

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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September 25, 2013

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HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Community Rm,  
14th Fl.

B E F O R E:

ALBERT VANN  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Diana Reyna  
Donavan Richards  
G. Oliver Koppell  
Melissa Mark-Viverito  
Vincent J. Gentile

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

Corey Chambliss  
Director of External Affairs  
New York City Center for  
Economic Opportunity

David Berman  
Director of Program Management and  
Policy  
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Lisa Levy  
Director of Policy, Advocacy &  
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## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Anne Williams-Isom  
Chief Operator Officer  
Harlem Children's Zone

Maureen Lane  
Co-Executive Director  
Welfare Rights Initiative,  
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Louise Feld  
Senior Policy Associate for  
Food and Economic Security,  
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Brooke Richie-Babbage  
Founder and Executive Director  
Resilience Advocacy Project

Adeline Walker-Santiago  
Bedford Park Resident

Wellington Chen  
Executive Director  
Chinatown Partnership  
Local Development Corporation



[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON VANN: I like doin' that...

[laughter]

CHAIRPERSON VANN: makes me feel  
powerful.

Good Morning. I'm Al Vann, Chair of the  
Committee on Community Development and of course,  
we've been joined by Council Member Diana Reyna;  
there are a lot of Committee meetings going on today,  
so members will be coming and going, but you have the  
most important members of the Committee here, so  
that's a good start.

I wanna thank you all for coming out to  
participate in today's hearing and the hearing is on  
Intro 1148 and this is legislation that proposes a  
specific plan to reduce poverty in New York City, a  
specific plan to reduce poverty in New York City.

Intro 1148 uses census data to designate  
high poverty areas of New York City as community  
development zones. The legislation creates a narrow  
control governance board that is intended to foster  
City agency collaborative planning and high-level  
accountability in order to effectively reduce  
poverty. This board includes agency heads from

1  
2 Department of Youth and Community Development,  
3 Department of Small Business Services, Human  
4 Resources Administration, Department of Education,  
5 Administration for Children's Services, Department of  
6 HPD, Department of Health and Mental Health and the  
7 City University of New York.

8           The board also includes the Speaker or  
9 his representatives and a representative from the  
10 Mayor's Office. In addition there are 10 non-  
11 governmental mayoral appointees, five of which are  
12 recommended by the Speaker of the Council. The  
13 appointees include representatives of the poor, the  
14 philanthropic community, community-based  
15 organizations and private industry.

16           Intro 1148 aims to break down existing  
17 agency silos that have intended to hamper efficient  
18 service delivery to low-income communities and  
19 residents. Through the creation of the Community  
20 Development Zone governance board, Intro 1148 will  
21 provide a formal mechanism for City agencies to work  
22 together to devise and undertake coordinated actions  
23 that support the reduction of neighborhood poverty.

24           The legislation requires members of the  
25 governance board to participate in the development of

1 needs statements and action plans; that is for each  
2 Community Development Zone as it relates to promoting  
3 area economic development, resident employability and  
4 self-sufficiency.  
5

6 Despite years of economic progress in  
7 development, high poverty levels have persisted.  
8 More than one-fifth of New Yorkers are currently  
9 living at or below federal poverty lines. To his  
10 credit, Mayor Bloomberg acknowledged the extent of  
11 the problem and announced in 2006 in his State of the  
12 City Address his administration's commitment to  
13 achieving a major reduction in the number of  
14 children, women and men who live in poverty in New  
15 York City over the next four years.

16 In March of 2006 the Mayor launched the  
17 New York City Commission for Economic Opportunity to  
18 help realize this goal.

19 Among the key findings highlighted in the  
20 Commission's 2006 report is that poverty in New York  
21 City is concentrated geographically. According to  
22 the Commission at that time, in New York City there  
23 were 248 census tracts classified as in extreme  
24 poverty in which more than 40 percent of the  
25 population lived below the poverty line.

2 These conditions continue to exist today,  
3 which is why I have decided to dedicate this final  
4 period of my tenure here at the Council towards  
5 pushing for the passage of this important legislation  
6 that I know will have the long-term collective impact  
7 necessary to measurably reduce poverty.

8 After that long introduction,  
9 Councilwoman Reyna; you have any opening? Having  
10 none... Councilman... Council Member Donovan has just  
11 joined us, welcome brother... we will begin the hearing  
12 and I'd like to call first, representatives from the  
13 Center for Economic Opportunity, Mr. David Berman and  
14 Corey Chambliss. Don't look so scared gentlemen,  
15 it's gonna be alright. It's okay. [interpose]

16 [laughter]

17 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Okay. You may begin  
18 at your leisure.

19 COREY CHAMBLISS: Thank you, Chairman  
20 Vann and distinguished members of the Committee; I am  
21 Corey Chambliss, Director of External Affairs for the  
22 New York Center for Economic Opportunity and I am  
23 joined by David Berman, Director of Programs and  
24 Policies for the Center for Economic Opportunity.



2 Thank you for the opportunity to testify  
3 on behalf of my colleagues on Intro 1148, which looks  
4 to establish Community Development Zones to reduce  
5 poverty and achieve sustainable growth while also  
6 establishing a community zone governance board.

7 The Center for Economic Opportunity, or  
8 CEO, is the product of the 2006 Commission for  
9 Economic Opportunity convened by Mayor Bloomberg to  
10 document the state of poverty in New York City and  
11 chart a course for new programs focused on asset  
12 development, education, employment, health and  
13 criminal justice.

14 The Commission rightly stated that those  
15 living in poverty are not a monolithic block and that  
16 a one-size-fits-all approach would not effectively  
17 target the systemic roots of the cycle of poverty.

18 The Commission therefore tasked CEO with  
19 developing innovative solutions to build financial  
20 security and support for education, thereby providing  
21 pathways to employment and advancement for the  
22 working core and for New York City's disconnected  
23 youth, those neither in school nor in the workforce.

24 As a unit of the Office of the Mayor, CEO  
25 has clearly established a capacity for innovation in

2 inter-agency collaboration in implementing targeted  
3 interventions for low-income New Yorkers. CEO has  
4 brought together 40 City agencies since its founding  
5 and launched more than 60 anti-poverty programs.  
6 More than 500,000 individuals have been served by CEO  
7 programs since 2006, securing more than 30,000 job  
8 placements and over 10,000 paid internships, more  
9 than 10,000 enrollments in college or occupational  
10 trainings and over \$100 million has been claimed in  
11 increased tax credits.

12 Bringing a sustained focus to the City's  
13 anti-poverty efforts has been a the core of CEO's  
14 work and early on it became clear that a better  
15 understanding of poverty would be needed to identify  
16 communities and issue areas facing the greatest need.

17 Developed during the early 1960s, the  
18 official poverty measure released by the Federal  
19 Government does not account for geographical  
20 differences in cost of living, nor does it consider  
21 non-discretionary expenditures, such as child care,  
22 out-of-pocket medical expenses or commuting costs.

23 In 2008 CEO developed a new measure of  
24 poverty to address these gaps in the Federal measure.  
25 Many New Yorkers face prohibitive out-of-pocket

1 medical expenses and child care costs. The CEO  
2 poverty measure accounts for these expenditures in  
3 measuring household income, along with government-  
4 provided nutritional and housing assistance, such as  
5 food stamps and rent subsidies. CEO then measures  
6 that income against the high cost of living in New  
7 York City, where a majority of residents are renters  
8 and housing costs are the primary driver of non-  
9 discretionary spending.  
10

11 According to this year's CEO poverty  
12 measure report, an analysis of 2011 data found that  
13 21.3 percent of New Yorkers fall below the City's  
14 poverty threshold, with rates across the boroughs  
15 ranging from 14.7 percent in Manhattan to 26 percent  
16 in the Bronx. It is important to emphasize how the  
17 CEO measure informs how policy affects poverty.  
18 These rates would have been substantially higher  
19 without government intervention following the  
20 national recession, which included expanding access  
21 to food stamp benefits and an expansion of the Earned  
22 Income Tax Credit.

23 Armed with a more complete understanding  
24 of poverty in New York City, CEO has... [clears  
25 throat]... excuse me... CEO has deployed its convening

1 power not just within City government, but also  
2 throughout the grassroots in high need, high poverty  
3 communities. Since its founding, CEO has partnered  
4 with more than 200 community-based non-profit  
5 organizations who have become key partners in  
6 delivering services. CEO's record of collaboration  
7 with community-based organizations has engendered a  
8 unique institutional knowledge that informs its  
9 program development and implementation.  
10

11 As we saw following Hurricane Sandy,  
12 local capacity to organize and support residents and  
13 local businesses varies greatly from neighborhood to  
14 neighborhood. From within the Office of the Mayor,  
15 CEO demonstrated a unique understanding of community  
16 needs as the City's efforts turned from response to  
17 recovery. CEO led a task force consisting of city  
18 and federal agencies, as well as community-based non-  
19 profit organizations which developed and conducted a  
20 door-to-door survey that reached every resident in  
21 the affected areas, totaling 140,000 residential  
22 units.

23 At the end of each day's operation, the  
24 City's data team extracted the data gathered and  
25 referred individual needs to the appropriate response

2 agencies and local community providers. Many areas  
3 most heavily impacted by Hurricane Sandy were already  
4 facing high unemployment and high rates of poverty.

5 For example, Red Hook, Brooklyn has a  
6 poverty rate of 44.1 percent, according to the U.S.  
7 Census Bureau. CEO was quick to act in understanding  
8 that employment remains a critical component of local  
9 resiliency, launching the NYC Recovers subsidized  
10 jobs program to provide young adults with  
11 opportunities to lead local rebuilding efforts in  
12 their communities.

13 It also launched Construction Works to  
14 provide local residents with occupational training  
15 and match them with post-Sandy construction  
16 opportunities. It also re-launched its Works  
17 Progress Program to train and employ young residents  
18 for local rebuilding efforts.

19 As part of the City's Strategic  
20 Initiative for Rebuilding and Resiliency, or SIR,  
21 report issued this spring, CEO's role in developing  
22 subsidized work for young adults was formalized  
23 through a partnership with NYC Service and the Office  
24 of Emergency Management. Beginning in 2014 CEO will  
25 work with the Office of Emergency Management to build

1 upon OEM's existing network of Community Emergency  
2 Response Teams, or CERT, by identifying young adults  
3 to train for employment opportunities in local  
4 disaster preparedness.  
5

6 Additionally, CEO will work local  
7 residents and OEM to identify service gaps in high  
8 poverty communities heavily impacted by Hurricane  
9 Sandy. CEO will lead this study with an outside  
10 evaluation firm to collect and analyze data from  
11 high-needs communities and the research gathered by  
12 this process will inform resiliency preparations  
13 already underway. CEO and the selected evaluator  
14 will utilize City data to identify vulnerable  
15 populations and needed public services, such as  
16 medical care, homeless shelters, food stamps and  
17 other government benefits. To quote the CERT report,  
18 "Following this comprehensive gap identification, the  
19 City and the community will subsequently develop and  
20 implement a plan, as well as seek philanthropic and  
21 other potential funding sources to address identified  
22 needs."

23 This assignment following Hurricane Sandy  
24 recognizes CEO's unique capacity and record of  
25 success in targeting high poverty communities with

2 City resources and CEO looks forward to a continued  
3 productive exchange of ideas and best practices with  
4 its partners on the City Council.

5 With that I turn CEO's testimony over to  
6 my colleague David Berman, Director of Programs and  
7 Policies for CEO and once again I would like to thank  
8 the Chairman and members of the Committee for this  
9 opportunity to testify.

10 DAVID BERMAN: Chairman Vann and  
11 distinguished members of the Community Development  
12 Committee, I'm David Berman, the Director of Program  
13 Management and Policy at the New York City Center for  
14 Economic Opportunity. I'm honored to be here before  
15 you today to discuss CEO's inter-agency work and some  
16 of the effective strategies that CEO is implementing  
17 to help low-income New Yorkers increase their  
18 economic opportunity.

19 A key mission of CEO is to increase the  
20 focus on anti-poverty efforts and promote greater  
21 coordination across City agencies to address the  
22 complex issues related to poverty. CEO creates a  
23 platform for a shared focus on economic opportunity.  
24 Many of the innovative programs CEO has piloted have  
25 led not only to building the knowledge base of what

1 works, but also to systems changes that have  
2 transformed the way City agencies address poverty.

3  
4 CEO's work has enhanced the focus on  
5 poverty among agencies that have not traditionally  
6 been associated with anti-poverty efforts, work that  
7 has demonstrated the importance of involving these  
8 needed partners to better address community needs.

9 As just a few examples, the New York City  
10 Department of Probation has created a system of  
11 Neighborhood Opportunity Networks, or NeONs, which  
12 brings services into the communities where  
13 probationers reside and CEO is now supporting its  
14 evaluations.

15 The New York City Small Business Services  
16 worked with CEO to develop the Community Partners  
17 Program, which creates a stronger bridge to services  
18 between all of the City's Workforce's Career Centers  
19 and jobseekers who are served at community  
20 organizations across the City.

21 The New York City Housing Authority,  
22 NYCHA, has redesigned its Resident Economic  
23 Empowerment initiatives by creating a system of "zone  
24 coordinators" where services are coordinated at the  
25



2 community level to better connect NYCHA residents to  
3 needed services.

4 CEO has been part of this work,  
5 implementing and evaluating many of the pilot  
6 programs that are part of these larger efforts.

7 Jobs-Plus, an evidence-based employment  
8 program that targets public housing residents is an  
9 example of how CEO's leadership effectively brings  
10 together multiple City agency partners to meet the  
11 needs of communities with high unemployment.

12 A steering committee made up of CEO,  
13 Human Resources Administration, NYCHA and the  
14 Department of Consumer Affairs oversees the  
15 initiative and ensure that services are well-  
16 coordinated. Last year the initiative was expanded  
17 through the Young Men's Initiative and non-profit  
18 providers are now situated in high-need communities,  
19 such as Hunts Point, Soundview, East Harlem, Bedford-  
20 Stuyvesant, Astoria and Brownsville.

21 By pulling together partners from  
22 different agencies or departments focusing on similar  
23 challenges, CEO moves agencies toward a joint  
24 problem-solving approach and creates a collaborative  
25

1  
2 process around clarified goals to better serve  
3 residents.

4 For example, CEO has brought together the  
5 New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
6 and the Health and Hospitals Corporation to support  
7 Cure Violence, a highly targeted anti-gun violence  
8 initiative that's also supported by the City Council  
9 that seeks to end the cycle of violence in five high  
10 violence communities. These agencies, plus  
11 representatives from the Council and the NYPD now  
12 meet regularly together to coordinate and strategize  
13 around the program's evaluation.

14 CEO, partnering with City agencies and  
15 the Council helps to focus attention on key issues  
16 faced by those living in poverty and to keep anti-  
17 poverty strategies high on City agency agendas. The  
18 Center's pilots and evaluation work helps to  
19 determine which programs are effective at improving  
20 outcomes; this is important work that can better  
21 guide the use of public dollars and ultimately  
22 improve the lives of those who are living in poverty.

23 CEO has built successfully a culture of  
24 learning within and across agencies and a focus on  
25 what is working and what is not. By regularly

1 bringing together key staff at City agencies to learn  
2 about evaluation findings and participate in expert  
3 roundtables, agencies make vital connections that can  
4 lead to program improvements or enhance links between  
5 programs.

6  
7 This learning agenda extends to  
8 community-based non-profit partners as well. As CEO  
9 programs build local capacity by convening providers  
10 to share best practices and offering technical  
11 assistance to implement their programs.

12 Last year we worked with CUNY to design a  
13 program that brings together CEO program directors  
14 from local non-profits to enhance their management  
15 and leadership skills. This initiative was  
16 successful and we expect it to be an ongoing part of  
17 CEO's work.

18 CEO's data-driven approach helps  
19 community-based organizations understand their  
20 impact, continually improve and learn from evaluation  
21 findings. Last year we created the Innovative Non-  
22 Profit Awards in recognition of the fact that  
23 innovation, effort and expertise is not always  
24 government-driven and that we have much to learn as  
25 well.

1  
2 In identifying groups with effective  
3 data-driven anti-poverty strategies we found the  
4 winning organizations sought assistance in making new  
5 connections to City agencies and in evaluating their  
6 services and we're now helping them on both of those  
7 fronts.

8 Based on our experience we found it  
9 beneficial to focus not only on communities in need,  
10 but also populations in need. While some initiatives  
11 target areas with high unemployment and poverty,  
12 others target populations city-wide that face similar  
13 challenges, such as out of work, out of school youth,  
14 people with a criminal justice history or low-wage  
15 workers. CEO recognizes the needs of local providers  
16 to tailor its programs to the needs of their  
17 populations where appropriate.

18 Across our network of over 200 non-profit  
19 program providers, CEO reaches high-need communities  
20 in all five boroughs with programs that provide  
21 education, employment and financial literacy. Our  
22 centralized coordination helps further connections  
23 between programs. As you know, several federal  
24 agencies, such as Choice and Promise Neighborhoods  
25 seek to promote greater coordination of comprehensive

2 services through community-based planning. CEO's  
3 programs grew out of recommendations from a planning  
4 process of the Commission, made up of leaders from  
5 government, non-profits, academia and the private  
6 sector.

7 The Commission was co-led by Geoffrey  
8 Canada, from the Harlem Children's Zone, a leader  
9 widely recognized for his focus on deep community  
10 engagement as an effective way to fight entrenched  
11 inter-generational poverty.

12 The federal efforts, combined with local  
13 endeavors, such as those by CEO and its partner  
14 create an opportunity to learn about the most  
15 effective ways to address community resiliency and  
16 they provide structures to build on.

17 There are many anti-poverty efforts  
18 underway and the key focus must be to make these  
19 initiatives as impactful as possible. There is a  
20 great deal of excellent data on community needs and  
21 CEO's poverty measure is one new addition.

22 Through our work on our programs  
23 described above, and in addressing new needs that  
24 grew out of Hurricane Sandy we've seen that one  
25

1  
2 standard approach cannot address the diverse and  
3 complex needs of City residents.

4 We brought together local residents most  
5 effectively when we have a well-defined, specific  
6 goal and resources and support to build the effort.  
7 By providing resources and support to existing  
8 structures and better connecting City agencies and  
9 community efforts, we can effectively accomplish the  
10 goal of greater impact.

11 We strongly support the focus on  
12 addressing concentrated poverty and unemployment  
13 across the City and we should do so in ways that are  
14 strategic and enhance community response and  
15 efficiency. In partnering with City agencies and  
16 non-profits, CEO adds value that expands and enhances  
17 City services in new ways that broaden and deepen its  
18 anti-poverty mission.

19 Combined, CEO programs served over  
20 500,000 New Yorkers over the past six years. There  
21 is more work to be done; there is more work that  
22 remains to ensure that low-income New Yorkers across  
23 the City received well-coordinated services that have  
24 proven success.

1  
2 We look forward to working with the  
3 Council to learn more about building community  
4 strength at the local level and to enhance the City's  
5 anti-poverty efforts. Thank you for this opportunity  
6 to share.

7 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Yeah, thank you,  
8 gentlemen for your extended testimony on all of the  
9 accomplishments and involvements of CEO and I can  
10 attest to some of the things you have spoken on; some  
11 of them very successful.

12 Does CEO or the Administration take a  
13 position on the legislation; is it good, bad,  
14 indifferent; what?

15 COREY CHAMBLISS: Well CEO certainly  
16 shares the goal of the legislation to better target  
17 and coordinate the City's anti-poverty efforts and we  
18 do look forward to continuing those conversations on  
19 this legislation.

20 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Okay. So we don't  
21 know if you support it or not, but can we expect a  
22 veto from the Administration if we pass it in the  
23 Council?

24 COREY CHAMBLISS: CEO is not in a  
25 position to discuss that; that would be a

1 conversation you'd have to have with Legislative  
2 Affairs.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON VANN: They were invited.  
5 Okay... [interpose]

6 COREY CHAMBLISS: If you... though it  
7 should be noted they are represented here today.

8 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Okay. Good. Good.  
9 Who's representing?

10 COREY CHAMBLISS: Mr. Brian Flynn.

11 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Are you prepared to  
12 take a position on the legislation? Okay. Cool.

13 Have... despite all of the effort and work  
14 and initiatives and pilots and so forth and  
15 collaboration that you have spoken about this  
16 morning, has the poverty level decreased in the last  
17 8, 12 years in New York City, the rate of poverty?

18 COREY CHAMBLISS: It should be noted that  
19 New York City has performed overall better than other  
20 large cities in the nation following the national  
21 recession; New York City has the lowest poverty rate,  
22 according to census data of the five largest cities  
23 in America.

24 CHAIRPERSON VANN: So the answer to my  
25 question is; other... there are cities who... [crosstalk]



1  
2 COREY CHAMBLISS: Can you repeat the  
3 question?

4 CHAIRPERSON VANN: have greater poverty,  
5 but we not reduced the poverty in our city; is that...

6 COREY CHAMBLISS: Well we have seen, as I  
7 noted in my testimony, one of the most important  
8 aspects of the City's unique measure of poverty is  
9 that we do see the impact of the actions that  
10 government has taken on the poverty rate and our  
11 report this year actually shows that without things  
12 such as the expansion of food stamps and housing  
13 subsidies the poverty rate would've been nearly 10  
14 points higher without those interventions following  
15 the recession.

16 CHAIRPERSON VANN: And we thank God for  
17 those federal interventions; I agree. [coughs]  
18 Excuse me. In 2006 the Mayoral Commission that  
19 launched CEO reported that the City's vast  
20 impoverished population was geographically  
21 concentrated in particularized communities, to the  
22 extent that administration currently uses  
23 geographically centered approaches, both for the  
24 NYPD, you know they use COMPSTAT and you know, of  
25 course, Operation Impact and Department of Health,

1  
2 they use their District Public Health offices, so  
3 would there be a problem if you use that same  
4 strategy in dealing with poverty; would you...

5 DAVID BERMAN: We have effectively used  
6 that strategy in many cases. As I mentioned in my  
7 testimony, some of our programs are geographically  
8 targeted, others are focused on populations that have  
9 sort of cross-cutting issues.

10 We have several examples of programs that  
11 have been geographically focused; with the Department  
12 of Youth and Community Development we... through the  
13 RFP process for the Young Adult Internship Program we  
14 targeted neighborhoods with high poverty; high  
15 unemployment rates. The Jobs-Plus Initiative that I  
16 mentioned is in many high-need communities right now;  
17 we've worked with the Health Department on an  
18 initiative called Shop Healthy that aims to increase  
19 access to healthy foods that takes a neighborhood  
20 focus. So we have many examples; I could continue  
21 on, but there are many examples where we have  
22 targeted geographically, but we haven't found that to  
23 be the only strategy; we use many different  
24 strategies in the fight against poverty.

2 CHAIRPERSON VANN: So CEO, you would not  
3 have a problem with the bill that we introduced,  
4 because that's exactly what it does. I know you  
5 can't speak for the Administration, but as expertise  
6 and people involved in creating programs, you would  
7 agree with this approach?

8 COREY CHAMBLISS: Oh I think... I think, as  
9 David just testified; I mean we have seen the  
10 effectiveness of place-based initiatives and I think  
11 we look forward to seeing how we can improve those  
12 efforts.

13 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Okay. Can you tell us  
14 how your current programs and policies have reduced  
15 the concentration of poverty within New York City?

16 DAVID BERMAN: I think, you know, one we  
17 can point to the over 500,000 people that have  
18 benefited from our programs; as I mentioned, we have  
19 transformed the work of multiple City agencies in the  
20 way that they do business, directing to every  
21 effective strategies; we've worked with Small  
22 Business Services, for example, to created the  
23 Community Partners Initiative that better links high  
24 poverty community neighborhoods through the  
25 community-based organizations there to the services

1  
2 of the career centers. We've also transformed the  
3 way they do their work in terms of taking on sector  
4 focus and they have multiple sector focus career  
5 centers now.

6 So I think there's many examples that we  
7 can point to of that systems change. As Corey  
8 mentioned, there's tens of thousands of people that  
9 we've helped place into jobs, open bank accounts;  
10 receive a lot of valuable services, so I think those  
11 are some of the successes that we can point to...

12 [interpose]

13 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Yeah.

14 DAVID BERMAN: We have many pilot  
15 programs that we're still learning from and many that  
16 have been successful.

17 COREY CHAMBLISS: And...

18 CHAIRPERSON VANN: I... I... I applaud CEO; I  
19 understand a lot of the initiatives; I'm aware of  
20 some of them that have been successful, some who  
21 haven't and I appreciate the work CEO has done and I  
22 am aware of the impact that the Federal program is  
23 having and being very supportive of people in poverty  
24 and perhaps preventing that number from falling below  
25 the line. But I mean, in real terms it is very

1  
2 difficult for you to tell me what the City has done  
3 to reduce the concentration of poverty in the City,  
4 notwithstanding their efforts and the initiatives and  
5 so on and so forth, all is good, but I'm just... bottom  
6 line is, all that we have done and tried to do; has  
7 it reduced the concentration of poverty within the  
8 City? And...

9 DAVID BERMAN: There is a lot more work  
10 to be done and we do look forward to working with you  
11 to accomplish that goal; I mean that's... [interpose]

12 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Okay.

13 DAVID BERMAN: one of the reasons that we  
14 really appreciate the bill that you've introduced; is  
15 that focus on high-need communities and we share...  
16 [interpose]

17 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Okay.

18 DAVID BERMAN: we share your passion for  
19 trying to reduce poverty in high-need communities.

20 CHAIRPERSON VANN: I... I... if I'm seeming  
21 like I'm beating a dead horse, it's very essential,  
22 so if I come at it in different ways you'll have to  
23 understand that unless we address that we're not  
24 addressing it at all if we don't deal with the basic  
25 fundamental decrease, with the goal of eliminating

2 poverty, then the problems of crime, the problems of  
3 poor educational outcomes, the problem of poor health  
4 outcomes, the high incarceration rate; all of that  
5 stems from, as experts say, poverty, so if we don't  
6 effectively and positively, focusly deal with the  
7 reduction of poverty, then we're not really solving a  
8 lot of the ills of society. So you can understand  
9 that we are very, very concerned with our approach,  
10 the City's approach to dealing with it.

11 And this may.. the official policy or  
12 formal program to reduce poverty between 2006 and  
13 2013; is there anything other than the initiatives  
14 that you have mentioned or does that constitute our  
15 goal of reducing poverty; the programs that you've  
16 mentioned thus far in your testimony?

17 COREY CHAMBLISS: Well of course this is  
18 a multi-faceted, multi-agency effort that; you know  
19 many of these initiatives live in the Human Resources  
20 Administration and you know, we'd be happy to provide  
21 follow-up information regarding the more holistic  
22 services that extend beyond what we've testified to  
23 today.

24 DAVID BERMAN: What we're doing is we're  
25 bringing together a lot of the City agencies that are

1 working on poverty, so as Corey mentioned, the Human  
2 Resource Administration, Department of Homeless  
3 Services, Department of Youth and Community  
4 Development, they're all part of this effort; they  
5 all have their own anti-poverty initiatives and CEO's  
6 work is to create new innovative programs that add to  
7 the mix and to help us learn and make more effective  
8 strategies.  
9

10 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Yeah, I'll come back,  
11 but let me pause here and see if other members have  
12 questions.

13 Oh okay, thank you. Someone... Oliver  
14 Koppell, I think someone before you had a question,  
15 Council Member Richards.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Just wanted to  
17 know in terms of the... [crosstalk]

18 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Oh, I'm sorry.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Sandy stuff, I  
20 wanted to know what sorta opportunities were you guys  
21 providing in the Rockaway, in particular a place that  
22 was hit very hard and I'm not...

23 COREY CHAMBLISS: Uhm-hm.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: totally  
25 familiar with... maybe you do have programs; I do wanna

1  
2 commend the Administration for working with me to put  
3 a workforce en route there, which we will open in a  
4 few days...

5 DAVID BERMAN: Great.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: but wanted to  
7 know what opportunities are you providing now  
8 construction-wise with the rebuilding of the  
9 boardwalks and you know and everything going on out  
10 there.

11 DAVID BERMAN: I can give two examples;  
12 one is an initiative that we created following Sandy  
13 that we called NYC Recovers and essentially that's a  
14 subsidized jobs initiative that will support the  
15 wages for folks to do recovery work that you  
16 mentioned. So a non-profit could apply to either  
17 help residents from Sandy affected communities or  
18 help residents from anywhere do community building  
19 work in Sandy affected communities. And so that's an  
20 initiative that's actually still open that community  
21 groups can continue to apply for and there's folks  
22 all over New York City right now working in Sandy  
23 affected communities through that subsidized job  
24 initiative.



2 A second initiative that we created we  
3 call Construction Works and that program is designed  
4 to provide job training and job placement. And so  
5 there are four non-profit organizations that we've  
6 supported in that initiative. Multiple of them are  
7 working in the Far Rockaways; one for example that we  
8 support is the organization, Strive; they've  
9 partnered with Ocean Bay Community Development... I'm  
10 not sure of their full name... Community Development  
11 Corporation, Ocean Bay Development, and they're doing  
12 construction training on-site at Ocean Bay's offices  
13 and they're working with Far Rockaway residents, and  
14 so they're giving them extensive training in skills  
15 that can help them enter the construction industry  
16 and get jobs specifically related to the rebuilding  
17 efforts in that area.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: You positive  
19 that's happening?

20 DAVID BERMAN: I'm positive, yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Council Member Reyna.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you so much,  
23 Mr. Chair. I just wanted to get clarity on the  
24 Council Member's last question. As far as monitoring  
25 these jobs; are they through a apprentice slots; is

1  
2 it entering the construction industry where their  
3 wages are connected to what would be prevailing wage  
4 with health benefits through unions or is this just  
5 temporary work where at the conclusion of the actual  
6 construction they're not going to be carrying what  
7 would be a union card and therefore they will be on  
8 their own searching for what would be employment?

9           DAVID BERMAN: It varies is the answer.  
10 So... well first, the initiative that I mentioned has  
11 just completed the training stage, so the folks are  
12 just now starting to get jobs; I'm not sure the  
13 latest in terms of the number of placements to  
14 really... the initiative is only a few months old...

15           COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Right.

16           DAVID BERMAN: so it took a little bit of  
17 time to get up and running, get the training  
18 curriculum established and get people through the  
19 training. So we have a good graduation rate so far  
20 of the training and right now they're in the  
21 placement stage.

22           Across the programs that we work with,  
23 one of the four grantees is Nontraditional Employment  
24 for Women; their focus is moving folks into union-  
25 related jobs. In other cases we're really looking to

1 work with local contractors that may be subcontracted  
2 to unions or may or may not be part of unions; we're  
3 really looking to learn through this initiative about  
4 what are the job opportunities in these communities,  
5 so part of the effort for us is intelligence  
6 gathering; what can we really learn about where are  
7 the job opportunities for local residents and the  
8 opportunities for good-paying jobs... [interpose]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Right.

10 DAVID BERMAN: it is not designed to be  
11 transitional short-term, temporary... [interpose]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Right.

13 DAVID BERMAN: jobs; it's designed to be  
14 long-term jobs related to the rebuilding. The...  
15 [interpose]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And when you say  
17 long-term; is it because you're measuring 3-month, 6-  
18 month, 9-month; 12-month retention and beyond or...  
19 define long-term, just so that I get clarity on how  
20 we're monitoring.

21 DAVID BERMAN: The initiative... the  
22 grantees will report to us on retention; at this  
23 point we have only one year of funding; we're doing  
24 our part to try to secure additional funding to keep  
25

1  
2 it going longer. CEO is committed to evaluation;  
3 that's a hallmark of our work and so down the road I  
4 think we would hope to get wage data from the State  
5 or, you know other types of evaluations to be able to  
6 see what does happen to those participants; I think  
7 it is something we're hoping to learn for, but we  
8 expect the rebuilding to take several years and so  
9 it's an open question, I think; something that we're  
10 hoping to learn from, but we do think that these are  
11 good quality job with good pay.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: They certainly can  
13 be... [interpose]

14 DAVID BERMAN: We hope they will be,  
15 yeah.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: but what I find  
17 when we start referring to the construction industry  
18 is that conversations have been a lot of silos and  
19 there could be 20 different ones and the issue of  
20 coordinating with what would be the trades as well as  
21 the State Labor Department, who monitors, who gets  
22 into what would be these types of jobs, in addition  
23 to the construction managers, the CMs and the GMs and  
24 just making sure that everyone's in one single room.  
25 We started off in this Administration with the hopes



1 issues I have as Chair of the Small Business  
2 Committee is the fact that the agencies have not  
3 committed to studying unemployment rates to geotarget  
4 what would be... whether that's workforce development  
5 and having it at 9 Bond Street is very different than  
6 having it at Bushwick DeKalb Library, where in that  
7 zip code there's a high unemployment rate of 22  
8 percent.  
9

10 And so, you know, that's what is  
11 remarkable about the Job-Plus Centers; you took it to  
12 where the poverty is; you took it to where the  
13 unemployment is and therefore it makes it easier,  
14 more efficient; the monitoring becomes much more  
15 dynamic and visible and accountable where the results  
16 can be tracked. So that I need to understand, you  
17 know, what is the partnership with let's say the  
18 Small Business Services in the midst of your  
19 interagency operation, because you know I value the  
20 innovative way in which CEO has really transformed  
21 existing dollars and leveraging existing dollars.

22 [background sneeze]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: God bless you... and  
24 we want to make sure that we continue to challenge  
25 ourselves, right, as government, to be able to do a

1  
2 better job, but it falls short if we're not doing it  
3 in the manner in which you've just addressed here in  
4 your testimony; strategic, where there is  
5 concentrated poverty and unemployment.

6 DAVID BERMAN: We've partnered with the  
7 New York City Small Business Services on multiple  
8 initiatives; we have one initiative called Sector  
9 Centers, the Workforce1 Career Centers created  
10 specialized centers that really develop deep  
11 expertise in a particular targeted sector or  
12 industry, so you may be familiar with the Industrial  
13 Transportation Center that's located in Jamaica,  
14 Queens and it was located there really out of the  
15 connection in that area to the airports and other  
16 employers that were there.

17 But the idea is that these programs are  
18 really a bridge between job seekers and low-wage  
19 workers and the employer side and so they're really  
20 serving as the intermediary between those entities,  
21 really trying to meet the needs of employers while  
22 upscaling local New Yorkers so that they can access  
23 some of these good jobs.

24 Another initiative we work on with Small  
25 Business Services is called Customized Training Funds

1  
2 and that's an initiative that gives grants to small  
3 businesses across the City; it works city-wide, and  
4 helps them to get funding to train their existing  
5 workforce, their existing low-wage workers and in  
6 exchange for the funds they agree to give those  
7 participants a wage increase. So it's sort of a win-  
8 win for the business that they can keep up with their  
9 competitiveness and upscale their workers to maybe  
10 adapt to a new technology that the workers need for  
11 the business to stay competitive, but also helps the  
12 workers get a wage increase, and we'll be releasing  
13 an evaluation of that initiative in the next couple  
14 months.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Well I appreciate  
16 that and I know that we're pressed for time; there's  
17 panels that are before us that are in the public  
18 eager to testify, but I wanna just share with you  
19 that, you know we have industrial business zones...

20 DAVID BERMAN: Uhm-hm.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: that are under the  
22 portfolio of Small Business Services and it would be  
23 one of those areas that we should be capitalizing in  
24 the City of New York where CEO can perhaps unlayer  
25 the 70 layers of bureaucracy to be able to directly



1 connect with these zones to be able to say, you know  
2 this is a jewel in the City of New York; how can we  
3 get... this is the middle class wage income bracket,  
4 right; this is career ladder opportunity; this is  
5 where we should be engaging what would be the  
6 connection between high unemployment areas to the  
7 jobs. And they have very specific contracts with  
8 providers that are on the ground, foot soldiers, and  
9 these jobs are current, up to date and very quickly  
10 turned around, as long as the right-trained  
11 individuals are, but I don't see that type of  
12 connection and it would be great to have CEO question  
13 Small Business Services on the industrial business  
14 zones and how can we better capitalize on that  
15 particular industry?

17 So I mentioned that because I take great  
18 reference to your statement and I want to be able to  
19 see that the support of this particular legislation  
20 keeps in mind that it allows for us to use it as a  
21 tool so that we are strategic. And the Chairman has  
22 already given you the advantage of making sure that  
23 all the work has been laid down as far as the  
24 legislation is concerned; it's a matter of  
25 implementing it and supporting it. So you know I

1  
2 thank the Chair for being creative this way and hope  
3 to see that there's support and that we engage in  
4 what is left of our tenure so that we leave a good  
5 foundation for the next Council. Thank you.

6 DAVID BERMAN: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Excellent summary.

8 Did I fail to mention that we are joined by  
9 Councilman Oliver Koppell? And as we close... and  
10 thank you for your testimony... to give perspective to  
11 all that you have said and done and why we're here,  
12 if we had visitors from outer space 12 years ago and  
13 these super intelligent beings measured and evaluated  
14 poverty in New York City, quality, quantity, all that  
15 great stuff and they went back to their planet and  
16 they return 12 years later and they'd measure the  
17 quality and quantity of poverty in New York City,  
18 they would think that we've done nothing; they would  
19 not be aware of CEO and all the policy and the  
20 initiatives and so on, so on and so forth and that's  
21 the perspective I bring; what have we done to reduce  
22 the rate of poverty in New York City; not  
23 withstanding what we've tried to do and so forth?  
24 And I think that is the significance of this hearing  
25 and the significance of this legislation; we wanna

1  
2 see something make an appreciative and a valuable  
3 difference and thank you for all that you've tried to  
4 do and thank you for being here this morning; we'll  
5 continue to work with you. Alright.

6 DAVID BERMAN: Thank you... [crosstalk]

7 COREY CHAMBLISS: Thank you.

8 DAVID BERMAN: we look forward to  
9 continuing to work with you also.

10 CHAIRPERSON VANN: You're welcome. We'd  
11 like to call up two of our experts that have worked  
12 very closely with staff in dealing with the criteria  
13 and so forth and they've very, very helpful; I'd like  
14 to call them now to give testimony, Jochen Albright...  
15 Albrecht, from The Neighborhood Stress Project at  
16 Hunter College and Mimi Abramovitz, from the Hunter  
17 School of Social Work; also with that same project.  
18 You may begin; we have a lot of testimony to be  
19 heard, so.

20 MIMI ABRAMOVITZ: Good morning; thank you  
21 for the opportunity to speak to you this morning on  
22 this important legislation. My name is Mimi  
23 Abramovitz; I'm a Professor of Social Policy at the  
24 Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College and  
25

1  
2 at the CUNY Graduate Center, where I teach social  
3 welfare policy to master's and PhD students.

4 My research interests focus on social  
5 welfare policy, poverty and place, the impact of  
6 resource loss on the well-being of local residents  
7 and community; I am also researching how the current  
8 policy environment, especially privatization is  
9 changing how human service agencies and workers  
10 deliver services to people in communities in need. I  
11 filter these questions through the lenses of race,  
12 class, gender and sexual orientation.

13 My colleague, Jochen Albrecht is a  
14 Professor of Computational Geography; as his title  
15 suggests, he is a specialist in spatial handling and  
16 analysis and will be available to answer questions on  
17 that part of our work.

18 We have come today to testify in favor of  
19 the proposed Community Development Zone legislation  
20 designed to address concentrated poverty in New York  
21 City neighborhoods. Dr. Albrecht and I co-direct the  
22 Neighborhood Stress Project at Hunter College in this  
23 capacity; we have worked with Councilman Vann's  
24 office, as mentioned, to conceptualize the issues and  
25 analyze some of the neighborhood base data.

1  
2 We believe that the plan to foster  
3 collaboration among City agencies working within the  
4 poorest New York City Neighborhoods represents an  
5 important and comprehensive response to entrenched  
6 problem of poverty. As such it supports this  
7 Committee's anti-poverty mission, which is more  
8 important than ever, given Federal budget cuts and  
9 the latest census data showing that the share of poor  
10 people living in New York City has in fact continued  
11 to inch up and the gap between the rich and poor  
12 remains stubbornly large.

13 Despite the end of the recession 1.7  
14 million New Yorkers live below the official Federal  
15 poverty line; the City's poverty rate rose from 20.1  
16 percent in 2010 to 21.2 percent in 2012, well above  
17 the national average of 15 percent. The poverty rate  
18 was especially high among black and Hispanic  
19 households, young children and families headed by  
20 single mothers.

21 The legislation that you are considering  
22 properly and necessarily focuses on the City's high  
23 poverty and high-need areas where health and social  
24 problems are clustered. It also recognizes that  
25 poverty is concentrated in some New York City

1  
2 neighborhoods while others are spared the resulting  
3 hardship and indignities.

4           The legislation also recognizes and our  
5 research supports that when addressing these problems  
6 it is not enough to point to high poverty rates or to  
7 blame the victim; rather, it's necessary to find out  
8 what accounts for the troublesome concentration of  
9 poverty in poor neighborhoods. That is, what is the  
10 pathway between exposure to the adverse conditions  
11 and the presence of health and social problems in  
12 poor neighborhoods?

13           Our research on poverty and place traces  
14 this pathway by asking what happens to people living  
15 in poor neighborhoods that lead some residents to  
16 engage in behaviors that harm themselves or others,  
17 otherwise known as health and social problems.

18           Data collected during the last five years  
19 by Dr. Albrecht and myself, as Co-Directors of the  
20 Hunter College Neighborhood Stress Project, suggests  
21 that stress acts as a pathway between the exposure to  
22 multiple adverse local conditions, such as poor  
23 schools, substandard housing, unsafe streets, high  
24 unemployment, high foreclosure rates, police  
25 harassment, lack of access to doctors, healthy foods

1  
2 and I could go on. Those conditions and the... so  
3 stress is the pathway between exposure to those  
4 conditions and the presence of health and social  
5 problems in these neighborhoods.

6           When these troublesome conditions over  
7 which most individuals have little or no control are  
8 persistent, chronic and simultaneous, the experience  
9 of what can best be called, accumulated disadvantage,  
10 can generate severe or toxic stress. Toxic stress in  
11 turn acts on the mind and body in ways that often  
12 leads people to behave in ways that bring harm to  
13 themselves or others, such as lashing out, engaging  
14 in interpersonal or community violence, becoming  
15 depressed, dropping out of school, taking drugs,  
16 among many other social problems that disrupt family  
17 and community relationships.

18           When many people in the same neighborhood  
19 persistently experience these adverse conditions at  
20 the same time, which is what happens in high-need  
21 neighborhoods, the social problems stemming from the  
22 aggravated toxic stress can move beyond the  
23 individual to threaten the stability of the wider  
24 community, contributing to social isolation, distrust

1  
2 of local institutions and limited civic  
3 participation, among many other problems.

4           Now many of us are pretty good at dealing  
5 with a small number of daily events that cause us  
6 stress; missing the bus, undiagnosed pain, lack of  
7 money; however, when these everyday obstacles pile  
8 up, when more serious stresses place the well-being  
9 of individuals and communities at risk it's a  
10 different story.

11           For example, how long does anyone in this  
12 room believe that you could cope with the following  
13 that occurred in the same week; you are unemployed,  
14 you spent many hours waiting in line for one or  
15 another city service; you are called to school  
16 because your kid was caught smoking; meanwhile, your  
17 son keeps ducking the police, hangs out in areas that  
18 you consider safe, but you know introduce him to  
19 peers you'd rather he not spend time with. You are  
20 lucky enough to have a spouse, but right now she's in  
21 the hospital because her diabetes caused  
22 complications with her pregnancy, but you don't have  
23 the means to take care of her at home and you don't  
24 find help from your neighbors 'cause they have  
25 similar problems. So your social worker try to



1  
2 persuade you to form a neighborhood watch group to  
3 help protect the children; you think, hey great,  
4 that's a great idea, but the idea makes you laugh  
5 because you know few people would have the time; more  
6 important, the trust to engage in such civic  
7 participation.

8           Is it surprising then that you try to  
9 relieve your chronic stress in seemingly innocent  
10 activities, such as sugars, fats, cigarettes or  
11 perhaps less innocent; drugs, alcohol; domestic  
12 violence?

13           People in communities with such stress  
14 and these problems show up at the door of health and  
15 social service agencies every day; they are the very  
16 ones that require the coordinated service response  
17 proposed by the legislation you are considering.

18           We all know about problem-rooted  
19 neighborhoods and are familiar with most if not all  
20 the specific problems, but our solutions in general,  
21 the City; the nation's, the solutions in general tend  
22 to focus on individuals rather than on the underlying  
23 conditions which we are pointing to. Of course it is  
24 critical to help people in trouble, but for some  
25 reason we have not yet managed to take adequate and

1  
2 concerted action against the systemic character of  
3 the conditions that produce chronic stress and the  
4 associated health and social problems.

5           If the behaviors that we are trying to  
6 prevent are the result of adverse neighborhood  
7 conditions over which residents have literally no  
8 control, isn't it our responsibility to try and  
9 change the conditions that cause the stress in the  
10 first place?

11           If we ask what happened to people in the  
12 neighborhood that led to problematic behavior rather  
13 than what did they do wrong, we will focus on the  
14 conditions that need to be changed rather than  
15 blaming the victim.

16           The Community Development Zone  
17 legislation before you has the potential to get at  
18 the root of the problem by identifying and responding  
19 to neighborhoods where such adverse conditions  
20 abound; it puts the finger on conditions rather than  
21 behavior of the people suffering the consequences.  
22 Best of all, it promotes collaboration among City  
23 agencies, asking them to work together to tackle the  
24 systemic causes of aggregated stress and associated  
25 problematic behaviors.

2 The Community Development Zone Governance  
3 Board has the potential to both coordinate the  
4 provision of a wide range of health and social  
5 services and to help repair the social fabric that  
6 has been torn apart under the weight of conditions  
7 that harm all affected communities.

8 There is no doubt that coordinated  
9 efforts focused on community and place can result in  
10 healthier and better functioning neighborhoods with  
11 lower stress levels, greater community trust and  
12 increased civic engagement. If we hone our efforts  
13 on problem-solving neighborhood by neighborhood, we  
14 have a much better chance to nurture local natural  
15 problem-solving capacities that exist in every  
16 community.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to present  
18 our research and to provide some context for the  
19 local law.

20 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Alright, thank you.  
21 Wanna continue or you'll respond to questions; do you  
22 have a comment?

23 JOCHEN ALBRECHT: I... [interpose]

24 CHAIRPERSON VANN: You'll respond to  
25 questions?

1                   JOCHEN ALBRECHT: I will respond to  
2  
3 questions, yes, sir.

4                   CHAIRPERSON VANN: Okay. Your testimony  
5 was perfectly clear and very necessary and I think  
6 built a strong argument for support of the  
7 legislation that we're introducing. I wanna thank  
8 you for all the help and support you gave our staff  
9 and for your testimony today. Does anyone here need  
10 clarification or anything? No, we... we just wanna  
11 thank you; it was excellent and we appreciate the  
12 time that you have put into it with your knowledge  
13 and expertise. Thank you very much.

14                   JOCHEN ALBRECHT: Appreciate it.

15                   CHAIRPERSON VANN: We've been joined by  
16 Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito to my right.

17                   We'd like to call the next panel, which  
18 is basically coming from community expertise, Lori  
19 McNeil from Urban Justice Center, please join us,  
20 Joel Berg; will you join us on this panel, from New  
21 York City Coalition Against Hunger, Noah Franklin,  
22 Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, join us,  
23 Tracey Capers, Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration. First  
24 one to sit down gets to speak first.

25                   [laughter]

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Need uh... is there  
3 another person and another chair. Okay. Now, your  
4 name is? Okay, you're not testifying, but they...  
5 Okay, you're representing someone who may show up; if  
6 not, you'll testify; meaning that you need a chair.  
7 Alright. Okay. Okay. Whoever... you may determine  
8 who goes first; democratic process.

9 NOAH FRANKLIN: I guess I'll... Good  
10 morning, Chairman Al Vann and distinguished members  
11 of the New York City Council, Committee on Community  
12 Development. My name is Noah Franklin and I serve as  
13 the Senior Policy Analyst for Child Welfare and  
14 Workforce Development at the Federation of Protestant  
15 Welfare Agencies.

16 On behalf of Jennifer Jones Austin, Chief  
17 Executive Officer of the Federation of Protestant  
18 Welfare Agencies, I want to thank you for the  
19 opportunity to testify on Intro 1148. FPWA also  
20 recognizes Chairman Vann's long-standing leadership  
21 in the City in addressing a variety of issues related  
22 to community development and poverty. FPWA is  
23 pleased to testify today in support of Intro 1148,  
24 for community development interventions to  
25 effectively reduce poverty.

1  
2 FPWA advocates on behalf of vulnerable  
3 New Yorkers to ensure they have the economic means to  
4 support themselves and their families. Our network  
5 of human service organizations and churches operate  
6 over 1,200 programs throughout New York City metro  
7 area; together we serve over 1.5 million low-income  
8 New Yorkers of all ages, ethnicities; denominations  
9 each year. As such, FPWA has been increasingly  
10 concerned with the growing high concentration of  
11 poverty in certain neighborhoods across New York  
12 City.

13 In considering the current challenges  
14 facing efforts to reduce poverty in the City, FPWA  
15 believes that important strategies to breaking the  
16 cycle of poverty are to develop comprehensive  
17 programs and to collaborate among different  
18 government agencies and non-profit organizations to  
19 provide complimentary services; that by their  
20 combination of efforts the output is greater than can  
21 be done by either alone. In this way anti-poverty  
22 programs help people achieve self-sufficiency by  
23 providing both deep and wide support and services.

24 Intro 1148 aims to designate high-need  
25 areas within New York City as Community Development

1  
2 Zones and provide socioeconomic services to such  
3 communities. This comprehensive legislation to  
4 designate Community Development Zones effectively  
5 captures the collective power of coordination of  
6 services and importantly emphasizes a place-based  
7 space approach to poverty reduction. For that reason  
8 we strongly support the proposed legislation.

9 For this testimony we will now examine  
10 the City's rising poverty rate, look at findings from  
11 an academic paper on the City's lack of coordination  
12 of services to effectively target inequalities,  
13 address in more detail the target population and the  
14 theoretical construct of the proposed bill and review  
15 three past and current models of coordination of  
16 services that have also proven to be effective in the  
17 City and elsewhere.

18 Recent statistics on the rising poverty  
19 rate in the City show holes in the safety net for New  
20 Yorkers and illustrate the need for programs like  
21 those encompassed in Intro 1148 to significantly  
22 improve the well-being of the poor.

23 The latest U.S. Census data paints a  
24 troubling picture of the struggles of many New  
25 Yorkers living in poverty. It shows that the number

1 of City residents living in poverty level is on the  
2 rise. According to the data the City poverty rate  
3 rose from 21.2 percent in 2000... sorry, rose from 20.9  
4 percent in 2011 to 21.2 percent in 2012.

5 Significantly, over 1.7 million New Yorkers in 2012  
6 made below the Federal poverty line, that's \$23,314  
7 for a family of four.  
8

9 The City's already alarming rate of  
10 income disparity as well as the budget cuts over the  
11 past several years in social services clearly signal  
12 a need to reassess the efforts taken against poverty.

13 In a recently released paper entitled,  
14 "Creating Collective Capacity: New York City's Social  
15 Infrastructure and Neighborhood-Centered Services,"  
16 Andrew White, from the Milano School of International  
17 Affairs, Management and Urban Policy outlined the  
18 efficiency of coordinated services in addressing  
19 inequality, which serves to reinforce the relevance  
20 of Intro 1148.

21 Importantly, White explains there is no  
22 doubt that New York City has one of the largest, if  
23 not strongest efforts in the nation to combat  
24 socioeconomic inequalities, from government to non-  
25 profits, to private industry, a vast network of



1 social programs are put in place to tackle different  
2 issues, such as unemployment, child care, education,  
3 workforce development and so on. However, he finds  
4 these current types of services largely lack clear  
5 coordinated strategy, which is inefficient for  
6 shoring up the collective capacity for low-income  
7 neighborhoods. And as effective as the current  
8 effort is, he knows that the fact is that there's  
9 just a light level poverty in the City shows that  
10 more can be done.

12 This concern about the lack of  
13 coordination of services can create problems for a  
14 number of reasons, one of which being areas of  
15 administrative overlap. White cites the example of  
16 homeless prevention services colliding with public  
17 housing authorities seeking to collect rent; he  
18 states the most pertinent flaw in the lack of  
19 coordination however is a tendency of services  
20 attempting to solve issues after the fact, issues  
21 such as domestic violence, child neglect; poor school  
22 performance are dealt with by single bureaucracies as  
23 they happen with no coordination with other agencies  
24 or targeting the roots of their causes, such as  
25 unemployment and lack of child care services.

1  
2 Now that we've examined the levels of  
3 poverty in New York City and necessity for more  
4 effective coordination of services to address  
5 inequalities we can better understand the need for  
6 Intro 1148 and why FPWA supports this legislation.

7 The intent of Intro 1148 is first and  
8 foremost to sufficiently target community districts  
9 where there exists a high level of poverty.

10 According to the bill, this is defined using three  
11 criteria, high level poverty, low education  
12 attainment and poor health outcomes. The trouble  
13 neighborhoods that meet this criteria are designated  
14 as Community Development Zones in which a place-based  
15 space approach of poverty is implement; more  
16 specifically, a strategic and comprehensive  
17 geographic approach to plan for social and economic  
18 development; the key driver of this approach is a  
19 robust coordination of community services through  
20 Community Development Zone Governance Board comprised  
21 of various City heads of social service agencies,  
22 Mayoral appointees, non-voting members and other  
23 representatives that voice the needs of the  
24 communities.

1  
2 In considering the main aspects of this  
3 legislation, FPWA would suggest a few additional  
4 amendments to striking the legislation.

5 First, in using census data, FPWA  
6 believes that it is critical to make sure that  
7 poverty is defined per capita, not by household in  
8 the legislation. As a recent example of the Early  
9 Learning MIC Program demonstrated, child care  
10 providers questioned the method used to determine  
11 high-need neighborhoods and as a result they felt  
12 that concentrated pockets of poverty were not served  
13 because they are located in community districts that  
14 had rising income levels.

15 Second, FPWA suggests this legislation be  
16 amended to ensure that Community Development Zone  
17 Governance Boards are representative of the various  
18 racial, ethnic and immigrant diversities of New York  
19 City.

20 Having reviewed the proposed legislation  
21 one can estimate the efficacy of Intro 1148 through  
22 an examination of other similar models of community  
23 development.

24 An example of such a model is the  
25 Bedford-Stuyvesant pilot of the Comprehensive

2 Neighborhood Economic Development Program, CNED, on  
3 which Intro 1148 is partially based.

4 Launched in Bedford-Stuyvesant in 2008,  
5 the CNED model was based in part on the comprehensive  
6 initiative of the 1990s and designed to promote  
7 economic development in low-income neighborhoods  
8 through comprehensive neighborhood-based planning and  
9 service delivery.

10 Through a coordinated partnership of City  
11 agencies, community partners; philanthropic  
12 organizations, CNED sought to enable low-wage and  
13 unemployed residents to gain financial independence  
14 and access to economic opportunity while enhancing  
15 the capacity of local businesses, non-profit City  
16 agencies to serve resident needs.

17 This multi-agency government approach to  
18 local neighborhood development serves as a useful  
19 model that can be replicated at the City level.

20 Similar to the CNED program, the key principals of  
21 coordinated services in the proposed legislation have  
22 been successfully employed in the Harlem Children's  
23 Zone. The success of the Harlem Children's Zone is  
24 based on extensive network of in-school and after  
25 school programs, social services, health and

1  
2 community building programs that have sought the  
3 objective of providing a better environment for  
4 children to achieve success from disadvantaged  
5 neighborhoods.

6 In 2010 the U.S. Department of Education  
7 announced Promise Neighborhood programs with \$10  
8 million in Federal grants which hopes to replicate  
9 the success of the Harlem Children's Zones in poverty  
10 stricken areas in other U.S. cities. Sure.

11 In conclusion, FPWA is committed to  
12 working with the City Council and facing the  
13 challenges ahead to address poverty in a  
14 comprehensive and accumulative way. In this  
15 testimony we have presented our argument endorsing  
16 Intro 1148 because FPWA believes that to break the  
17 cycle of poverty services for disadvantaged  
18 communities need to be comprehensive and  
19 collaborative. Let's work together to strengthen the  
20 social and institutional infrastructure for  
21 neighborhoods with concentrate poverty. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Thank you. Please.

23 LORI MCNEIL: Good morning, my name is  
24 Lori McNeil; I'm the Director of Research and Policy  
25 at Urban Justice Center Safety Net Project and I

1 appreciate the opportunity to testify on Intro 1148;  
2 I will be brief.

3  
4 Let me start by saying that we fully  
5 support the bill; we see the desperate need for both  
6 a systems-based and a geographic initiative to  
7 eradicate poverty in New York City.

8 So just two issues that I would like put  
9 on the table that I would ask the Committee to  
10 consider; one is the lack of full engagement of  
11 stakeholders beyond the agencies and I know that the  
12 way that the governance structure is established;  
13 there is communication from stakeholders, however  
14 they don't have voting power and so we know that when  
15 we look at successful community impact initiatives  
16 that one of the key elements for successful  
17 initiatives is to have strong stakeholder; not just  
18 communication, but full engagement, so I would ask  
19 that the Committee consider if that might be a  
20 possibility. Again, we love the bill; we think it's  
21 right on target.

22 The other issue that we had some concerns  
23 on; we wondered if there were protections against  
24 funding being funneled away from other areas of New  
25 York City where eligible and needy residents live

1  
2 that aren't necessarily designated as Community  
3 Development Zones, if there would be protections that  
4 monies wouldn't be funneled from those communities  
5 that also are in desperate need of those services to  
6 fund 1148.

7 And so those are just two considerations  
8 that we would like to kind of put out there and you  
9 probably have already talked and thought about these  
10 long and hard, because obviously this is a very well-  
11 structured bill and that's really all I have today;  
12 my full testimony I've submitted.

13 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Will be part of the  
14 record. Thank you; very helpful. Yes.

15 TRACEY CAPERS: Good morning... Good  
16 morning Council Member Vann; thank you for your long  
17 and distinguished leadership on behalf of the City  
18 and especially for Bedford-Stuyvesant and also good  
19 morning to the other members of the Committee.

20 I am representing Bedford-Stuyvesant  
21 Restoration Corporation; I'm Executive Vice President  
22 for Programs; I'm bringing testimony on behalf of  
23 myself and the President of Restoration, Colvin  
24 Grannum, who would've really liked to be here.

1 Restoration, for those of you who don't  
2 know, is the nation's first community development  
3 corporation; we partner with residents and business  
4 to improve the quality of life of Central Brooklyn by  
5 fostering economic self-sufficiency, enhancing family  
6 stability and growth, promoting arts and culture and  
7 forming the neighborhood into a safe vibrant place to  
8 live, work and visit. During the past fiscal year we  
9 served 6,600 individuals through evidence-based  
10 programs, you know, many CEO programs, such as Jobs-  
11 Plus, Financial Empowerment Center and Single Stop  
12 USA, funded by Robin Hood Foundation.

14 Of those individuals, 1,500 new clients  
15 came to Restoration for asset-building services;  
16 i.e., financial literacy, Financial Empowerment  
17 Center and tax preparation services. Of those,  
18 clients saved an average of \$2,500; we helped them  
19 reduce debt by \$966,000 and helped deliver more than  
20 \$3 million in tax refunds. And through our Single  
21 Stop program we've helped to deliver \$2.86 million in  
22 benefits, such as health insurance and food stamps.

23 We are also on track to place 300 adults  
24 in permanent jobs through expanded capacity this  
25 year. And finally, and notably, you know this year



1  
2 we've been part of the Summer Youth Employment  
3 Program and we've placed some 550 youth in jobs.

4           So we would like to express our strong  
5 support for the concept of creating Community  
6 Development Zones and providing socioeconomic  
7 services to such communities. This legislation is  
8 consistent with Federal policy, which establishes  
9 Promise Zones to promote cross-agency collaboration  
10 at the Federal level for the purpose of targeting  
11 resources, to saturate low-income communities with  
12 programs intended to create jobs, leverage  
13 investment, increase economic activity, expand  
14 educational opportunities and improve public safety.

15           We wanna comment you for this proposed  
16 legislation's alignment with Federal policy; this is  
17 important and necessary, is a necessary step to  
18 galvanize and organize the City to position us for  
19 greater and maximum federal and philanthropic  
20 resources.

21           I also wanna say that this proposed  
22 legislation is also consistent with policies and  
23 programs being pursued by academia, philanthropy and  
24 other municipalities through program models referred  
25 to as Collective Impact.



1 created, and other initiatives, Restoration has been  
2 working for several years to build collective impact  
3 models, focus on cradle to career, educational  
4 attainment and family financial stability and  
5 independence. In adopting collective impact model,  
6 Restoration recognizes that committee level impact is  
7 what is needed to drive change in communities and  
8 that Restoration cannot create change acting alone,  
9 nor can such change be created absent concrete  
10 community level goals pursued through highly  
11 rigorous, data-driven cross-agency and cross-sector  
12 coordinated strategies and management.

14 That being said, we have several  
15 recommendations for this draft legislation. First we  
16 have recommendation regarding the definition of  
17 poverty and Community Development Zone. With respect  
18 to the Community Development Zone, we believe that  
19 community district level in many cases may be too  
20 large and may not be the best measure for high-need  
21 communities. As an alternative measure we recommend  
22 consideration targeting census tracts. As high-  
23 income-wage households settle in traditionally low-  
24 income communities, the poor are becoming

1  
2 increasingly isolated and Balkanized to blocks and  
3 pockets of neighborhoods.

4           For example, in Community District 3 in  
5 Fort Greene the poverty rate is below 25 percent,  
6 while we know there are dense pockets of poverty in  
7 the community, particularly those living in public  
8 housing. As a result of this trend, Restoration has  
9 been increasingly focusing our community development  
10 intervention on the census tract. Currently we are  
11 partnering with organizations Bridge Street  
12 Development Corporation and Pratt Area Community  
13 Council to target four census tracts in Northern Bed-  
14 Stuy; we're planning to deliver comprehensive and  
15 seamless integrative services based on a geographic  
16 saturation model to residents of Northern Bed-Stuy  
17 with the ultimate goal of catalyzing financial  
18 independent and household stability for under-served  
19 residents. Strategies will include workforce  
20 development, financial literacy, housing development,  
21 social services, health services and case management.

22           Second, in Section 21.1003 Community  
23 Development Zone Advisory Board, we have several  
24 recommendations. Not only will we recommend that the  
25 Community Development Advisory Board establish

1  
2 priorities for community development needs, the Board  
3 should be charged with establishing numerical goals  
4 to reduce poverty in the Community Development Zone  
5 over a specific period of time. Clear metrics and  
6 benchmarks should be considered. Further, a system  
7 and process for reporting to the community should be  
8 outlined.

9           With respect to the composition of the  
10 governance board, we would recommend changing the  
11 language in Section 21.1003, number 3 from... I think  
12 it says to read, coordinate and integrate City  
13 programs and services instead of consider the  
14 coordination of.

15           Third and finally, with respect to  
16 Community Development Governance membership, we would  
17 recommend that representative of the poor be further  
18 clarified. For example, we recommend consideration  
19 of low-income individuals representing the Community  
20 Development Zone. Moreover, an implicit mechanism  
21 and vehicle should be adopted to receive the views  
22 and recommendations of the residents of the low-  
23 income community that the legislation targets.

24           But all in all we commend you and we  
25 appreciate the legislation and we look forward to

1  
2 working with you on its development. So thank you  
3 for the opportunity.

4 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Thank you. Thank you  
5 for the recommendations. Are you prepared to  
6 summarize Joel Ber... is it Joel Berg you're  
7 representing? Yeah. You wanna move up to the table  
8 and... and get the mic and identify yourself and begin  
9 your summary.

10 LISA LEVY: Good morning; I'm Lisa...

11 [interpose]

12 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Good morning and I... I...

13 LISA LEVY: I'm Lisa Levy; I'm the  
14 Director of Policy, Advocacy and Organizing from the  
15 New York City Coalition Against Hunger; my testimony  
16 is on behalf of more than 1,100 soup kitchens and  
17 food pantries in New York City and the more than 1.4  
18 million New York City residents who even before Sandy  
19 hit lived in homes that couldn't afford sufficient  
20 food. I'm also here on behalf of Joel Berg, the  
21 Executive Director who is testifying at the FoodWorks  
22 hearing.

23 I thank Chairman Vann for not only  
24 holding this hearing and introducing this bill, but

1  
2 also for his lifetime of public service to reduce  
3 poverty in inequality and boost opportunity.

4 We support this bill 1148 and suggest a  
5 few improvements, which we listed in our written  
6 testimony and we also hope that the next Mayor and  
7 City Council will work together to take broad steps  
8 to address poverty, hunger and inequality.

9 While the poverty rate in the U.S. stayed  
10 essentially flat at a very high plateau in the U.S.  
11 over 2011 and 12, poverty increased by 5 percent in  
12 New York City, according to recently released data  
13 from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community  
14 Survey.

15 One in 5 New Yorkers now lives below the  
16 Federal poverty line. \$1,990 for a family of 3  
17 equaling 1.7 million impoverished residents, a number  
18 greater than the entire populace of the City of  
19 Philadelphia. Yet according to Forbes, over the last  
20 two years the collective net worth of the City's 53  
21 wealthiest billionaires rose from \$210 billion to  
22 \$277 billion dollars, a 31 percent jump.

23 In contrast, the Municipal Budget for the  
24 entire City of New York, which pays for parks, roads,  
25 schools, firefighters, police, etc. is now \$70

1 billion, meaning that the 53 wealthiest New Yorkers  
2 now have four times the money of the entire City  
3 budget.  
4

5 Median households' annual income in the  
6 City is now \$53,895 and a person working full-time at  
7 the current minimum wage in New York of \$7.25 per  
8 hour would earn \$15,080; that means that the 53  
9 wealthiest New York City billionaires now have as  
10 much money as five million average families and 17  
11 million minimum wage workers.

12 If a full-time worker supported one or  
13 more children on a salary at the current minimum wage  
14 in New York, the family would live below the poverty  
15 line. The State's minimum wage rate is scheduled to  
16 rise to \$9 per hour by 2016, but if a single parent  
17 with two children earned that much the family would  
18 still be below the poverty line.

19 Given that poverty, unemployment and  
20 under-employment are the main causes of domestic food  
21 insecurity and hunger, it is no surprise that hunger  
22 and food insecurity soared city-wide even before  
23 Superstorm Sandy and have likely surged since then,  
24 according to data collected and compiled by the New  
25 York City Coalition Against Hunger. These problems



1  
2 will worsen significantly if massive federal  
3 nutrition assistance cuts already scheduled for  
4 November 1st, as well as other massive cuts proposed  
5 in the Federal Farm Bill become reality.

6           Hunger and food insecurity cost the  
7 City's economy at least \$2.5 billion per year because  
8 hungry children cost more to educate, hungry workers  
9 are less productive and hungry City residents of all  
10 ages have higher health care costs. There are more  
11 than 1100 non-profit soup kitchens and food pantries  
12 city-wide that distribute a mix of government and  
13 private donated food to try to fill in the gaps in  
14 the anti-hunger safety net. In 2012, before Sandy,  
15 pantries and kitchens city-wide faced a 5 percent  
16 spike in demand on top of increases of 12 percent in  
17 2011, 7 percent in 2010 and 29 percent in 2009.

18           Resolution 1148 creates a Mayoral  
19 controlled governance board to reduce New York City  
20 poverty. The board will target City services and  
21 foster City agency collaboration within areas that  
22 have been identified through census data as being the  
23 poorest New York City neighborhoods. Such high level  
24 attention and coordination can certainly help, but we  
25 also caution that without additional finance

1  
2 resources allocated the impact of such efforts will  
3 likely be limited. In fact, if the Federal  
4 government continues to slash anti-poverty funding,  
5 then poverty and its symptoms will increase no matter  
6 how much coordination improves.

7           Lastly, we urge you to include food and  
8 nutrition needs as key needs that must be addressed  
9 in order to improve the ability of neighborhood  
10 residents to obtain and keep employment. We continue  
11 to point out that it is impossible for the City to  
12 reduce poverty unless it also reduces hunger and food  
13 insecurity. Thank you.

14           CHAIRPERSON VANN: Thank you very much.  
15 I'd like to thank the panel for.. you made numerous  
16 recommendations, which we appreciate and we'll take a  
17 look at very seriously. Again, thank you again.

18           I failed to mention we've been joined by  
19 Council Member Vincent Gentile.

20           Chair would like to call the next panel,  
21 the next panel and the next to the last panel, Anne  
22 Williams-Isom from the Harlem Children's Zone,  
23 Maureen Lane, Welfare Rights Initiative, Hunter  
24 College, Louise Feld from the Citizens Committee for  
25

1  
2 Children, and Brooke Richie-Babbage, Resilience  
3 Advocacy Project.

4 Please try to focus and summarize your  
5 testimony; I would appreciate it.

6 ANNE WILLIAMS-ISOM: Good morning..  
7 [crosstalk]

8 CHAIRPERSON VANN: May begin.

9 ANNE WILLIAMS ISOM: Good morning,  
10 Councilman Vann and member of the Community  
11 Development Committee. Thank you for holding these  
12 hearings to discuss community development zones; we  
13 appreciate the opportunity to speak with the  
14 Committee on this proposal that supports the approach  
15 that the Harlem Children's Zone has used for years in  
16 our mission to break the cycle of intergenerational  
17 poverty.

18 My name is Anne Williams-Isom and I'm the  
19 Chief Operator Officer at the Harlem Children's Zone  
20 where I'm responsible for the coordination and  
21 integration of all of our programs in schools.  
22 Before starting at HCZ I spent 13 years at the New  
23 York City Administration for Children Services as a  
24 Deputy Commission for Community and Government  
25 Affairs, so my comment today reflects the need that

1  
2 I've seen from both vantage points of those  
3 institutions, for coordination, integration of  
4 services for children and families living in under-  
5 resourced neighborhoods. I will first discuss the  
6 work at the Harlem Children's Zone and how we  
7 coordinate and integrate services in Central Harlem  
8 and then I will reflect on my time at ACS, while I  
9 underscore that I'm not speaking for ACS.

10 Central Harlem and communities like it is  
11 a community deeply impacted by poverty and  
12 corresponding social ills, including failure schools,  
13 inadequate health care, domestic violence, child  
14 abuse and foster care placement. Typically the  
15 children who come from challenging environments such  
16 as this are successful and celebrated for beating the  
17 odds. Our approach aims to focus on an entire  
18 neighborhood and transform the odds for all children  
19 living in that community. Our comprehensive place-  
20 based strategy works with children from birth through  
21 college graduation, whether they attend our public  
22 charter school or traditional public schools, in  
23 fact, we serve more children in the traditional  
24 public schools.

1  
2 HCZ has one basic mission, to get our  
3 children into and through college; we have the same  
4 standards for children who are in any of our  
5 programs. Last year we served a little under 11,000  
6 young people and 8,000 adults throughout our 97  
7 blocks in the zone. Our four key principles are  
8 about scale; this idea of serving as many children as  
9 possible so that most children that bump into each  
10 other will have some contact with us and we feel like  
11 young people do what the majority of kids around them  
12 are doing, so we want them to be involved in positive  
13 activities.

14 The idea of building a community, most  
15 people nowadays talk about the Harlem Children's Zone  
16 because of charter schools; that was never what  
17 Mr. Canada's vision was years ago when we talked  
18 about building a community and transforming it by  
19 getting most of those young people to and through  
20 college and back to that community, creating a  
21 pipeline of services from our baby college to our  
22 elementary school programs, our Harlem gyms, our  
23 extensive social services and wraparound services and  
24 right now we have over 800 young people who are in  
25 college, which we are staying with through college by

1 assignment them a college advisor, financial aid and  
2 any support that they need to get through college and  
3 by having an obsession with data and evaluation. We  
4 have over 300 data points that we look at throughout  
5 the organization and we make sure that each one of  
6 the 24 directors that we have are focused on doing  
7 what works, making sure, testing it and if it doesn't  
8 work, trying something different.

10 The HCZ pipeline provides children and  
11 families with a seamless system of free coordinated  
12 best practice programs at every developmental age.  
13 All HCZ programs, when looked at individually, are  
14 effective, however, the whole is greater than the sum  
15 of the parts. The greater impact is achieved when we  
16 look at the programs together; the synergies that  
17 exist allow children and their parents to move  
18 between these programs depending on their needs at  
19 the time and the cumulative effect of multiple  
20 programs helps children meet their maximum potential.  
21 We always talk about redundancy; none of us would  
22 that our 10-year-old would get a program or have a  
23 service and would be done and would be fine; we know  
24 that we need to keep and stay with kids for long

1  
2 periods of time and provide them with longevity and  
3 deep quality services.

4           Coordination and integration - There is a  
5 great deal more that I could say about the HCZ  
6 Project, but I would direct anyone interested to look  
7 at the website. Today I wanna focus on the key idea  
8 of coordination and integration of our pipeline  
9 services. We spend a tremendous amount of time as  
10 senior managers helping our program and our staff and  
11 our principals to coordinate, which is really  
12 difficult within one organization, so I can imagine  
13 how complicated it is to do a bunch of different  
14 organizations and a different set of government  
15 agencies.

16           All families appreciate a more seamless  
17 set of services, but for our most vulnerable families  
18 this approach is most critical, which I think someone  
19 referred to today when we talked about the toxic  
20 stress that our families and children are exposed to  
21 every day. It reduces the amount of stress and work  
22 that they need to do to access all the programs that  
23 can assist them on our end; it reduces duplication of  
24 efforts and enables us to provide better services all  
25 over.

1                   While our goal is to make it seamless and  
2                   easy for families to move along our programs, it  
3                   requires careful measures from staff at all levels of  
4                   our organization and in our external partners as  
5                   well.  
6

7                   HCZ model aligns well with the approach  
8                   taken during the tenure of Commissioner Scoppetta at  
9                   ACS when we transitioned from a centralized  
10                  bureaucracy to a neighborhood-based strategy. This  
11                  included redesigning borough offices to focus on  
12                  certain community districts so that child protective  
13                  workers would be familiar with neighborhoods. I  
14                  remember at the time we called it the Top 18 Strategy  
15                  and we looked at couple of neighborhoods and we could  
16                  see that 80 percent of the young people that were  
17                  coming into foster care came from certain communities  
18                  in the City and really wanted to focus on those  
19                  communities.

20                  We created community partnerships in 11  
21                  communities whose goals were to recruit foster  
22                  families, provide space for children to visit who  
23                  were in foster care, connect families to Head Start  
24                  and child care services and to have family case  
25                  conferencing. Many of the families who came into the



1  
2 attention of ACS also touched many different  
3 agencies, DOE, NYCHA, HRA and we found that the more  
4 stakeholders we could have at the table the better we  
5 could coordinate services for families. Organizing  
6 the agency's work by community required us to invest  
7 time and effort to realign our efforts, but the  
8 families reaped the benefits.

9           Whether wearing my community-based  
10 organization hat, my City agency hat, my mother of  
11 raising three kids in Harlem hat, I know that I've  
12 seen the benefits of coordination at the neighborhood  
13 level for families.

14           On behalf of the Harlem Children's Zone I  
15 offer support for Intro Number 1148 and Community  
16 Development Zones; it makes great sense for us that  
17 communities in the City that are most underserved  
18 receive the greatest level of coordination and  
19 support from New York City agencies. If HCZ can be  
20 of assistance in this process, please let us know and  
21 thank you very much for this opportunity to discuss  
22 these issues with the Community Development  
23 Committee.

24           CHAIRPERSON VANN: Alright, thank you  
25 very much. Continue.

1 MAUREEN LANE: Hi, good morning, if it  
2 still is morning; I'm not sure. I am Maureen Lane;  
3 I'm Co-Executive Director of Welfare Rights  
4 Initiative, WRI. WRI is located at Hunter College  
5 City University of New York and organizes students  
6 with first-hand experience of poverty, through  
7 leadership training and legal advocacy to create and  
8 defend fair and just policies.  
9

10 On behalf of the staff and student  
11 leaders at WRI we are pleased to be here and help the  
12 Committee make real socially constructive changes to  
13 improve the lives of poor low-income youths and  
14 families and we thank the Committee for this hearing,  
15 sincerely. You know, we're really excited; thank  
16 you.

17 WRI is supportive of Council Members'  
18 efforts to bring more resources to the City districts  
19 that experience deep poverty. In relation to issues  
20 of community accountability, specific thinking about  
21 how community voices need to be heard in a meaningful  
22 way, we believe the experience of people in the  
23 community who are living below poverty, need  
24 literacy, GED and other education programs; have high  
25 infant mortality rates in their families is essential

1  
2 for planning; their voices need to be heard. These  
3 are the families that we work with at WRI, many from  
4 the districts that 1148 identifies.

5 We ask the Committee to take a second  
6 look at the board of governance proposal with an eye  
7 toward innovation and new voices for planning and  
8 ideas. We are concerned that the governance board is  
9 overstocked with City agency heads and not sufficient  
10 representation from the community. Very often we've  
11 found agencies do not see the challenges with the  
12 replicating regulations and policies that they have.

13 For example, City agencies that WRI works  
14 with and our legal advocacy so often are riddled with  
15 misguided or repetitive regulations that create  
16 obstacles for poor families rather than  
17 opportunities. We believe that New York City has a  
18 goal that aligns with ours and other New Yorkers,  
19 values in survey after survey, New Yorkers; in fact,  
20 most Americans believe education is the surest route  
21 out of poverty, education leads to opportunity and  
22 jobs and it's a stepping stone to life-changing  
23 opportunity, yet right now WRI students report being  
24 hindered by HRA, the City agency, Human Resource  
25 Administration, appointments and work requirements

1 that because they have classes, internships and often  
2 work study, when in fact we have law in the books  
3 that keeps students in school even with all of those,  
4 even at four-year college. We find so often that HRA  
5 misguides the students and their families and they  
6 very often leave school... I'm just summarizing.

7  
8 This causes us concern when agencies  
9 aren't seeing their own challenges and how the  
10 intersecting laws, regulations impact negatively.

11 For 14... for 19 years, actually, of  
12 leadership training, legal advocacy and policy  
13 experience WRI has come to see that policy-making  
14 processes must include people with first-hand  
15 experience. In addition it is important to include  
16 other stakeholders to build saliency for the issues  
17 we are here to discuss and that this Committee holds  
18 as important. Poor families' lives are a rich  
19 reservoir of experience in problem-solving that are  
20 necessary to clearly understand policy changes.

21 WRI believes a process can be designed to  
22 develop a meaningful policy changes and emerge a  
23 shared vision for policy by process participants,  
24 which would include policymakers, agencies, children  
25 aging out of foster care in need of welfare, homeless

1 youth, including gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual,  
2 State legislators, City agencies and officials; a mix  
3 of people. We are convinced that dialogue, for  
4 example, could be that process, with a mix of  
5 stakeholders as key to the opening of minds and  
6 hearts to a mutually beneficial policy.  
7

8 We just wanna say in closing, WRI is now  
9 in the beginning stages of planning a Spring  
10 Symposium at Hunter and the symposium will bring  
11 together all of the folks we just mentioned and the  
12 plan with the idea of merging a strategic action plan  
13 for the next Mayor when it comes to poverty. Welfare  
14 and education is our concentration because we believe  
15 that when families are stabilized and your  
16 legislation speaks to that directly, stabilizing  
17 families in the neighborhoods; once families are  
18 stabilized we find that basically legislation,  
19 regulation and policies have to get out of the way  
20 and remove obstacles for people engaging in education  
21 and other activities.

22 Anyway, WRI student, staff and alumni  
23 stand ready to work with this Committee and initiate  
24 meaningful dialogue in however you think it might  
25 helpful and thanks again.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Alright, thank you and  
3 let us know about the symposium; gladly represent it...  
4 [interpose]

5 MAUREEN LANE: Swell.

6 CHAIRPERSON VANN: 'Kay, please.

7 LOUISE FELD: Good morning, my name is  
8 Louise Feld and I'm the Senior Policy Associate for  
9 Food and Economic Security at Citizens' Committee for  
10 Children. CCC is a multi-issue child advocacy  
11 organization dedicated to ensuring that every New  
12 York child is healthy, housed, educated and safe.

13 Thank you so much to the Chairman and the  
14 Committee for holding his hearing today and for your  
15 dogged dedication to addressing poverty in New York  
16 City, we certainly thank you very much for that.

17 I submitted written testimony, so I'll be  
18 brief; I won't belabor the points you've already  
19 heard today about the growing rate of poverty in New  
20 York City; I will add though, because we talked  
21 generally about adults in New York City that the  
22 census data bears out, once again that 1 in 3 New  
23 York City children are still living in poverty and  
24 that's well over half a million children living in  
25 poverty in New York City. So of course this is a

1 city-wide average and we know that in certain  
2 communities the rates of poverty are much higher, so  
3 we appreciate that the proposed legislation does seek  
4 to target certain geographical neighborhoods; there  
5 are also other key features of the legislation which  
6 we applaud, such as the fact that many agencies, as  
7 well as CBOs and community members are all going to  
8 be engaged in addressing the issue of poverty in the  
9 targeted neighborhoods.  
10

11 We do have a few respectful suggestions  
12 to impart. First have to do with the indicators at  
13 which you look in determining which zone should be  
14 the targeted Community Development Zones. In our  
15 biannual bookkeeping track, which is a very thorough  
16 look at all of the indicators about child well-being,  
17 we do... when we issue a risk ranking of all the  
18 communities for risks to child well-being and we do  
19 look at some of the indicators that you use the  
20 education, health and poverty indicators, but we do  
21 look at also a broader set of indicators as well  
22 having to do with housing conditions in communities,  
23 as well as health, environment, as well as safety and  
24 environment issues and so we urge you in thinking  
25 about when you're targeting communities to think

1  
2 about what other important information, other  
3 indicators and data sources could further reveal  
4 about communities and their needs. And we say this  
5 because although there is overlap in a lot of the  
6 community districts identified in the summary that  
7 accompanied your legislation and our communities that  
8 were found to have the highest risk rankings to child  
9 well-being, there are some additional communities  
10 that we found to have a great risk to child well-  
11 being that are not included; specifically they are in  
12 areas of Brooklyn and in South Bronx.

13 We would also respectfully suggest that  
14 the sponsors of the proposed legislation consider how  
15 the governance board might engage with their informed  
16 City Planning and Economic Development efforts; the  
17 board as structured in the proposal is charged with  
18 planning and monitoring, but we didn't see much  
19 implementation authority or ability to influence the  
20 City Budget and of course, with issues related to  
21 poverty and services to address poverty we hope that  
22 they will be considered when City Budget negotiations  
23 are occurring and so would therefore ask that the  
24 Council remain open to working with incoming  
25 administrations on the structure and function and



1  
2 approaches to tackle poverty at budget time and  
3 throughout the rest of the year.

4 Finally, I want to just echo my  
5 colleague, Lori McNeil, from the Urban Justice  
6 Center's concern; children from low-income families  
7 live at home, attend schools, utilize services  
8 outside of the designated zones and so while we wish  
9 to see poverty and its consequences addressed in the  
10 zones with highest needs, we also don't want to see  
11 the needs of children who live outside these zones  
12 not go unaddressed, nor do we wanna see them lose  
13 programs or resources, so we really stress the need  
14 for continued government efforts to address poverty  
15 throughout New York City for every child in need.  
16 But we thank you for your many efforts to do that and  
17 we appreciate the opportunity to testify today.

18 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Yeah, thank you for  
19 your recommendations. And uh final hitter.

20 BROOKE RICHIE-BABBAGE: Wonderful, last  
21 but not least. Good morning, my name is Brooke  
22 Richie-Babbage; I and the Executive Director and  
23 Founder of the Resilience Advocacy Project; we're a  
24 youth leadership, empowerment and advocacy  
25 organization working to empower young people to

1  
2 become leaders in the fight to end poverty, so we  
3 are... I am particularly excited to be here; I'd like  
4 to thank you, Chairman Vann and the members of the  
5 Community Development Committee for the opportunity  
6 to testify and express our support for Intro 1148.

7           As my colleague Louise did, I will be  
8 brief; you have extensive testimony from me. So I'm  
9 just going to highlight three core strengths that we  
10 are particularly excited about in the proposed  
11 legislation and two areas for further consideration  
12 that we'd be happy to work with the Committee on.

13           So first, I think that the emphasis on  
14 addressing entrenched and intergenerational poverty  
15 is excellent and actually very innovative. Very  
16 often city level and community level policies and  
17 public strategies will target those communities and  
18 those populations that are the easiest to engage,  
19 that are sort of the closest to the, you know, upper  
20 level of the poverty line and for which outcomes are  
21 most apparent. So we really applaud the emphasis  
22 here on the most entrenched communities and the ones  
23 that have remained sort of stubbornly resistant to  
24 recent economic recovery.

2 Second, we really applaud that many of  
3 the human needs identified directly in the  
4 legislation impacting benefit children and youth in  
5 particular; child care, the focus on parent  
6 engagement in schools, youth development and an  
7 emphasis on increased health awareness we believe  
8 will actually directly support and strengthen the  
9 next generation of people living in these communities  
10 that you've targeted, and while it might sound trite  
11 to say that children are the future, it is actually a  
12 proven fact that investing in the physical and  
13 emotional and educational health and development of  
14 children yields an economic and well-being return on  
15 investment. So although children and youth are not  
16 an explicit... focusing on children and youth isn't an  
17 explicit goal of the legislation; it does that we  
18 think very well.

19 And then lastly, a number of my  
20 colleagues and Councilwoman Reyna have identified as  
21 a particular strength the emphasis on concentrated  
22 poverty and I just wanna briefly highlight, and my  
23 testimony goes into more detail, the slight  
24 difference between deep poverty or communities of  
25 poverty, which are very important in a number of the

1 community districts that you've identified are sort  
2 of stubbornly poor over the last 10 years; the  
3 difference between that and concentrated poverty,  
4 which is really the sort of clustering of poor  
5 populations and poor people into pockets of isolated  
6 poverty. I think that if you look for example at  
7 differences between poverty rates and rates of what  
8 we define as concentrated poverty they tell a  
9 slightly different story and this particularly true  
10 for children and young people growing up in  
11 concentrated poverty.  
12

13 The effects of concentrated poverty are  
14 amplified above and beyond the effects of living in a  
15 poor community. For example, looking at the poverty  
16 rates in the Mott Haven, Hunts Point area, Community  
17 Districts 1 and 2, their poverty rates are almost  
18 identical, 41 and 40 percent to those in Brownsville.  
19 But if you look at the concentrated poverty rates,  
20 there's actually a 20 percent difference. Mott Haven  
21 and Hunts Point have a concentrated child poverty  
22 rate of 74 percent while Brownsville has one of 54  
23 percent. So I think that focusing... we urge the  
24 Committee to focus on concentrated poverty in  
25 identifying those communities, 'cause I think it will

1  
2 offer more nuanced and strategic laser focus on which  
3 communities to start with.

4 I wanna wrap up by highlighting two areas  
5 for further consideration, both of which concern the  
6 mechanics of implementation and as Louise pointed  
7 out, we think that clarifying some of the steps that  
8 will go into implementing the legislation would be  
9 really helpful particularly for community  
10 organizations that would like to partner with you.

11 First, we recommend appointing at least  
12 one youth member to the governance board, perhaps has  
13 part of one of the representatives of the poor, but  
14 it doesn't have to be. A number of City Council  
15 Members, Councilwoman Brewer for example, have  
16 identified the unique perspective that young people  
17 bring and sort of insight that they bring into the  
18 ways in which community needs play themselves out.

19 Second, we echo some of the concerns of  
20 our colleagues around how representatives of the core  
21 will be defined, how they will be chosen and  
22 identified; in particular, we'd like to urge the  
23 Committee to make sure that most of those if not all  
24 of those representatives are actually people who are  
25 experiencing or have experienced poverty firsthand as

1  
2 opposed to just organizations that work with the  
3 poor, both perspectives are valid, but I think in  
4 terms of investment and ongoing success of your  
5 strategies, having that authentic perspective is  
6 important.

7           And lastly, we're really interested in  
8 the community engagement mechanisms that you guys  
9 have identified; we're really excited about the  
10 public hearings, the sharing of data on the website,  
11 but there are some real limitations to things like  
12 public hearings, people going to school, people in  
13 jobs during the day, working parents for example,  
14 people with disabilities very often can't participate  
15 in hearings like this and so we really encourage the  
16 Committee to use both front end information and  
17 public engagement strategies, working with community-  
18 based organizations on surveys, focus groups and  
19 using technology in a creative way, such as Skype,  
20 mobile text and again, online surveys to really  
21 engage community members that are perhaps more  
22 disconnected from formal engagement processes in an  
23 ongoing way throughout the process.

24           Thank you again for the opportunity to  
25 testify; we're very excited to work with the

1  
2 Committee moving forward to make this really  
3 important legislation a reality.

4 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Thank you; your panel  
5 was very, very helpful; we appreciate your  
6 recommendations and... [interpose]

7 BROOKE RICHIE-BABBAGE: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON VANN: we will continue to  
9 work with you.

10 We have reached our last panel and we  
11 were supposed to been out'a here in a few minutes, so  
12 we are almost right on time. So we're gonna call  
13 Adeline Walker-Santiago; Council Member Koppell was  
14 very pleased that you came to testify, by the way;  
15 are you here? Adeline? Uh oh uhm... oh coming, okay.  
16 Yeah... the Council Member was very pleased that you  
17 came, Koppell. Uh Wellington Z. Chen, from the  
18 Chinatown Building Partnership and Annetta Seecharran  
19 from United Neighborhood Houses. Do we have three or  
20 two? Oh Annetta left. Okay, two. Okay, we are at...  
21 thank you... we are at 12:00; do not wanna penalize you  
22 for being last, but you do really have to sort of be  
23 brief and concise and you may begin.

24

25

1  
2 ADELINE WALKER-SANTIAGO: Hi. Good  
3 morning Chairman Vann and the distinguished City  
4 Council Committee on Community Development.

5 My name is Adeline Walker-Santiago; I'm a  
6 Bedford Park resident, a proud supporter of the  
7 Neighborhood Advisory Board and a Bronx Community  
8 Board Member. I'm here today solely representing  
9 myself to personally support this bill, Intro Number  
10 1148, which includes Community Board 7 as a Community  
11 Development Zone. I believe that this legislation  
12 would benefit my community by requiring City agencies  
13 to directly address the specific needs of my  
14 community.

15 For years my neighbors and I have been  
16 looking for ways to improve the social and economic  
17 realities of our community. The Bronx High School of  
18 Science, one of the top high schools in the country,  
19 is in my neighborhood, yet the number of kids from my  
20 community that go to this grade school are  
21 staggeringly low. My community, like so many others,  
22 continues to deal with the stigma of being a  
23 depressed area. From housing assistance to child  
24 care services, individual communities' needs vary  
25 greatly. For city agencies to have direct



1  
2 involvement in community planning to promote economic  
3 development and increase financial independence for  
4 residents is a strategy for success.

5 For my community these needs include  
6 creating programs to help students get into  
7 specialized high schools and great colleges. Our  
8 needs also include encouraging businesses to come to  
9 the community; my neighbors and I dreamed of more  
10 diversified food options and seeing restaurants like  
11 the Olive Garden come to Board 7. I hope Intro  
12 Number 1148 will allow us to work with the City to  
13 encourage banks to open up in Bedford Park instead of  
14 more check cashing places.

15 My community would greatly benefit from  
16 this bill; thank you for allowing me to address you  
17 today.

18 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Thank you; thanks for  
19 coming out; appreciate it.

20 WELLINGTON CHEN: So good morning  
21 Chairman Vann, distinguished members; I will keep it  
22 brief; as you can see that my testimony is limited to  
23 one page.

24 So my name is Wellington Chen; I'm the  
25 Executive Director of the Chinatown Partnership Local

2 Development Corporation, a non-profit 501(c)(3). I'm  
3 here to speak briefly regarding the Intro 1148 of  
4 2013.

5 First let me commend the Committee for  
6 taking on these challenging issues and I'm pleased to  
7 see that more Council Members have signed on since  
8 its introduction last month.

9 The Council is correct in identifying  
10 that historically there are neighborhoods with high  
11 concentration of poverty, joblessness, low  
12 educational attainment and poor health attributes,  
13 resulting in less than desirable social and economic  
14 conditions.

15 Furthermore, these consequences create  
16 further dependencies on public assistance programs,  
17 increasing instabilities, decreasing business revenue  
18 generation and decreasing consumer spending and low  
19 purchasing power.

20 In many ways Chinatown and its business  
21 implemented district service area share many of the  
22 identified characteristics. It is one of the many  
23 reasons why Chinatown Partnership and the BID were  
24 created post 9/11, after many years and decades of  
25 travail and struggles and I thank the Council for the

2 unanimous report after 12 public hearings through  
3 three different Community Boards, 230 votes cast; not  
4 one vote against and I'm very, very proud of that  
5 record and thanks for all your unanimous support.

6 It has been said that 67.5 percent of our  
7 adult population in our area do not have high school  
8 GED; this is what you have identified that the  
9 threshold is 15 percent that at least have a high  
10 school GED; we're not even near that and compare that  
11 to Lower Manhattan where it would have to be... have a  
12 competitive workforce where more than 50 percent of  
13 the adult population have post-graduate degrees, so  
14 think of what it does for my job to try to leverage  
15 that, you know; a weakened workforce against a well-  
16 educated, well-financed workforce.

17 Since the launch of the BID Quincy  
18 campaign late last year, just before Sandy, it's  
19 become quite apparent that without public health or  
20 educational campaign to raise awareness and truly a  
21 well-coordinated public-private partnership much of  
22 our efforts will be just keep on repeating in the  
23 same perpetual cycle.

24 To the degree that many of the goals and  
25 aspirations of the Partnership LDC and BID are

1 similar in that we are interested in community  
2 development of the Community Development Zones and  
3 since there are many areas of potential overlaps we  
4 would like the Committee to consider to the degree  
5 possible that whenever there are local LDCs such as  
6 us and BIDs that they be included; that they are  
7 valuable community assets and resources willing to  
8 build our infrastructure, the databases, the outreach  
9 merchant databases and who's here and the residents  
10 and that... the testimony when we mailed off 15,000  
11 pieces of mailing we identified those people that are  
12 there. So these are the local efforts that will be  
13 very valuable, that when you want to engage we can  
14 help assisting many ways.

16 In other areas we believe that other  
17 government agencies have not been identified in the  
18 initial list; they may not be apparent at this  
19 moment, but for example, one of the things I want to  
20 bring to your attention is rather just focusing on  
21 one single indices, which is poverty, NPR just had a  
22 talk show last night about San Diego is doing what is  
23 called a well-being zone and which is that you take a  
24 broader, for example, the amount of park space, the  
25 health and... and... so there is more of a, rather than

2 negative, a positive balance of really judging on how  
3 healthy a community is and how well balanced a  
4 community is rather than zeroing on just say you have  
5 a particular symptom, a problem and I thin that will  
6 boost the psychology. So I thank you for listening  
7 and I want to look forward to continuing this... this  
8 dialogue and I'm grateful that I'm the last speaker.

9 CHAIRPERSON VANN: Thank you. Thank you  
10 for... for your brevity and for the recommendations  
11 that were included. It's been a very... it's been an  
12 excellent hearing; I really have learned a lot and  
13 appreciate the recommendations; been a lot of  
14 thoughtfulness as you have reviewed the testimony;  
15 I'd like to thank our members; I think almost every  
16 member came and stayed as long as they possibly could  
17 and I really appreciate that and with that we  
18 conclude the hearing.

19 [gavel]

20

21

22

23

24

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date October 8, 2013