.

5 MS. CAPOTE: Okay. Mr. Chairman and members of  
6 the City Council, my name is Melody Capote, Executive  
7 Director of the Caribbean Cultural Center African  
8 Diaspora Institute.

9 Earlier presenters today have spoken as if  
10 everything is hunky dory. Some have said that we are  
11 resilient, and we will find our way back to all of  
12 these cuts with DCLA and CDF programs.

13 I'm here to tell you that it's bad, real bad.  
14 Those of us that received funding from CDF grants  
15 through DCLA have yet to receive our award letters  
16 for fiscal 23. And most of us are halfway into our  
17 fiscal year. We have started our programming this  
18 year in July, and now are freezing and eliminating--  
19 eliminating programs and staff because everything is  
20 uncertain, not only for the next fiscal year, but for  
21 what we are experiencing right now, today, in this  
22 fiscal year.

23 I appear today to comment on the oversight topic  
24 of arts and cultural organizations' outreach into New  
25 York City communities. I congratulate you for what

1  
2 appears to be a long overdue insight: Namely, if you  
3 want to make a difference in communities that were  
4 intractable-- where intractable poverty, turmoil,  
5 hate incidents, and institutionalized racism prevail,  
6 one can not expect that community to reach out to the  
7 purveyors of arts and culture because it is the duty  
8 of the arts and culture community to reach out to  
9 them.

10 Yet only 15% of the DCLA budget goes to smaller  
11 organization organizations who both exist in the  
12 community, and do not have to-- do not have to do the  
13 outreach in the classic-- I am so sorry, I am like  
14 rushing-- do not have to do the outreach in the  
15 classic sense because they are integral-- an integral  
16 part of the community. And while there is  
17 insufficient transparency--

18 [BELL RINGS]

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has has expired.

20 MS. CAPOTE: --within the 15%, it is fair to say  
21 that only a small percentage of that represents  
22 organizations of color within communities of color.

23 And now we are told to get ready for PEG cuts  
24 that can result in reductions as high as 20%.

25 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

2 COUNSELING AND COORDINATION OF CARE: Thank you.

3 Lauren Miller, you may begin when the sergeant starts  
4 your clock.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

6 MS. MILLER: Thank you, Councilmembers and Chair  
7 Ossé. My name is Lauren Miller and I am the  
8 Advancement and Alliance Director of the Bushwick  
9 Starr in Council District 37. We are the only  
10 professional nonprofit producing theatre in Bushwick.  
11 We serve 5000-plus audiences and 120 learners from  
12 the age of 9 to 99 every year.

13 The Starr lost our original space in council  
14 district 34 in 2020 and have been fighting to  
15 construct our permanent home in Bushwick without  
16 interrupting our artistic and educational programs  
17 ever since. We remain grateful for the city's  
18 significant capital and program investments in our  
19 theater over the years, but its current cuts and  
20 delays put our already precarious circumstance at  
21 immediate, extreme risk.

22 We are not alone in this struggle. Bushwick is  
23 an internationally renowned, vibrant, cultural  
24 community, but just us and a handful of Community Art  
25 Center's struggle to survive as nonprofit

1  
2 institutions amid a proliferation of for-profit  
3 galleries and venues which charge a premium for  
4 exclusive access.

5       Rather than intentional planning and investment,  
6 this city has ceded or cultural development to the  
7 whims of the market. And so there is no Spanish  
8 language theatre venue, for instance, or an Afro  
9 Latino museum, or other professional culturally  
10 specific institutions in this gentrifying primarily  
11 black, brown and immigrant community.

12       We can and must change that through robust  
13 capital and programs funding and timely awards and  
14 payments.

15       It's clear at less than a quarter of a percent of  
16 the city's budget that the CDF is clearly  
17 underfunded. But the years of underinvestment have  
18 also led to a cratering of capacity within the agency  
19 itself, which leads to inefficiencies and delays a  
20 compound our struggles. We're currently 165 days  
21 into FY 24. We have received not-- no notification,  
22 let alone funding from CDF or the council initiatives  
23 that we applied to 7 to 10 months ago, not to mention  
24 the labyrinthian process for accessing capital funds.

1  
2       We know that the agency wants to give the best  
3 possible service to our communities, but they need  
4 your help. Navigating these constant cuts is making  
5 their already difficult undertaking impossible.

6       I want to thank my fellow brave New Yorkers today  
7 for highlighting the hypocrisy of a government that  
8 fuels endless war amidst--

9       SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

10       MS. MILLER: --care. Thank you. Please, resist  
11 the pay cuts and fund our communities including the  
12 arts.

13       [APPLAUSE]

14       CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you so much.

15       COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Our last remote  
16 panel will be Gregory Calvin, Marisol Duran, and  
17 Hikma Abdulghani. Gregory, you can begin when the  
18 sergeant starts your clock.

19       SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

20       MR. CALVIN: Hi, everyone, sorry. Technical  
21 difficulties. My name is Gregory Calvin. My  
22 pronouns are he/him. I live in Ridgewood, Queens.  
23 I'm a member of Brooklyn For Peace and Queens also,  
24 Lenape, and Canarsie Land.

1  
2 I'm here simply to state relatively quickly, you  
3 know, to thank Chairman Ossé and all Councilmembers,  
4 and that, you know, if passed on and voted Resolution  
5 423, the Council simply would be stating that  
6 military budget takes away federal funding that New  
7 York City needs.

8 To take one example, when funding of military  
9 bases overseas competes with programs struggling to  
10 survive here. To me, that is a recognition that  
11 something's not right.

12 I thank the committee for taking time to consider  
13 this resolution, and it will be passed and voted on  
14 next week.

15 And one final thing is in regard to some of the  
16 discussion earlier regarding other groups, citizens,  
17 other demographics, I can speak to at least some of  
18 the views that many young people share. I'm 30, and  
19 I noticed that many young people in my generation  
20 involved in activism are directed, motivated, and  
21 passionate concerning issues of war and peace and  
22 economic justice. However, I think what we don't  
23 always see in rallies or on social media is that  
24 young folks are also really desperate, actually, to  
25

1 see signs of guidance from and their views reflected  
2 by elected officials.

3  
4 So, I can't tell you how many groups I've made  
5 where young folks are looking for any past voting  
6 record, any quote from elected representatives, to  
7 see that their views are reflected in regard to peace  
8 and equitable, equitable distribution, of funding.

9 And I think, you know, the council passing this  
10 resolution would serve just that purpose. It would  
11 serve as a form of a moral guide for folks that we in  
12 the peace movement and community organizing can point  
13 to, and we can say, "Look, our elected  
14 representatives do understand the gravity of  
15 disproportionate funding at federal level." And then  
16 we could also say, "Yes, while New York City  
17 Councilmembers are responsible for the federal  
18 budget, they do recognize that fiscally biased--"

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

20 MR. CALVIN: "--directly affect us." So if it  
21 would be passed to be greatly appreciated by me, and  
22 people in my generation, thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

24 [APPLAUSE]

1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Marisol, you can  
3 begin when the sergeant starts your clock.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

5 MS. DURAN: Good afternoon. My name is Marisol  
6 Duran. I was born and raised in the Bronx District  
7 15. I am a mom of a six-month-old, and we live in  
8 District 17.

9 I speak this afternoon to help improve condition  
10 for my child and other children in the Bronx. I  
11 support Resolution 423 Because District 15 and 17 are  
12 some of the most struggling communities when it comes  
13 to education and public safety. It is important that  
14 children in less-resourced districts have the tools  
15 and support to excel academically. Our public  
16 library should not lose funding, because they are a  
17 central community institutions, where children of all  
18 ages can learn in addition to school.

19 As a young adult, I spent many hours at the  
20 public library studying for the standardized exam.  
21 Our apartment was too small to have my own designated  
22 study area, so the library was the only place where I  
23 could get most of my studying done for my  
24 undergraduate and postgraduate studies.



1  
2 Now, I take my baby to the Baby Lapsit classes at  
3 the New York Public Library in Pelham Bay. These  
4 classes have been helpful because he has accomplished  
5 many milestones for his young age.

6 Growing up, I witnessed few children have access  
7 to educational opportunities outside of school. I  
8 participated in many of these activities available  
9 only to a small group of children because of the lack  
10 of funding. As a result, only a small fraction of my  
11 peers from elementary school went beyond high school.  
12 Some of my closest friends cannot read or write at  
13 the designated level. Therefore, many did not even  
14 graduate high school.

15 I am disappointed to not see my representative  
16 co-sign the resolution, because investing in our  
17 children is the way to promote real public safety. I  
18 urge this committee to pass the bill so that every  
19 child in the city has access to opportunities for  
20 academic excellence. Thank you.

21 [APPLAUSE]

22 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hikma, you may begin when the  
24 sergeant starts your clock.

1  
2 MS. ABDULGHANI: [SOUND GARBLED] Thank you. Good  
3 afternoon. Thank you for holding this hearing and I  
4 hope it will pass. My name is Hikma Abdulghani. I'm  
5 a resident of [INAUDIBLE], Brooklyn. I'm a  
6 [INAUDIBLE], I'm a parent, and I'm a [INAUDIBLE]  
7 middle school. This resolution has the support of  
8 peace activists and community leaders who come  
9 together around the issue of military spending,  
10 because every dollar spent on the military is a dollar  
11 taken away from vital services. I believe the public  
12 has a right to [INAUDIBLE] and ideally [INAUDIBLE]  
13 excess military budget for community needs, and it  
14 will really help contribute to [INAUDIBLE].

15 Our immediate [INAUDIBLE] budget cuts [INAUDIBLE]  
16 in the community, health, safety, education, climate,  
17 and our quality of life. We see that there are many  
18 needs, and that this resolution is an opportunity to  
19 shed light on military spending, and what our city  
20 misses [INAUDIBLE] priorities that are [INAUDIBLE]  
21 due to the everyday reality of working people and  
22 families like mine.

23 My children's afterschool program will be cut.  
24 Our middle school will not be playing soccer or chess  
25 this year. Our local libraries are set to be closed

1 on Sundays. And the other is after school, the  
2 workers are underpaid and overworked. When I talk to  
3 young people, they are scheduling [INAUDIBLE] ride to  
4 work.  
5

6 As a parent, I try to teach my children to be  
7 stewards of the earth. The community park  
8 [INAUDIBLE] have been cut. When we go to the park,  
9 we are surrounded by garbage, [INAUDIBLE] cut.

10 I look forward to my son pursuing higher  
11 education, but all around us [INAUDIBLE] have been  
12 cut. These are policy cases [INAUDIBLE], and we want  
13 and deserve accountability. [INAUDIBLE] from Mayor  
14 Adams and the City Council, but also from our  
15 President and Congress with [INAUDIBLE] military  
16 spending either [INAUDIBLE].

17 [INAUDIBLE] that the Pentagon has failed an audit  
18 for the sixth straight year, and the Pentagon admits  
19 to having no idea where half of their assets are.

20 [INAUDIBLE] tax dollars paid [INAUDIBLE] billion to  
21 [INAUDIBLE] invested here. There are [INAUDIBLE]

22 [BELL RINGS]

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

24 MS. ABDULGHANI: [INAUDIBLE]. Our policy could  
25 lead [INAUDIBLE] cut to the bone, dilapidated

1 subways, [INAUDIBLE] and people who are spending the  
2 holidays [INAUDIBLE]

3  
4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

5 MS. ABDULGHANI: [INAUDIBLE]. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you so much.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. That concludes  
8 our remote testimony. And I'll just do one last call  
9 for those who registered but didn't testify. So in  
10 person we have Hillary Ekster, Sharon Leslie Brown,  
11 Jonathan Fourgash, and Robert Greenberg.

12 And then for remote testimony, we have Michelle  
13 Barnes Anderson, Luke G. Boyd, Sunny Kumar Ukani,  
14 Keith Nelson, Ella Ryan, Maamoun Rashid, Fei Moore,  
15 Candace Anderson, Phillip Schneidman, Nicole Tuzion,  
16 and Leonard Jacobs.

17 Seeing no one else, I would like to note that  
18 written testimony which will be reviewed in full by  
19 committee staff may be submitted to the record up to  
20 72 hours after the close of this hearing by emailing  
21 it to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).

22 And I'll turn it back to the Chair for closing  
23 statements.

24 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And without further, thank you  
25 to everybody who came on and testified. Really. I

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think this is getting passed next week, I believe.  
So, thank you so much for coming out. And without  
further ado, this hearings adjourned.

[APPLAUSE]

[GAVEL]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date January 14, 2024