

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL  
WELFARE

Jointly with the

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

And

COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE  
JUSTICE

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March 24, 2014  
Start: 10:30 a.m.  
Recess: 7:19 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E: Stephen T. Levin  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Annabel Palma  
Fernando Cabrera  
Ruben Wills  
Donovan Richards  
Vanessa L. Gibson  
Corey D. Johnson  
Carlos Menchaca

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

## Council Members:

Ritchie J. Torres  
Rory Lancman  
Ben Kallos

Letitia James  
Public Advocate

Gladys Carrion  
Commissioner of Administration of Children's  
Services

Susan Nuccio  
Deputy Commissioner for Financial Services

Gilbert Taylor  
Commissioner of Department of Homeless Services

Lula Urquhart  
Deputy Commissioner for Fiscal Procurement  
Operations and Audits

Erin Villari  
Assistant Commissioner for Budget

Kathleen Carlson  
Commissioner of HRA

Ellen Levine  
Chief Financial Officer at HRA

Jill Berry  
Deputy Commissioner of Finance at HRA

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

Frank Lipton

Karen Lane

Executive Deputy Commissioner for MICSA

Cecile Noel

Adult Protective Services

Randi Herman

First Vice President of Council of School  
Supervisors and Administrators

Ralph Palladino

DC 37 1459

Luz Santiago

Associate Executive Director DC 1707

Jeremy Hoffman

United Federation of Teachers

Ray Barbieri

Center for Court Innovations

Donna Anderson

Institute for Children

Randy Levine

Advocates for Children of New York

Stephanie Gendell

Citizens' Committee for Children

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

Gregory Brender  
United Neighborhood Houses

Alice Owens  
Colony South Brooklyn Houses

Joel Berg  
New York Coalition Against Hunger

Linda Bunch  
Colony South Brooklyn Houses

Triada Stampas  
Food Bank of NYC

John Medina  
Community Voices Heard

Ann Valdez  
Community Voices Heard

Alyssa Aguilera  
VOCAL-NY

Quentin Walcott  
Connect Inc.

Sally Greenspan  
Enterprise Community Partners

Mark Dunlea  
Hunger Action Network

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

Lucia Rivieccio  
STEPS to End Family Violence

Lesley Feingold  
Center Against Domestic Violence

Randy Martinez  
Teen RAPP

Al BURI  
Teen RAPP

Sabrina Gonzales  
Teen RAPP

Alliyah Assevido  
Teen RAPP

Johnathon Trago  
Teen RAPP



2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Good morning, we  
3 are going to begin the General Welfare Budget  
4 Hearing at this time. I'm Laurie Cumbo, Chair  
5 of the Women's Issues Committee. I'd like to  
6 thank Chair Levin for his support and  
7 collaboration with this committee. I'd also  
8 like to thank my Committee Staff, Finance  
9 Analyst Nora Yaya [phonetic], Counsel Tai Mia  
10 [phonetic] and Policy Analyst Joan Polvoni  
11 [phonetic] for their work in preparing this  
12 hearing. As we welcome and celebrate and  
13 recognize Women's History Month, this year's  
14 theme is about celebrating women of character,  
15 courage and commitment. It only seems  
16 appropriate that as we celebrate the tenacity  
17 and courage of women, we hold this very  
18 important hearing as we work collectively to  
19 best support women and children. Today, I  
20 would like to honor Shirley Chissolm [phonetic]  
21 the nation's first black congresswoman and  
22 Brooklynite. Many people don't know that  
23 Shirley Chissolm had a very, very illustrious  
24 and elaborate and effective career in her role  
25 as a child administrator. From 1953 to 1959 she

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2 was the director of the Friend's Day Nursery in  
3 Brownsville and the Hamilton-Madison Childcare  
4 Center in lower Manhattan. From 1959 to 1964

5 she was an educational consultant for the  
6 division of daycare and she became known as an  
7 authority on issues involving early education  
8 and child welfare. She understood in order to  
9 eradicate inequities and injustice, much of the  
10 work starts within our very own communities. I

11 am proud to be a member of the City Council  
12 that through the collaboration of the Council  
13 and the Administration, year after year managed  
14 to restore critical services and ACS, thus  
15 continuing the legacy of Shirley Chissolm by  
16 becoming an authority for New York City's

17 children and families. As Chair Levin has  
18 spoken about many times the fiscal 2015 ACS  
19 preliminary budget has base lined funds to  
20 support the city's childcare system and has  
21 increased funding for UPK, both of which are  
22 crucial to the healthy development of children.

23 in addition, it provides low income working  
24 families, particularly working mothers security  
25 and a stable environment. It is important that



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2 as we highlight the funding, we acknowledge  
3 there is some challenges ahead. I am interested  
4 in learning more about the childcare rates in  
5 Early Learn and the professional development  
6 offered to childcare workers. We want to ensure  
7 that we are doing all that we can to keep  
8 qualified, innovative and creative employees  
9 most of whom are women. Considering women still  
10 do not make nearly as much as men, we want to  
11 take change and lead the fight for equality in  
12 every city agency including ACS and set the  
13 standard high for the state. As Chair of the  
14 women's issues committee I am also concerned  
15 about the young women in our juvenile justices  
16 system. Girls make up a growing percentage of  
17 the juvenile justice population and a  
18 significant body of research and practice shows  
19 that they often enter the system with a vast  
20 set of needs. The set of challenges that girls  
21 often face as they enter the juvenile justice  
22 system include trauma, violence, neglect,  
23 mental and physical challenges, family  
24 conflict, pregnancy, residential and academic  
25 instability as well as school failure. I look

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2 forward to hearing what preventive measures are  
3 in place for these young women and what  
4 specific efforts are made for them post  
5 detention or placement. As we continue to move  
6 forward in our Close to Home initiative, I want  
7 to know what lessons we have learned and how we  
8 can improve in our gender responsive  
9 programing. Lastly, as we move from the  
10 infamous budget dance, I hope we can work  
11 closely together and renew the dialogue on how  
12 to best support our children, youth, and  
13 families, while continuing to elevate the  
14 voices and needs of women across the city. I  
15 want to thank all of you for being here. I want  
16 to welcome our new Commissioner. I am proud to  
17 see a dynamic woman who has extensive  
18 experience in the development of our youth and  
19 our children heading this very, very important  
20 agency, and I look forward to working with you  
21 in the years to come, and now we would like to  
22 have your testimony moving forward.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you so  
24 much. Good morning. I want to thank Public  
25

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2 Advocate James and Councilwoman Cumbo and  
3 Council Member Cabrera, and the member--

4 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing]

5 Excuse me, Chair, I'm so sorry. Excuse me  
6 Commissioner. We're going to just at this time  
7 because of a change in scheduling we're going  
8 to have the next opening statement and then we  
9 will have your remarks. Thank you for your  
10 patience.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so  
12 much, Co-Chair, and we're going to be having  
13 Co-Chair Levin, he's on the way. He got caught  
14 up in an accident that had taken place. Good  
15 morning and I am Council Member Fernando  
16 Cabrera, Chair of the Juvenile Justice  
17 Committee. I'd like to thank Chair Levin and  
18 Chair Cumbo for their collaboration with the  
19 committee. I'd also like to thank and  
20 acknowledge the Committee Members who are here  
21 today, Council Member Lancman and Council  
22 Member Vacca. I am excited to Chair this very  
23 important committee and work closely with ACS  
24 division of youth and family justice for the  
25 next four years. In January, the Governor state

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2 of the state address touched on an ongoing  
3 issue for the state of New York, the race, the  
4 age campaign. As we all know, New York is one  
5 of the two states in the country that are  
6 charge 16 year olds as adults. If legislation  
7 changes, I believe it is essential that we  
8 prepare as a city for the potential fiscal  
9 impact it could have on agencies across the  
10 city. I look forward to hearing from ACS about  
11 how they are working closely and strategically  
12 with other agencies to address this potential  
13 issue. I am glad to see in the preliminary  
14 Mayor's Management Report that there is a  
15 decrease in admissions to detention. I would  
16 like to hear more about this and see how we can  
17 encourage similar positive trends. I am also  
18 interested in hearing more about the close to  
19 home initiative. Under this initiative, New  
20 York City's youth are no longer having to  
21 travel hours away and are currently being  
22 housed in city non-secure placement facilities  
23 closer to their families. This time last year,  
24 ACS was preparing for the transfer of youth  
25 from the state limited secure placement

2 facility to city administered programs and  
3 facilities. However, LSP facilities have yet to  
4 begin. The committee would like to know where  
5 we are in the process, in this process, and  
6 what hurdles the agencies has encountered along  
7 the way. While much of today's focus will be  
8 directed towards the close to home initiative,  
9 I do not want to lose sight of some of the  
10 longstanding programs that have served as  
11 preventive measures to detention. The true goal  
12 is to provide support to our troubled youth and  
13 to positively engage them so that they could  
14 become future leaders for this city despite  
15 their involvement with the juvenile justice  
16 system. I am looking forward to meeting with  
17 the Commissioner, but I am surprised and taken  
18 back by how long ACS took to set up this  
19 meeting. Hopefully, we could finally meet and  
20 though I am extremely disappointed by the  
21 response time I hope we can collaborate and  
22 work collectively together to address the  
23 ongoing needs of youth in the juvenile justice  
24 system. Before I conclude, I'd like to thank  
25 Nora Yaya on our financial analyst, Peggy Chan

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2 and Wesley Jones our legislator attorney and  
3 William Hundatch [phonetic] our policy analyst  
4 for the work they did in putting together  
5 today's budget hearing. I'm looking to hearing  
6 from the Commissioner, and I'd like to  
7 recognize we've been joined by Public Advocate  
8 Letitia James, Council Member Vacca, Council  
9 Member Gibson, Council Member Palma, Council  
10 Member Lander, Council Member Johnson, Council  
11 Member Lancman and Council Member Menchacca.  
12 Let me turn it over back to my Co-Chair. Thank  
13 you so much.

14 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you so  
15 very much for your opening remarks, and we'll  
16 now turn it over to our Commissioner. Thank  
17 you.

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you and  
19 once again good morning, and I want to thank  
20 all the members, the Finance, General Welfare,  
21 Women's Issues and Juvenile Justice Committees  
22 and the Chairs for this opportunity to present  
23 testimony to you today. I am Gladys Carrion. I  
24 am the Commissioner of the New York City's  
25 Administration for Children's Services. With me

2 today is Susan Nuccio, who's the Deputy  
3 Commissioner for Financial Services. I  
4 appreciate this opportunity to brief you on the  
5 preliminary budget and to update you on  
6 Children's Services ongoing work and how we  
7 will support the agency's mission to protect  
8 and support New York City's most vulnerable  
9 children and families. I would like to start by  
10 sharing with you some details regarding our  
11 budget. Children's services budget for fiscal  
12 year 2015 provides for the operating expenses  
13 of 2.9 billion dollars of which approximately  
14 874 million is city tax levy. Unlike in  
15 previous years, we are thankful that we have  
16 not had to make any cuts to our agency budget  
17 in this cycle. During my eight year tenure as  
18 the Commissioner of the Office of Children and  
19 Family Services, New York State moved toward  
20 implementation of an agenda focused on child-  
21 wellbeing. A growing body of research indicates  
22 that ensuring safety and achieving permanency  
23 are necessary to well-being, but they are not  
24 sufficient and we should not stop there. Safety  
25 is paramount and permanency is an important

2 outcome. But as we move toward a record low  
3 foster care census in a steadily decreasing  
4 residential juvenile justice population, it is  
5 critical that we understand and influence what  
6 happens to the young people who come through  
7 our system. Do they learn and succeed in  
8 school? Do they graduate from high school? Do  
9 they possess the skills to go onto higher  
10 education or obtain a job that pays a livable  
11 wage and do they have the social and emotional  
12 skills to develop healthy relationships. We can  
13 do better and we will do better. So as we  
14 continue to ensure safety, we will also focus  
15 on the well-being of children and families who  
16 are involved in our systems. The foundation of  
17 this framework is a knowledgeable workforce, a  
18 greater focus and understanding of the impact  
19 of trauma on our children and families and more  
20 effective engagement with our community  
21 partners and provider agencies. In each of our  
22 program areas, child welfare, juvenile justice  
23 and early care and education we're already  
24 taking steps toward that direction. I look  
25 forward to expanding our approach from a safety



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2 and risk focus to one that also includes a  
3 child well-being framework that works to  
4 strengthen family's ability to nurture as well  
5 as protect their children. Each year, ACS  
6 investigates approximately 55,000 allegations  
7 of abuse and neglect. In 40 percent of these  
8 cases, we find some credible evidence of abuse  
9 or neglect. Wherever possible, ACS provides  
10 preventive services to keep families safely  
11 together. Last year, ACS provided preventive  
12 services to over 22,000 families to protect and  
13 improve the lives of New York City's most  
14 vulnerable children, young families, young  
15 people and families. We must constantly  
16 evaluate and use the science and research on  
17 what works and the tools available to  
18 continuously improve our work. Unfortunately,  
19 my appointment to ACS coincided with the tragic  
20 deaths of several young children. After  
21 reviewing these cases in depth, Mayor de  
22 Blasio, Deputy Mayor Barrios Baoli [phonetic]  
23 and I announced recommendations related to  
24 child welfare case practices and citywide  
25 partnerships to ensure the safety of New York

2 City's most vulnerable children. Among those  
3 reforms are reviewing and bolstering ACS's  
4 approach to the highest risk child welfare  
5 cases. To this end we are assessing our family  
6 services units which serve and support high-  
7 risk families in cases where family court has  
8 ordered that ACS supervise the home. We are  
9 improving collaboration with other city and  
10 state agencies, this agency is focused on  
11 safety permanency and wellbeing of children.  
12 However, the welfare of children and young  
13 people is the responsibility of the entire city  
14 of New York. Toward that end, I recommended to  
15 the Mayor that he establish a children's  
16 cabinet under the leadership of Deputy Mayor  
17 Richard Beury, the New York City's Children's  
18 Cabinet is being established and we'll bring  
19 together over 14 city agencies in order to  
20 establish and improve interagency communication  
21 and services related to children and families.  
22 Introducing and supporting state legislation  
23 that will assist us, our child protective  
24 practices by giving ACS the ability to access  
25 arrest records in addition to the criminal

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2 records we are now authorized to view. Creating  
3 a public awareness campaign to emphasize that  
4 the safety of children is a collective  
5 responsibility and to raise awareness about the  
6 many ways that New Yorkers can impact and  
7 improve child safety and wellbeing. To ensure  
8 the implementation and oversight of these  
9 reforms, ACS will hire an internal monitor who  
10 will report directly to me and assume  
11 responsibility for establishing a robust child  
12 vitality review process and will identify ways  
13 to improve the services ACS provides and to  
14 overcome systemic barriers to child safety and  
15 wellbeing. As we implement these reforms in  
16 child protective practices, we're continuing to  
17 strengthen and improve our collaboration with  
18 preventive and foster care providers.

19 Preventive services provided by ACS in our  
20 network of social services agencies include  
21 counseling, parenting classes, substance abuse  
22 treatment, domestic violence intervention,  
23 homecare, support for pregnant and parenting  
24 teens, support for families with children with  
25 special medical or developmental disabilities,

2 sexually exploited youth and other services. In  
3 2013, ACS expanded our preventive continuum of  
4 services to include evidence based and evidence  
5 informed and promising practice models of  
6 service delivery. We currently have a total  
7 capacity for 12,791 preventive service lots  
8 which includes 497 slots that were awarded in  
9 August 2013 to serve high risk teens. New York  
10 City's foster care census continues to decline.  
11 In 2013, approximately 11,690 children were in  
12 foster care, down 10 percent from the 12,950 in  
13 care in 2012. For those who are in care, we're  
14 working to ensure they build the skills that  
15 foster stable adulthood. Last year, ACS  
16 created the Housing Academy collaborative to  
17 better prepare young people to maintain long-  
18 term possession of NYCHA and supportive housing  
19 when they leave foster care. The housing  
20 academy also offers workshops and resume and  
21 career building employment and financial  
22 literacy. Since the inception, over 240 young  
23 people have participated in the housing  
24 academy. We also, New York's ICS oversees the  
25 largest publicly funded early care and

2 education system in the country where we invest  
3 over one billion annually to meet the needs of  
4 about 100,000 children. Mayor de Blasio's plan  
5 to expand universal pre-care presents ACS with  
6 an opportunity to review both our contracted  
7 and non-contracted systems of care. In order to  
8 assess how we can improve our system, this will  
9 be our focus over the next year. We know that  
10 high quality early care and education programs  
11 do much more than provide childcare. They  
12 promote healthy early childhood development and  
13 offer extensive support to parents and care  
14 givers and get children ready to learn. The  
15 Mayor's plan to expand high quality full day  
16 kindergarten, pre-kindergarten builds on this  
17 same vision, and ACS is working closely with  
18 the Department of Education to ensure that all  
19 four year olds will receive the same quality  
20 standards regardless of whether contracted  
21 under ACS or by DOE. In the first year of the  
22 Mayor's pre-k plan, ACS will implement quality  
23 enhancements for the 12,681 seats that contract  
24 with ACS to serve four year olds. These  
25 enhancements will make it possible to provide

2 full pre-k services without any costs to the  
3 parent. This opportunity to assess our early  
4 care and education allows us to look at both  
5 our contracted and noncontracted systems. Our  
6 new contracted system, Early Learn New York  
7 City began in October of 2012. Since that time,  
8 ACS staff and providers have worked very hard  
9 to implement a systemic transformation.

10 Currently, 136 ACS contractor providers serve  
11 over 31,000 children and 363 centers, and in  
12 1,628 family daycare childcare providers across  
13 the five boroughs of the city of New York. Our  
14 center-base enrollment is at 88 percent today,  
15 and ACS continues to work with our providers to  
16 ensure that they have the support they need and  
17 that families are aware of the nearest Early  
18 Learn New York City Center in their  
19 neighborhood. But even before I arrived at ACS  
20 I have heard concerns about Early Learn New  
21 York City, that it falls short of reaching its  
22 aspirational vision. We know that there's  
23 always room to do better, and I am confident  
24 that working together with providers, agencies  
25 and other stakeholders we will continue to make

2 improvements to the system. In addition to  
3 31,000 children that are served in our  
4 contracted system, ACS funds childcare for  
5 about 66 [phonetic] children through a voucher  
6 system. As the ACS has explained in the past,  
7 as families are choosing formal care settings  
8 and younger children are being served in non-  
9 early learn settings, the total cost has  
10 resulted in a significant deficit against our  
11 budget. The city is continuing to explore ways  
12 to encourage voucher recipients to enroll in  
13 vacant Early Learn seats in order to both  
14 address this deficit and to ensure the long  
15 term viability of a high quality contracted  
16 care system. Children Services has been working  
17 also to assist families impacted by the March  
18 12<sup>th</sup> tragedy in East Harlem. It has been  
19 brought to our attention that some families are  
20 in need of childcare and our Early Care and  
21 Education staff have been working hard to  
22 identify services in the community for these  
23 families. Working to transform the juvenile  
24 justice system was a priority of mine when I  
25 served as the State Commissioner and will

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2 continue to be now as I am serving the City. We  
3 are committed to providing preventative  
4 services for youth in crisis. Out of home  
5 juvenile placement is and should be our last  
6 option. ACS oversees two community based  
7 alternative programs that offer young people  
8 involved in or at risk of involvement in the  
9 juvenile justice system, the opportunity to  
10 receive services at home. FAP, the Family  
11 Assessment Program that identifies services and  
12 provides referrals to help families work  
13 through their challenges before the need for  
14 court involvement was able to serve 6,700  
15 families in 2013. This program will be familiar  
16 to you as the program that we use for PINS, our  
17 persons in need of supervision. The other  
18 program is JJI, the Juvenile Justice  
19 Initiative, links young people and families  
20 with intensive therapeutic interventions aimed  
21 at diverting youth from residential placement.  
22 JJI seeks to reduce recidivism, improve youth  
23 and family functioning and reduce the number of  
24 delinquent youth in residential facilities and  
25 has the capacity to serve 200 young people each



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2 year. We're also happy to report that the New  
3 York State Division of Criminal Justice  
4 Services awarded a contract to ACS, New York  
5 Family and the Center for Court Innovation,  
6 which will expand our capacity and enable us to  
7 provide alternatives to detention services to  
8 youth in Queens. In total, through partnerships  
9 with the New York City probation and Department  
10 of Health and Mental Hygiene, we have leveraged  
11 city tax dollars, federal, state and private  
12 foundation's funds to invest close to 37  
13 million dollars in diversion programs, adding  
14 to our investments in DYCD Beacon and summer  
15 youth programs, ACS's child welfare preventive  
16 dollars that fund services for our most  
17 vulnerable youth and families and ATD's  
18 administered by the New York City Office of  
19 Criminal Justice Director support by the city  
20 for programs decide to keep youth out of  
21 juvenile justice system is substantial. It  
22 comes as no surprise that many young people who  
23 have engaged in delinquent behavior have a  
24 history that involves abuse or neglect. ACS is  
25 dedicated to understanding and addressing the

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2 needs of this population, known as cross-over  
3 youth, who are involved in both our child  
4 welfare and juvenile justice systems. The  
5 center for juvenile justice reform at  
6 Georgetown University developed a cross-over  
7 youth practice model which recognizes that we  
8 must build and individual and family strength  
9 in order to help young people overcome  
10 challenges. ACS in collaboration with the  
11 family court is incorporating this model to  
12 improve ongoing work between juvenile justice  
13 and child welfare partners and family members.  
14 Our confirmed unit works with young people  
15 involved in both systems to reduce the number  
16 of out of home placement where safe and  
17 appropriate and to consistently engage  
18 families. I am also committed to build upon our  
19 statewide efforts to work with judges and  
20 others to reduce the unnecessary use of  
21 juvenile detention. While we have seen a marked  
22 decrease in the use of detention, too many  
23 young people are in detention for just a few  
24 days and it's clear that these young people are  
25 not a risk to the community. While a young

2 person is in detention waiting for his or her  
3 case to be adjudicated, ACS has the opportunity  
4 to ascertain what that young person's needs are  
5 and to begin to address them. We will work with  
6 detention facility staff to ensure that we're  
7 capturing this opportunity to evaluate and meet  
8 the educational, medical, mental health,  
9 vocational and family needs of a young person  
10 in detention. Eighteen months ago, the city and  
11 the state launched Close to Home, which gave  
12 ACS custody of New York City's young people  
13 adjudicated as juvenile delinquents. The city  
14 launched the first phase of Close to Home non-  
15 secure placement in September of 2012. Since  
16 then, nearly 300 young people have successfully  
17 completed their court orders, which ACS divides  
18 into two components, residential care and after  
19 care. Approximately 200 youth are currently in  
20 residential care and 85 are after care status.  
21 Central to Close to Home is the ability for  
22 young people to remain connected with their  
23 families and communities. We will work to build  
24 a strong network of community providers in the  
25 neighborhoods where our children return after

2 they leave our system. Our young people need to  
3 be connected to the supports in their  
4 communities that will offer them options that  
5 lead to success. ACS is preparing to launch  
6 limited secure placement this fall. We have  
7 planned to launch earlier in the year, but I  
8 want to be certain that New York City has  
9 ironed out any remaining non-secure placement  
10 challenges before we accept responsibility for  
11 higher needs use. The limited secure placements  
12 are larger than the non-secure placement sites  
13 and are presenting some challenges with respect  
14 to construction and renovation. ACS is working  
15 with three local nonprofit agencies to provide  
16 limited secure services at nine residential  
17 sites in and just outside of New York City.  
18 These residents will have more restrictive  
19 features to ensure the safety of residents,  
20 program staff in communities and will provide  
21 many services including education on site. We  
22 anticipate that each site will serve 12 to 20  
23 youth for a total projected census of  
24 approximately 140 young people in the limited  
25 secure placement system. For too long, our

2 communities have been seen as the problem. For  
3 too long, children have been sent far away and  
4 far and their families have been ignored or  
5 even vilified. These families and communities  
6 are assets that we need to support and embrace  
7 to achieve better outcomes for our children.  
8 I'm honored to have this opportunity to serve  
9 New York City's children and families in my new  
10 role as Commissioner of ACS. It is my sincere  
11 hope that as I endeavor to strengthen the work  
12 of ACS, I can also reframe our work to impact  
13 our measures of wellbeing that speak to the  
14 success of our children, our young people, and  
15 improve the public's understanding of our role,  
16 that as a city we are all committed to keeping  
17 our children safe, our families strong and our  
18 young people on pathways to success. This is a  
19 shared responsibility. I'm very much looking  
20 forward to a fruitful and productive  
21 collaboration with the City Council. Thank you  
22 for your time this morning. I welcome your  
23 comments and questions, and Council Member  
24 Cabrera, I look forward to meeting with you  
25 shortly.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so  
3 much.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. I  
5 am very pleased that we've been joined by our  
6 Chair Steve Levin of General Welfare, and I'm  
7 happy that you are here and safe. We've also  
8 been joined by members, Council Members Arroyo,  
9 Council Member Wills, Council Member Kallos and  
10 Council Member Ferreras, and now we're going to  
11 take questions from the Chairs and then we'll  
12 open it to our fellow Council Members. The  
13 first question I wanted to ask, and this is  
14 going right into UPK, and as you know, that is  
15 a major topic of discussion right now and I'm  
16 sure your agency is dealing with a lot of  
17 questions revolving around that. My first  
18 question is, do you have an understanding at  
19 this time of what the Early Learn as well as  
20 the Head Start programming will look like once  
21 the implementation of the UPK has happened?  
22 How will those particular programs within your  
23 portfolio look and operate at that time?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I think that's  
25 what we're working on now in developing what

2 that would look like. We have a governance  
3 committee. We work very closely, both with the  
4 Mayor's Office and with the Department of  
5 Education to see how that would look. We're  
6 working on the first year transition in making  
7 sure that we are aligning our programs, that we  
8 have now the funds to provide equity for our  
9 head teachers, and that we have the resources  
10 we need to be able to have the start up dollars  
11 to provide for the material. We have additional  
12 dollars for professional development for our  
13 teachers, and so that's been our focus right  
14 now, and moving forward, we will be working  
15 very closely with all of the stakeholders to  
16 see how our system would look moving forward.

17 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Does it look like  
18 it would be a merger of sorts, or does it look  
19 like they may remain independent programs, or  
20 what shift? I know you're working on it right  
21 now. I would imagine as time is approaching  
22 quickly that it would have moved a little bit  
23 more in terms of the understanding?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well, those  
25 decisions haven't been made. I think that we're

2 looking at what all the options are. You know,  
3 a lot of it depends on what the response is for  
4 UPK and what parent's choice for the services  
5 are. We are certainly very interested in making  
6 sure that we have continuity that's in a  
7 coordinated integrated system where the  
8 services provided are parody and comparable in  
9 whatever setting they're in.

10 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. Wanted to  
11 know the 73,000 pre-k that have been  
12 identified, how do you derive at this number in  
13 terms of is this the current number of parents  
14 that have expressed an interest in UPK? Is that  
15 the idea in terms of how that number is  
16 formalized? Because, I guess the question or  
17 concern is will more parents that know about  
18 this program and know that it's happening that  
19 never applied for universal pre-k, will they  
20 also enter into the folds? So how is the  
21 number derived?

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I, you know,  
23 I think that the plan provides for first year  
24 number. You know, the Mayor issued a white  
25 paper.



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2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Like 53,000  
3 correct?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Right.

5 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: 3,604--

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]  
7 And I think that the Department of Education  
8 has a evaluated and assessed that that number,  
9 73,000 represents what has been identified as  
10 the interest and I imagine as we roll it out we  
11 will be able to better gauge moving forward  
12 what that interest is and what the out years  
13 need to look like.

14 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: And one of the  
15 things that's come up in terms of the capital  
16 dollars has also been that a lot of the CBO's  
17 that would be participating in this in some  
18 ways have been identified at not being up to  
19 code. Do you feel confident in the beginning of  
20 the academic year moving forward that those  
21 CBOs that were listed at that time as not being  
22 up to code will be up to code at that time?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That is the  
24 commitment that any site that's used to serve  
25 these children will meet all courts code

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2 standards, and that is something that  
3 Department of Education is working with the  
4 Department of Buildings to ensure.

5 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: When do you  
6 believe that work will begin given the--

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]  
8 Well, the planning had begun--

9 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing]  
10 moving parts that are going on right now?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well, the  
12 planning has begun. You know the Mayor has an  
13 interagency workgroup where we're all sitting  
14 to identify what the challenges are, what the  
15 needs are and how we work together to meet  
16 those challenges. So that work has commenced,  
17 and as the Department of Education moves  
18 forward to identify the agencies that will be  
19 participating. As you know they have an RFP out  
20 and that there's been a response to. So once  
21 they identify what the needs are they will move  
22 forward.

23 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: And has there  
24 been any thought about adhering to MWBE goals  
25 and the selection of those that will do the

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2 work to bring these CBO's up to code, as well  
3 as those CBO's that are going to be utilized to  
4 provide universal pre-k? Is there any desire  
5 to make sure that minority and women owned  
6 business, daycare providers and community based  
7 organizations will be utilized in this process  
8 in a way that will adhere to the goals and  
9 guidelines set forward?

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: This  
11 Administration has a deep commitment to meeting  
12 those goals.

13 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: And is that  
14 commitment being discussed? Have they been  
15 outlined? Have they been identified in this  
16 process?

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: There are a  
18 number of subcommittees that are working on  
19 this of which I'm not part of, but I'm sure  
20 that that's part of the conversation.

21 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. That'll be  
22 also very important at this time. Also wanted  
23 to gain an understanding that I understand some  
24 time ago that ACS ended their group home  
25 program where they were doing it internally and

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2 have subcontracted that out to private entities  
3 to address the needs of group homes. Is that  
4 correct?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Direct care or  
6 foster care?

7 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Uh-hm.

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, that was  
9 a number of years ago that ACS had administered  
10 direct programs. We haven't done it for a  
11 number of years, that's correct.

12 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: And would say  
13 that this--and the reason why I ask is because  
14 I under--I was wondering if you were thinking  
15 about reinstituting some of that in the sense  
16 that there seems to be from what I understand a  
17 backlog with some young people having the  
18 opportunity to be placed in a reasonable amount  
19 of time so that I understand that the Nicholas  
20 Scoppetta Center at First Avenue which was  
21 built to be somewhat of a 72 hour facility now  
22 young people are staying there particularly in  
23 their teenage years from 30 days to 60 days,  
24 some even 90 days and longer, and so has this  
25 idea to phase out your handling of the group

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2 home to then give it out to private entities  
3 and it's creating, I guess, a backlog in terms  
4 of placement, is there any thought process in  
5 terms of how we could make that process so that  
6 the young people actually have somewhere to go  
7 because this facility wasn't necessarily  
8 intended for that?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So the  
10 Children's Center you're absolutely right. You  
11 know, and it is really a moment in time where  
12 sometimes we're challenged with our capacity  
13 and certainly older, young people coming into  
14 the center that we initially I think that ACS  
15 didn't anticipate would be serving. I think  
16 that that is one of the options to consider,  
17 and it's something that in terms of how we  
18 address what the needs are in terms of our bed  
19 capacity at the Children's Center. That  
20 certainly is one of the options to be  
21 considered. That's an ongoing conversation and  
22 one of the initial challenges I will have to  
23 address.

24 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. Wanted to  
25 ask you in terms of the budget, it seems that

every area within the budget was somewhat base lined or remained flat. Some went up, some went down, but the most notable one is that protective services, which seems to be the heart of ACS services. Of all of them, their budget was decreased, that particular programmatic line, and I understand that case loads are extremely high. I understand that many of the sites such as in Brooklyn, Adam Street, Marcy Avenue, Pine Street, Linden Boulevard, Grant Square, they often have to share critical key service providers that should be mandated in every office and that they're sharing across offices. I also understand that there's a high turnover rate in this particular division as well, and that staff members are having difficulty closing out cases because I believe there's supposed to be like five to a unit, and they're kind of working with three to four in a unit, and this inability to have the proper staffing is causing a level of bottlenecking that's causing many cases not to be closed in a timely manner. So I was wondering in the protective services,

2 which is really the heart of the agency, why  
3 this particular program line is decreased while  
4 some others such as foster care were increased  
5 even though the number of children in foster  
6 care decreased?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So I'll let  
8 Susan answer that with greater level of  
9 specificity than I have at my fingertips, but I  
10 will share with you that I will look into that  
11 very closely, but that's not my understanding  
12 of the situation in Brooklyn, and our case  
13 loads continue to be pretty low. But I will  
14 tell you that we are taking a very close look  
15 at the entire Brooklyn operation, and it's  
16 part--one of the recommendations that we've  
17 adopted as a result of one of the child  
18 fatalities [phonetic], and we actually have a  
19 consultant that's taking a very deep dive there  
20 looking at the culture, looking at the cases,  
21 the types of cases that we have, what the  
22 staffing is, the level of supervision, and work  
23 that we need to better identify what we need to  
24 do in that office to assist the staff in doing  
25 their job. I've been out there to visit that

2 office, and it's really not a concern to that  
3 scale that's been expressed to me. The case  
4 load now is about 10.7. The attrition,  
5 interesting enough, is at one of the lowest  
6 points, 4.3 percent right now. Now, I want to  
7 look particularly at Brooklyn, 'cause we've had  
8 quite a few cases there, to see if there's some  
9 disparities there, how we can better address  
10 what some of the concerns that we've identified  
11 already, but certainly Brooklyn is very much on  
12 my radar.

13 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I understand that  
14 the demand in Brooklyn is quite high and it  
15 continues to grow, and I appreciate the  
16 research and the information that you've  
17 provided, but I would say on the ground the  
18 staff perhaps is feeling something different  
19 and with a case like Miles Dobson, the very  
20 tragic case, I'm still curious as to why  
21 Preventative Services would be the one item in  
22 the budget that would be decreased at a time  
23 when there's so much more attention in that  
24 area.

25 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Protective.



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2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Protective, I'm  
3 sorry. Protective Services, but Protective  
4 Services does also lend itself into  
5 preventative as well, and I have a question  
6 about that also.

7 SUSAN NUCCIO: So my name is Susan  
8 Nuccio, Deputy Commissioner of Financial  
9 Services. What you're seeing as a change in the  
10 budget is OTPS not PS.

11 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay.

12 SUSAN NUCCIO: Okay. And those are  
13 contracts that support Protective, and as you  
14 mentioned, the contracts or the dollars between  
15 what supports Preventive and Protective move  
16 within a year as we need the dollars in the  
17 right budget, but they're similar services. So  
18 what you see in this decrease is because this  
19 year, fiscal year 14, we had a parent advocate  
20 RFP and those dollars are in one place, but not  
21 in the same place in 15. So it's not a real  
22 decrease in dollars. We're going to have the  
23 same amount of money available for protective  
24 and preventive this year and next year.

25

2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Wanted to ask as  
3 it pertains to preventative services in that  
4 same line, that referrals are often made to  
5 organizations like WPA, the Women's Prison  
6 Association and that sort of thing, and Harlem  
7 Children's Zone and others, but what I  
8 understand with that is that often these  
9 organizations are at maximum level and that  
10 often there aren't slots for these types of  
11 services to be provided once the referral is  
12 made and that families often lose interest  
13 because of the wait times. Is there any way or  
14 has there been any discussion to talk about how  
15 to either expand who you're doing the referrals  
16 to, and can you give me an understanding as to  
17 how that happens because it seems if referrals  
18 are constantly being made to the same  
19 organizations and their capacity hasn't  
20 expanded, it seems like there's a bottlenecking  
21 of services in that way particularly as it  
22 pertains to Preventative Services.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: You know,  
24 that's something that I'm going to take a close  
25 look at. It has not been an issue that's been

2 identified as a great concern. We, you know,  
3 there's an assessment that's made based on what  
4 the needs of the families are and whether or  
5 not those needs could be made in the community.  
6 I think that we do need to take a really close  
7 look at how we resource those agencies and work  
8 with them. We make a lot of assumptions about  
9 their capacity and whether or not they really  
10 do have the capacity and really look at how we  
11 support them. We also have preventative  
12 providers that we fund that have capacity. So  
13 we need to do a better recaliber--you know,  
14 calibrate the system to make sure that we refer  
15 people to families where the other services are  
16 available and we do have capacity in our  
17 preventive system.

18 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. I just have  
19 one more question before I turn it over to  
20 Chair Levin. This goes in terms of the Early  
21 Learn and wanting to understand how that  
22 impacts the budget. We understand due to the  
23 Early Learn implementation there are many  
24 former childcare workers who lost their jobs  
25 and are legally owed vacation and sick pay

2 under the collective bargaining contract  
3 agreement that was still in effect when their  
4 jobs were lost. How does ACS intend to resolve  
5 this issue and what is the timeline as well as  
6 inevitable contract bargaining agreements that  
7 are happening as we speak, how is it reflected  
8 in the budget?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we've been  
10 working very closely over time with these  
11 agencies and we have actually been able to pay  
12 out these funds in 66 percent of--for the  
13 providers. The challenge is outstanding audits.  
14 We need to have these agencies submit their  
15 audits, and so we are waiting for audits. We've  
16 paid out over eight million dollars and as soon  
17 as we receive those audits, we would be in a  
18 position to review and pay out the rest of the  
19 money. We're working closely with the daycare  
20 council to help facilitate that.

21 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. And I know  
22 I just have one more before we go. Just wanted  
23 to ask in terms of the epidemic in some ways  
24 and your understanding of it of young people  
25 that are held at First Avenue or that are

2 receiving services there going what they would  
3 refer to as AWOL, leaving the center for any  
4 extended period of time. Has there been any  
5 understanding, and I also understand that once  
6 they leave the center, if they were on the list  
7 to get placement in terms of housing or home or  
8 foster care situation that they then go back to  
9 a bottom of a list once they've left that  
10 particular--once they've left the First Avenue  
11 facility. So I wanted to know in terms of the  
12 circumstances with AWOL and young people  
13 leaving the facility which I understand has  
14 been a great challenge. Has there been any  
15 decline in that any way to keep better  
16 accountability of the young people for their  
17 own safety, because I understand that there's a  
18 level of freedom there that allows them to come  
19 and go as they please, and often that creates a  
20 lot of challenges for their own placement and  
21 beyond.

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So my  
23 understanding, Councilwoman, is that our AWOLs  
24 are pretty low right now from the children's  
25 center. I get a daily report that I review and

2 so it is an issue that's very important. We  
3 want to make sure that we keep children safe,  
4 and you're right that there is easy access out  
5 of the children's center, but we've worked very  
6 hard to reduce those numbers. I don't think,  
7 and I will look into the issue that you raised  
8 that they go in, you know, down the line so to  
9 speak, the bottom of the list, 'cause that's  
10 not my understanding at all that that's what  
11 happens. Most young people return after a  
12 couple of hours, back to the children's center.

13 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I just want to  
14 say I appreciate your testimony here and the  
15 questions that you've answered, but I also want  
16 to add from extensive conversations with  
17 individuals throughout ACS there's a  
18 discrepancy in terms of how some of the staff  
19 is feeling or recognizing some of the issues  
20 and challenges and the numbers to be. So I hope  
21 that in moving forward that perhaps this is a  
22 new position. Everyone's just kind of getting  
23 acquainted with one another and understanding,  
24 but from my research and conversations it seems  
25 that some of these issues are a little bit or a

2 bit more prevalent than may have been seen in  
3 the testimony today, but thank you very much.  
4 And now I'll turn it over to our Chair Steve  
5 Levin.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
7 much Chair Cumbo. Thank you, Commissioner. My  
8 apologies for running late this morning.  
9 There's a crash on the BQE so I apologize to  
10 you and to my colleagues and to those of you in  
11 the audience here today. I wanted to ask a  
12 couple of questions before turning it over to  
13 Chair Cabrera, and then I'm going to have a  
14 couple questions after my colleagues have an  
15 opportunity to ask their questions. First I  
16 want to thank you very much for being here  
17 today and for agreeing to taking on this  
18 monumental role as Commissioner of ACS which is  
19 a tremendous amount of responsibility, a very  
20 difficult job and a job that requires not only  
21 responsibility in an institutional sense but  
22 personal responsibility and taking on the legal  
23 guardianship of hundreds and hundreds of  
24 children, so I want to thank you very much for  
25

2 putting yourself out there and serving this  
3 city. So I appreciate that.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I want to ask a  
6 couple of questions around childcare and how  
7 following up on Chair Cumbo's questions on how  
8 this is going to work with the Early Learn  
9 program and with the UPK program expansion as  
10 envisioned by the Administration. I first want  
11 to ask about the funding that was base lined in  
12 the November plan by the Bloomberg  
13 Administration. There was 62 million dollars  
14 that the Council had restored or put into the  
15 budget in response to gaps in the Early Learn  
16 program or deficiencies of the Early Learn  
17 Program as perceived by the Council and in  
18 fiscal year 2013 we restored 62 million  
19 dollars. We restored that again last year and  
20 the Bloomberg Administration base lined that  
21 before they left office, but a couple of issues  
22 have arisen with that and while we're very  
23 appreciative that there is that funding now  
24 base lined in the budget it presents some  
25 questions of limitations and procurement issues



2 and I was wondering if you might be able to  
3 speak to that because there are providers that  
4 are serving New York City's children today that  
5 may have been serving in that role for many  
6 years prior to Early Learn that are part of  
7 this funding that may run into issues around  
8 procurement. So I was wondering if you might be  
9 able to speak to how ACS is looking at this  
10 issue right now and how we plan on addressing  
11 it in the next couple of months.

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: You know, it's  
13 an issue that we've very cognizant of. It's an  
14 issue that we have engaged in conversations  
15 with the Administration and we're working  
16 really hard to consider the options and what  
17 the best way to proceed would be. We want to  
18 ensure that there be continuity of services. We  
19 understand how that is very important, and I'm  
20 confident that shortly we will have a decision.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great. Have you  
22 looked at the possibility of either extending  
23 the contracts for a year or looking at  
24 negotiated acquisition as a solution?

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, those are  
3 two options that are on the table.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great. Thank you.  
5 I wanted to ask about with regard to UPK full  
6 day UPK expansion in ACS community based  
7 organizations, an issue around training and  
8 certification because as it's been explained to  
9 me there could be an issue with potential  
10 inequities with teachers that are in CBO  
11 setting versus for four year olds, versus  
12 teachers in a school setting in terms of the  
13 level of training certification and  
14 compensation and then also potentially an issue  
15 with regard to--within a particular CBO  
16 training certification and compensation for  
17 teachers if there are three year olds that are  
18 not part of the UPK program, those classroom  
19 teachers not having the same type of  
20 compensation as potentially the four year old  
21 teachers. I was wondering if you can explain  
22 how ACS is looking at this issue right now.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So as you  
24 know, we do this in partnership with the  
25 Department of Education. There is funding in

2 the budget to ensure that there is parity  
3 salaries between the teachers and the CBOs and  
4 the teachers in Department of Education  
5 programs. There is also additional funding to  
6 enhance professional development. And so we  
7 have considered that and that's very much in  
8 the Mayor's plan to make sure that this parity  
9 wherever the fours are, so that the setting  
10 doesn't dictate what the salaries are, what the  
11 professional development is and the supports  
12 that teachers get. The other issue is one that  
13 we're looking at that is more challenging. What  
14 happens? As, you know, the universal with  
15 three year old and the teachers in three year  
16 old classrooms, some of our classrooms are  
17 mixed classrooms which mean three and fours. So  
18 we're in the process of exploring what are the  
19 possible options there to address that problem,  
20 but the funding that is available at this point  
21 is for the four year olds and the teachers,  
22 head teachers in those settings.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good. 'Cause it  
24 could potentially create a circumstance where  
25 there may be problems within a particular CBO

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2 just based on, you know, some teachers if  
3 they're teaching three year olds or a mixed  
4 classroom, you know, there may be some parody  
5 issues there, so.

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I look forward to  
8 working with you on resolving that. I wanted to  
9 next ask about wrap-around services. With half  
10 day UPK there is currently dollars associated  
11 with wrap-around services. Is there going to be  
12 funding in place to continue those wrap-around  
13 services for a full day UPK and beyond? So in  
14 terms of if the hours of--

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]

16 Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: three to six, is  
18 that part of--

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]

20 Yes, it is. Yeah, we're running a ten hour  
21 program.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah, for  
24 childcare.

25

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So that will be  
3 funding that's coming from--that'll be the  
4 funding associated with UPK that's coming in  
5 from Department of Education or it's a  
6 different funding source?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It's our  
8 funding.

9 SUSAN NUCCIO: So the way we're  
10 looking at this is we already have the two and  
11 a half hour funding within the ten hour day.  
12 What we will be doing is adding funding to that  
13 to bring into place what the Commissioner said,  
14 the parody, the professional development and  
15 anything else that's needed in the classroom to  
16 have UPK equivalent services.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: With regard to--  
18 so now that the UPK funding is going to be  
19 coming into ACS from Department of Education  
20 it's 105 million dollars.

21 SUSAN NUCCIO: Hundred and six.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Hundred and six  
23 million dollars. Is that going to be used--in  
24 looking at the ACS childcare portfolio, is that  
25 going to be used to help provide more two and

2 three year old slots, essentially aging down  
3 the system or is that going to be used to help-  
4 -in addition to where it's--to the professional  
5 development aspects of it and those funding  
6 priorities, is there going to be an effort by  
7 ACS to try to age down the system or conversely  
8 is ACS going to be looking at trying to address  
9 some of its structural deficits, because as  
10 we've spoken about there's a huge structural  
11 deficit in the childcare system. My concern is  
12 that some of these dollars coming in from the  
13 DOE might be used to try to plug the structural  
14 deficit which we should be addressing in a  
15 structural fashion and we should be looking at  
16 it long term and addressing it in that regard,  
17 and we have an opportunity to age down the  
18 system and serve more three year olds and two  
19 year olds in the system. So you can speak now  
20 on that.

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So councilman,  
22 there are no savings. There are no additional  
23 dollars coming to ACS. The dollars are  
24 earmarked for us to meet the parody  
25

2 requirements of expanding services to the four  
3 year olds in our system.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But there are--  
5 there will be four year olds that are not  
6 currently served in a UPK, through UPK now that  
7 will be picked up by UPK. Those children, there  
8 will be no savings with those kids because  
9 they're no longer going to be in a non UPK  
10 program?

11 SUSAN NUCCIO: Well, all four year  
12 olds in our system now have the funding of the  
13 two and a half hours inside the program. When  
14 Early Learn went out it assumed that for every  
15 four year old.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: How much does ACS  
17 right now project that its deficit is going to  
18 be with regard to childcare for FY 15?

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Our deficit  
20 can be as high as 90 million dollars, and we've  
21 estimated it at 80 million dollars, but as you  
22 know, the state recently issued their market  
23 rate increases. That would add an additional at  
24 least if not more 10 to 12 million dollars to  
25 our deficit. This is--the state is not fully

2 funding the cost of market rate increase in the  
3 city of New York.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: and how has that  
5 been addressed in the past, that deficit and  
6 how do we plan to address it in this current  
7 fiscal year and FY 15?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, you know,  
9 those are ongoing conversations and really on  
10 how we better address the deficit. I think in  
11 the past we stole from Peter to pay Paul, and I  
12 don't think that's a prudent way to run an  
13 agency.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Could you  
15 elucidate on that?

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we took  
17 money from other places in the agency that was  
18 unspent, and we quite frankly delayed hiring as  
19 much as we could to generate some accruals to  
20 be able to shift money around to meet those  
21 needs. You can't sustain that on an ongoing  
22 basis. It's not prudent. One is not a wise  
23 steward of city dollars, and programs in our  
24 responsibility overall. So we're taking a very  
25 hard look as to how we deal with that deficit.



2 Clearly, I don't have the answers for you  
3 today.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. But why is  
5 that we're seeing it every year? Is it part  
6 of--it's our, the agencies needs assessment is  
7 not--

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]  
9 Well, what the challenge has really been the  
10 vouchers. I think that our projections and the  
11 budget projections underestimated quite frankly  
12 the use of vouchers by cash assistant  
13 recipients who are not accessing early learn  
14 sites and seats. So they're going outside our  
15 contracted system, and that's really what has  
16 driven the increase in our deficit moving  
17 forward. So for instance, in our--we're--our  
18 budget provides for low income vouchers for  
19 7,000 families, 7,000 children. We're right now  
20 close to 12,000, and this care is more costly,  
21 and our vouchers, while the use for cash  
22 assistant vouchers is slightly down they are  
23 choosing much more formal, must more instances  
24 formal care in settings that are much more  
25 expensive, and that--

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] But  
3 not Early Learn?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: But not Early  
5 Learn and that's driven the cost of that care  
6 up high and as you know, that's mandated and  
7 that amount of money just comes out of our  
8 allocation.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And that actually  
10 leads to my next question, which is what  
11 efforts is ACS making to coordinate with HRA to  
12 make sure that cash assistance clients have  
13 access to information around Early Learn  
14 opportunities in the HRA setting. So for  
15 example, is there some--is there an ACS staff  
16 member in HRA offices providing clients with  
17 information or is there--there's ways I could  
18 think of with technology to make sure that, you  
19 know, there's just a list of per zip code that  
20 says hey, here's a location with four  
21 vacancies, or here's a location with seven  
22 vacancies. It's right around the corner from  
23 your house. You don't have to go to an informal  
24 setting. You can go to a--you can go to an  
25 Early Learn center.

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, last  
3 summer we actually did use some technology to  
4 do a mass mailing. We were able with assistance  
5 from HRA to identify eligible families and did  
6 a mass mailing, a targeted mailing to them and  
7 also NYCHA to make them aware of the Early  
8 Learning program and the sites. That still has  
9 not resulted in a real change with the choices  
10 being made by cash assistance recipients. It  
11 still continues to be about three percent of  
12 our system that they use. We also work with HRA  
13 to place some of our staff in some of their job  
14 centers. That also did not make a great change  
15 and quite frankly because of our own staff  
16 challenges, we weren't able to out station as  
17 many of our staff as we really need to do that.  
18 So we're taking a closer look at that and see  
19 how we can do that in a way that would be more  
20 effective or how we can leverage technology in  
21 a more impactful way than we have in the past.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great. And I'm  
23 going to ask HRA the same question because  
24 there's things which they can do on their end  
25 to make this more effective. And then lastly, I

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2 just want to ask very quickly around, about  
3 vouchers. The Mayor has said that he in favor  
4 of restoring priority five and priority seven  
5 cuts that have happened over the last four or  
6 five years. Is there a plan to have those  
7 vouchers, those voucher categories restored in  
8 this budget session?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, you know,  
10 Council Member, each of those lots cost about  
11 12,000 dollars plus. Given that we're facing  
12 up to a 92 million dollar deficit, it's very  
13 hard to be able to think about expanding the  
14 system any further. So, you know, it's very  
15 challenging to think about increasing the  
16 eligibility further. Certainly that's something  
17 that the Mayor would have to take under  
18 advisement.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, thank you  
20 very much. I'm going to turn it over to Chair  
21 Cabrera. Thank you very much, Commissioner.

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so  
24 much, Co-Chair. I'm going to be parsimonious with  
25 questions because I know we have colleagues that

2 are waiting to ask questions. Then I'll come back  
3 later, but I want to just change focus on the  
4 limited secure placement plan. Can you talk to me  
5 about what are the security features that are  
6 different than the secure placement? How is it  
7 different? If you could explain me how the  
8 nonsecure placement, the limited secure placement  
9 and secure placement, how do they differentiate  
10 with one another?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well, the secure  
12 placement is administered by the Office of  
13 Children and Family Services. Those are juvenile  
14 offenders that commit the high risk pretty  
15 egregious crimes. Those are prisons, you know, we  
16 call them secure. They are prisons and they have  
17 all the hardware that one connects with a prison  
18 so it's a very, very high level of security. Lots  
19 and lots of fences and barbed wire, sally  
20 [phonetic] ports, very locked doors. The limited  
21 secure and nonsecure for juvenile delinquents is  
22 a different type of setting and facilities. Youth  
23 and limited secure are young people for the most  
24 part that have much higher service needs that  
25 have been adjudicated to pose in some instances,

2 not in most, a higher risk for flight, but  
3 actually what they've been found through an  
4 assessment process is to have much higher needs  
5 that require more services and a higher level of  
6 intervention and more structure and because they  
7 need more structure, the setting is more secure.  
8 The doors are locked. There is in some, you know,  
9 it depends, you know--thinking about the  
10 facilities that we will be using in limited  
11 secure in the city will differ from the limited  
12 secure facilities at the state level. So you  
13 don't necessarily need fences. What you do need  
14 is to have more eyes on from the staff, a higher  
15 level of staff training to be able to understand  
16 and manage behavior better so that you will see  
17 that more services are provided on site, not  
18 necessarily all services and young people as they  
19 demonstrate an ability to better manage their  
20 behavior can then go out under supervision into  
21 the community, but initially you will see that  
22 they have--need a higher level of managing their  
23 behavior and addressing some of those needs.  
24 Once you stabilize that behavior, you can do more  
25 things outside of a facility.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So, just so I can  
3 understand, because I'm into detail. In terms--  
4 you say you have more eyes, does that mean you're  
5 going to have somebody by the door or we're  
6 talking about cameras? Are we talking about that  
7 if someone leaves when they're not supposed to  
8 leave, an alarm would go off?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: The door--the  
10 facility will be locked. So it is not possible  
11 for a young person to just leave.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Right? You have  
14 cameras throughout the facility except the  
15 bathrooms and their rooms. You have a lower staff  
16 to child ratio. You have--so those are--you have  
17 more the doors. You can possibly have bars on  
18 windows, not necessarily, but you could so that  
19 there's some hardware features. You have more  
20 staff and you have locked doors.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay. In terms of  
22 location, where do you thinking of placing these  
23 limited secure placement, which boroughs,  
24 Westchester or Long Island included? Because I  
25 know part of the legislation or I think even in

2 your testimony you mentioned the possibility of  
3 being outside of New York City.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So there will be  
5 some special need, capacity in Westchester and  
6 Dobbs Ferry the Children Villages, which is one  
7 of the agencies.

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I've been there.

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: right, so  
10 they're going to be responsible for some of the  
11 specialized beds that we will need. New York City  
12 is leasing three of the state properties that  
13 were used as state facilities. So one of them is  
14 in the Bronx on East 210 Street in the Bronx.  
15 Another one is in Brooklyn on Carol Street across  
16 the street from Medgar Evers College. And another  
17 one is Staten Island on Forest Hill Road. Those  
18 are the three facilities that the city's  
19 utilizing that the state had programs in. And  
20 then we have Dobb's Ferry for children's village.  
21 We have Episcopal Services will have a program  
22 also in the Bronx and Lincoln Watts, I don't--I'm  
23 not remembering right now where Lincoln Watts is  
24 going to have its program.

25 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Watts is in--



2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]

3 But where they will have the limited secure  
4 program.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: In Westchester.

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I think the  
7 program is going to be in the Bronx, but I think  
8 we're looking it up--

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing] So  
10 I not--and the reason I ask is because the Bronx  
11 usually end up having a disproportionate amount  
12 of sites like these when it comes to just about  
13 any--every program and, you know, one of the  
14 things that I love about our Mayor that wanted to  
15 do was to spread the level of responsibility to  
16 all five boroughs other than here, Manhattan, and  
17 I didn't hear Queens. I would love to hear that  
18 in the near future that that would be part of the  
19 strategic plan. So every borough would carry the  
20 log [phonetic], 'cause I'm sure there's kids from  
21 Manhattan and Queens who are also--they going to  
22 be placed in the limited secure placement, and  
23 because you know, normally I hear Bronx,  
24 Brooklyn, Bronx, the BMB. And is there any plans  
25 in the future for that?

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So let me update  
3 what I have said to you. Yes, there will be a  
4 couple of facilities in the Bronx too. There will  
5 be one in Queens, one in Staten Island, one in  
6 Brooklyn. We do not have one--and in  
7 Westchester. We don't have one in Manhattan, and  
8 as you know, it's very challenging to secure  
9 property in Manhattan. The--So Manhattan in the  
10 only borough right now that doesn't have a  
11 facility.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: But you would  
13 like to have one?

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I would  
15 absolutely like to have--

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing]  
17 Okay.

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: a facility in  
19 Manhattan to better serve young people who come  
20 from Manhattan to better serve young people who  
21 come from Manhattan.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And now you were  
23 talking about a 140 beds?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes.  
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Or right now you  
3 have 140 potential youth that will go into--I  
4 just want to have clarity.

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: It's 140 beds.

6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Beds.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's the  
8 projected capacity at this time.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And you're  
10 expecting how many youth to come at any given  
11 time?

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, well at any  
13 point in time it's 140 youth. That's what we  
14 expect over the course of a year. I really at  
15 this point don't really know in the course of a  
16 year what our expectation is, but we--well, we  
17 anticipate 119 youth in placement. We have 140  
18 beds will be available. In the course of year  
19 there's turnover as you know. We anticipate that  
20 the length of stay for these young people will be  
21 about six to seven months. So it'd probably be  
22 around 200 young people.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So you don't  
24 expect to have an other capacity at any moment?  
25 And if you do, what happens to those young

2 people? Would they go to secure or non-secure or  
3 what do you do if you have over capacity?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We create  
5 additional capacity. We have the vendors. We  
6 would create additional capacity. We would look  
7 at ways. A young person would never be sent to  
8 secure because we don't have sufficient beds in  
9 limited secure. There might be young people that  
10 can be stepped down as we do an assessment as to  
11 whether or not they're ready to re-enter the  
12 community and go in after care status. There are  
13 different ways that we can address that should  
14 there ever be a moment in time that we don't  
15 have sufficient capacity, but we have the  
16 flexibility to be able to respond in those  
17 situations.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And we're looking  
19 at the fall, the fall is a pretty secure day,  
20 because I know the last hearing they were talking  
21 about summer and before there was talk there was  
22 going to be back in fall 2013, and I get it. We  
23 want to get this done right. We want to make sure  
24 that we take care of the glitches before we  
25 begin, but does it look like it's got like a date

2 that we could expect to get started, season of  
3 the year, the fall?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, I would--you  
5 know, there are some lessons learned from the  
6 implementation of the non-secure, and so I want  
7 to make sure that not only we have the capacity  
8 in terms of the physical capacity, but I want to  
9 make sure that our agencies that'll be delivering  
10 will be running the limited secure placement,  
11 have the capacity to do this, have hired their  
12 staff, have trained their staff and have a model  
13 in place and that the policies and procedures  
14 have been promulgated and staff have been trained  
15 to that and that we have the aftercare capacity  
16 in place that we need, that we've engaged with  
17 communities. So, while my hope is--and also, the  
18 construction challenges that we experienced in  
19 the past because it was a very aggressive  
20 timeline. You know, we have to be ready for  
21 these young people and we need to have the  
22 services and supports in place. We would be doing  
23 them an immense disservice if we didn't have a  
24 system that was ready. And so while my  
25 expectation is that we are hoping to have our

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2 system in place in November, if it happens in  
3 January, I would ask for your indulgence in that,  
4 because I want to make sure that my system is up  
5 and running and has the set of services and  
6 supports that young people need. And we won't  
7 have those challenges that we've experienced  
8 before.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So you have the  
10 locations and I'm sure Children's Village will be  
11 the provider, obviously in Children's Village.  
12 Were there other locations? Do you have  
13 providers, discussion levels right now?

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, that was a  
15 procurement that--

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing] The  
17 RFP? Okay.

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, that was a  
19 procurement that the city did and they've  
20 identified three. That is Lincoln Watts,  
21 Episcopal Social Services and Children's Village.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So they're going  
23 to be the only three managing--

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]  
25 Yes.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: all of the sites?

3 Okay. My last question, have you gotten all the  
4 approvals you need from OCFS to begin the limited  
5 secure placement?

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No, we have not  
7 because we have not submitted a final plan for  
8 their review. We have--we submitted an initial  
9 plan. We received their comments, and we're in  
10 the process of revising that plan.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And when do you  
12 expect to cement the plan?

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Anticipate in  
14 three or four months we will be ready to submit a  
15 plan.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay. Thank you  
17 so much, Commissioner. I have another question,  
18 but I'll come back to that question later on.  
19 Thank you so much.

20 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: We will now hear  
21 from our Public Advocate, Letitia James.

22 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. Good  
23 morning, Commissioner. First, let me recommend  
24 that under--when you create this New York City's  
25 Children's Cabinet that you consider the office

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2 of Public Advocate. We would love to work with  
3 you with regards to this inter agency, improving  
4 interagency communication and services related to  
5 children and families. It's an issue, as you  
6 know, that I've been focused on all throughout my  
7 career. Two, I know that last night all New  
8 Yorkers were with this child that was found in  
9 Harlem, a child that was abandoned in a  
10 playground, and so as you create a public  
11 awareness campaign, I hope that you would include  
12 in that information with respect to safe haven,  
13 that all parents can leave children in safe  
14 havens without abandoning them in public parks  
15 and public playgrounds in the city of New York  
16 and not put children at harm. There was a fire  
17 house right across the street and the person only  
18 had to just leave the child at the firehouse and  
19 the child would be safe. Thank God the child was  
20 safe and we want to, again, applaud the young  
21 gentlemen who noticed the child in his window  
22 across the street, and on behalf of my office and  
23 I'm sure the City Council. We just want to,  
24 again, applaud his efforts in rescuing that  
25 child. So if we can include information with



2 respect to the safe haven and that campaign  
3 awareness, that would be great. Working with the  
4 previous Administration towards the end of their  
5 tenure, one of the--I was working with the  
6 Bloomberg Administration with respect to the  
7 public awareness campaign as it relates to child  
8 fatalities, primarily abuse and neglect and  
9 homicides, and often times parents are not--they  
10 leave their children with caretakers who are not  
11 properly trained and what we really need to is  
12 engage in a campaign to educate parents about  
13 leaving their children with caretakers who are  
14 not properly trained and not in an emotional  
15 state to care for children, which unfortunately  
16 has resulted in all too often fatalities of  
17 children. And let me add, primarily children of  
18 color. And so I was working with the Bloomberg  
19 Administration and I would love to work with you  
20 and under your leadership to make this a public  
21 awareness campaign with respect to how to keep  
22 children safe in the city of New York. And so let  
23 me ask you, I understand at some point in time  
24 there was a child fatality unit in the city of

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2 New York where we reviewed fatalities in the  
3 city, does that still exist?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We have a form  
5 of a child fatality review which is pretty  
6 rigorous. We call it now the Accountability  
7 Panel, and that is comprised of experts from, you  
8 know, outside of ACS, doctors and others and  
9 other city agencies that come together to review  
10 cases and they do that on a monthly basis and  
11 it's a rotating panel, pediatricians and mental  
12 health experts and others and law enforcement  
13 that come together to review these cases.

14 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Excellent. I  
15 now want to turn to Early Learn and thank you for  
16 recognizing the fictional aspirations of the  
17 Early Learn system, which under the previous  
18 Administration, under the leadership of Council  
19 Member Palma joined by Chair Levin and others and  
20 myself, we had a new name for it. It was Early  
21 Failure. We predicted it then and what we all  
22 predicted has come true, that it has been a  
23 complete failure of government and it's  
24 unfortunate. As you look at the enrollment  
25 numbers from fiscal year 12, 45,000 children

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2 enrolled and now we're at 30,000 children. We are  
3 missing over 15,000 children and the question  
4 really is, is it possible to track where these  
5 children have gone and under what care they're  
6 receiving in the city of New York, is that  
7 possible?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I don't think it  
9 is. I mean, I won't even look at staff. I just  
10 know what our own internal capacity is and we  
11 don't.

12 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay. Well,  
13 thank you for recognizing that. It raised some  
14 challenges going forward and let me also say that  
15 we criticize the previous Administration with  
16 respect to awarding contracts to agencies that  
17 could not, that did not have the capacity and  
18 agencies that unfortunately were not community  
19 based and were not in a position to handle all  
20 these children. So, my question to you is, are  
21 you considering a new RFP for childcare in the  
22 city of New York?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: You know, Public  
24 Advocate James, I'm taking very close look and  
25 review of the entire program, and that certainly

2 as you know, it's up in 2016 and that certainly  
3 is one of the options that I am considering.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. And  
5 I would hope with respect to the metrics and the  
6 standards that were used which were clearly  
7 objective, that we would use more objective  
8 standards and include and give more weight to  
9 community based organizations, organizations that  
10 are culturally sensitive and organizations that  
11 reflect the children that they're serving. I  
12 would hope that you would give some objective  
13 criteria and standards in your new RFP should you  
14 issue one. And let me just say that under the  
15 leadership of Council Member Palma who was the  
16 Chair of General Welfare, the City Council  
17 provided more than 50 million dollars in direct  
18 childcare subsidies for low income New Yorkers in  
19 the city's budget and more than 9,000 childcare  
20 slots that Mayor Bloomberg tried to eliminate.  
21 The City Council was able to save. It was a win  
22 for families, but yet it created another layer in  
23 delivering childcare services. And currently, as  
24 you know, we have a multiplicity of programs with  
25 overlapping funding streams, varying eligibility

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2 requirements and program requirements. I don't  
3 know whether or not there's any standard similar  
4 to Common Core, whether or not there's any  
5 developmental standards or curriculum standards  
6 related to childcare. I've gone to some childcare  
7 programs all throughout the city. Some are better  
8 than others. I can say that with some degree of  
9 confidence and there's a question as to whether  
10 or not we're providing one system of care across  
11 the board for all children of the city of New  
12 York to allow them to graduate into pre-k and  
13 then ultimately kindergarten.

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I agree with  
15 you. We need to have one standard of care. We  
16 need to have a coordinated integrated early care  
17 and education system across the city of New York.  
18 And I think in partnership with the Mayor and the  
19 Department of Education as we're looking at  
20 expanding universal pre-k, that really does give  
21 us a platform to be able to look at what we're  
22 doing in the entire system, and that is part of  
23 the challenge I have moving forward.

24 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you,  
25 Commissioner. And again, I thank you and I

2 congratulate you. It's a breath taking, it's a  
3 new day and thank you for your clarity, and  
4 again, if my office could be a part of this new  
5 interagency under the leadership of Deputy Mayor  
6 Richard Beury, the cabinet, the children's  
7 cabinet, we would greatly appreciate it and I  
8 thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
11 much, Public Advocate James. We are going to--I  
12 want to welcome Council Member Inez Barron, and  
13 we are going to next hear from Council Member  
14 Rory Lancman followed by Council Member Lander.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Good morning.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Good morning.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Five minutes  
18 to go before afternoon. It's good to see you,  
19 Commissioner, and for you and I to somewhat  
20 reprise our role. You coming from OCFS in the  
21 State and I was in the State Assembly, and I, as  
22 you might recall I chaired a subcommittee on work  
23 place safety and we worked very collaboratively  
24 with OCFS to try to address the issue of  
25 workplace violence in the juvenile justice

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2 system. So I do look forward to working with you  
3 hopefully as collaboratively here.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Absolutely.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Here in the  
6 city and in our new capacities. I want to ask you  
7 about two issues. One, just to get some  
8 clarification on the AWOL rate and what is being  
9 done about it, and then I do want to get into  
10 some details on the issue of workplace safety in  
11 the Close to Home program. So, as I understand  
12 it, looking at the Mayor's management report,  
13 the--one would--it would seem to indicate that  
14 the AWOL rate at nonsecure placement facilities  
15 is very low. The four month actual for FY 14 is  
16 at 0.8, but I recall reading and I pulled up  
17 articles from last year and the New York Times  
18 and the Daily News which indicated a much higher  
19 AWOL rate. The Time in particular wrote, "In the  
20 first eight months, 422 warrants were issued for  
21 more than 200 residents who had run away." It's  
22 approximately 20 percent or 25 percent AWOL rate  
23 and in one case there was a Queens Family Court  
24 judge who was I guess hearing the case of a youth  
25 whose placement level needed to be adjusted,

2 described it as a "potential threat to public  
3 safety." So could you explain to me the  
4 difference in the AWOL rates that the press seems  
5 to be reporting and the judge seemed to recognize  
6 and what's in the Mayor's management report?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So I think that  
8 that's--was early on in the implementation of  
9 Close to Home. I think that ACS, and certainly it  
10 was a concern at the State when I was at the  
11 State. I think that ACS has done an incredible  
12 amount of work to impact on that and reduce the  
13 number of AWOLs and the number of AWOLs is low.  
14 We've increased the use of both our investigative  
15 consultants on our staff, and also a partnership  
16 with the police and a partnership with the  
17 sheriff to really impact on that and have  
18 designated staff responsible producing that. You  
19 know, but that is something that you constantly  
20 have to work on, so I think we're in a better  
21 place. There's always room for improvement and  
22 that's, you know, some of the things that I want  
23 to avoid in an implementation of limited secure  
24 and make sure that that doesn't happen as we move  
25



2 forward in implementing the second phase of Close  
3 to Home.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Because I know  
5 I don't have to tell you that public support for  
6 this initiative is really important and for many  
7 of the people that I represent, the first thing  
8 that they intuitively feel when you're talking  
9 about bringing people who have been adjudicated  
10 of doing, committing some wrong doing of bringing  
11 them literally close to home in nonsecure  
12 placements is whether or not that's going to  
13 endanger a public safety. Are you comfortable  
14 that the--or confident that the numbers that's  
15 reported in the Mayor's management report, that  
16 0.8, that that's an accurate number?

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, based on  
18 all the reports and information that I've  
19 received. I actually think it's probably a little  
20 lower today than even eight percent.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Good. Well,  
22 that's good to hear, and again, I don't need--I  
23 know I don't need to emphasize with you how  
24 important it is that we have public support for  
25 this program which when we were in Albany

2 together in our different positions, we both  
3 support it very, very strongly. Let me just ask  
4 you about the issue of workplace violence. The  
5 work that we did in Albany was rooted in the  
6 state's workplace violence prevention law, which  
7 as you know requires public employers in  
8 particular to have a workplace prevention, a  
9 workplace violence prevention policy in place.  
10 It's very detailed. It's structured. It requires  
11 collaboration with the workforce and we passed  
12 legislation as part of our work together and part  
13 of our review which would extend the reporting  
14 requirements to workplace violence prevention  
15 requirements to nonprofit entities that have  
16 these juvenile justice placements. As you recall,  
17 there was some spectacular failures in upstate of  
18 nonprofit providers who--individuals either went  
19 AWOL or caused violence against staff, and so we  
20 extended that law to include those nonprofit  
21 providers, which my reading of the law would also  
22 include the Close to Home providers here in New  
23 York City. Do you know--have you had an  
24 opportunity to determine whether or not yet a  
25 juvenile justice workplace violence prevention

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2 law which is supposed to apply to those nonprofit  
3 Close to Home providers New York City, whether  
4 they are following through with that, whether  
5 they're adhering to that, and if so, what--let me  
6 ask--

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]  
8 Right.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Let me just  
10 let you answer that question.

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So it's  
12 something that I am reviewing right now. You  
13 know, as--like you, great interest of mine to  
14 make sure that our staff are safe and that we  
15 really understand how to keep staff safe and have  
16 the systems and procedures in place to facilitate  
17 that and the structure. So I'm actually--that's  
18 one of the things that I'm reviewing right now to  
19 see whether we are, whether we come under that  
20 and how are we doing.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Okay. So I'm  
22 going to follow up, as I'm sure many of my  
23 colleagues will follow up with a written request  
24 to get to the bottom of that, and I know that  
25 you're relatively new like I am and many of us

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2 are, and so if you could look into that and get  
3 us a response I would really appreciate it.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Absolutely.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you very  
6 much.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
8 Member Lancman. Council Member Lander followed  
9 by Council Member Menchacca. I'm sorry, Council  
10 Member Kallos.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you to  
12 all the Chairs, and welcome and congratulations,  
13 Commissioners. Wonderful to have you here.  
14 Great to see your team and all the energy that  
15 you're bringing, and of course I'm especially  
16 excited about the attention to enhancing  
17 community capacity and really strengthening the  
18 way our communities can be resources for all our  
19 families and kids. I want to talk a little more  
20 about the relationship between ACS Early Learn  
21 and the UPK expansion. So just--well, first, it's  
22 great to hear the plan and that there's resources  
23 to equalize the pay between DOE UPK and the CBO  
24 UPK that you talked about earlier. I assume that  
25 relies on getting the state funding that we've

2 asked for, a steady stream of state funding to be  
3 able to do that in the years to come. Am I right  
4 in that assumption?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: You are correct.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Alright, so one  
7 more reason why we need the Governor and the  
8 legislature to provide the resources that we've  
9 asked for in a steady and stable way as to be  
10 able to do that and I don't think people  
11 appreciate just how, you know, it's a big gap  
12 otherwise and would make a big difference in, you  
13 know, quality of care and equity. So that's a--I  
14 appreciate that you're attending to it and I will  
15 continue to fight to get those resources at the  
16 state level. So you said in your testimony that  
17 you currently have 12,681 four year olds in ACS  
18 slots, that right?

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: That's correct.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Those are all  
21 part day or half day?

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: They're full  
23 day.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Those are full  
25 day.

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2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Seven hundred of  
3 those are part time, right?

4 SUSAN NUCCIO: They're either in a Head  
5 Start day which is eight hours or a childcare  
6 day, which is 10 hours. The UPK part is only 2.5.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And the rest of  
8 it you supplement with other--

9 SUSAN NUCCIO: [interposing] We  
10 supplement and we wrap around--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: [interposing]  
12 Early Learn resources.

13 SUSAN NUCCIO: That's correct.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So one question  
15 there is will we see any savings if we--you know,  
16 again, I go--I understand that this depends on  
17 the state providing us the UPK funding, but if  
18 those four year olds were in, you know, state  
19 funded full day UPK, would there be Early Learn  
20 savings that could be used for some, you know, to  
21 achieve, to go down to three and two year olds or  
22 other?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Unfortunately,  
24 no, but Susan could give you a more detailed.

25

2 SUSAN NUCCIO: I'll explain why it's a  
3 no. The additional money is going to be an add-  
4 on, an enhanced rate add-on for every four year  
5 old seat. It is going to be used for a number of  
6 items that address the parody, like salaries,  
7 like professional days, additional staff that may  
8 be needed in the classrooms. So all the money is  
9 spoken for and there are no savings.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So you've  
11 factored what's currently being spent on the  
12 wrap-around into the overall budget already?

13 SUSAN NUCCIO: That's right.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And that's what  
15 was in Ready to Launch. Okay. Sorry, but at least  
16 I'm happy to understand it. So thank you on that.  
17 And I guess my last question is about achieving  
18 coordination for purposes of ease of enrollment  
19 for families, training and quality for teachers.  
20 They'll be, you know, we already have this but  
21 we'll have it, you know, even more. DOE  
22 classrooms, DOE funded CBOs and ACS funded CBOs  
23 all offering universal pre-k and as we get closer  
24 to everyone having that option, how are we  
25 working to make sure that families understand the

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2 full range of their choices, that it's a seamless  
3 process and that the efforts for quality for  
4 training of teachers are seamless across the  
5 systems?

6 SUSAN NUCCIO: That certainly is the  
7 goal, and we currently work very closely with DOE  
8 and we will continue to work very closely with  
9 DOE to ensure that there is that coordination,  
10 and DOE will be doing and providing the enhanced  
11 staff development. So we'll be the same  
12 professional development that is available across  
13 the system.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And DOE will be  
15 doing it for all the--

16 SUSAN NUCCIO: Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And I guess for  
18 some of your teachers they, the CBO teachers in  
19 your system, they might be getting you know, a  
20 meaningful salary increase which they would  
21 deserve. That'll go along with this professional  
22 development to help them--

23 SUSAN NUCCIO: [interposing]  
24 Absolutely.

25



2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: step up to  
3 these expanded responsibilities.

4 SUSAN NUCCIO: Absolutely, yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Very good.

6 Thanks very much. Well, I do--I'm out of time so  
7 I'm not going to ask more questions about the  
8 focus on sort of community capacity and  
9 collaboration which I know is important to you  
10 and many members of your team, but I look forward  
11 to hearing more about that in the future as well.  
12 Thank you. Welcome, and thank you, Mr. Chair.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
14 much, Council Member Lander. Council Member  
15 Kallos followed by Council Member Menchacca.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you,  
17 Chair Levin, Cabrera and most importantly, Chair  
18 Laurie Cumbo who is why I'm here as a member of  
19 the Women's Issues Committee. I am Ben Kallos.  
20 You can tweet me at Benkallos. Thank you  
21 Commissioner Carrion for your forward thinking  
22 testimony and for the new progressive policies of  
23 our Mayor and your agency with which many of us  
24 on the Council whole heartedly agree. You got the  
25 right attitude. We absolutely can do better for

2 our city's children. Thank you for your advocacy  
3 for early intervention and education through  
4 universal pre-k. I think you're the first  
5 Commissioner to come before us on a preliminary  
6 budget hearing advocating for funding to other  
7 agencies. So, within the--now, just within the  
8 ACS program area for juvenile justice including  
9 support and nonsecure detention, residential  
10 placement and secure detentions, we see a total  
11 cost of about 203 million dollars. Your  
12 performance measures indicate an emissions of  
13 3,419 children with an average daily population  
14 of 266 children, at an average cost per day of 77  
15 dollars a day per child and the average length of  
16 stay of 29 days or 22,533 dollars per child per  
17 stay. What is the recidivism rate once children  
18 are in the system and can we add that as a  
19 measure?

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We certainly can  
21 add that as a measure. I don't--in order to be  
22 able to calculate recidivism you need at least  
23 two years of opportunity time to be able to  
24 calculate that, and so as you know, Close to Home  
25 is a very new program. So at the state we

2 calculate a recidivism but I think that we need a  
3 cohort to be able to follow for two years to be  
4 able to have recidivism rates. You could have one  
5 year recidivism rates and two year recidivism  
6 rates. In the field, the norm is two years. The  
7 state, we did one year and two year. So, I don't  
8 know and I will say that I don't know what we do  
9 in terms of collecting information right now at  
10 ACS to determine recidivism. I know that our  
11 state partners do, so but absolutely. Now, you  
12 mentioned recidivism as a rate. I think that  
13 that's an important measure. I think that that  
14 should not be the only measure and it's a  
15 negative measure. I think that we need to be able  
16 to look at how are young people doing, how we've  
17 improved their reading level while they're with  
18 us, how we've improved their vocational skills,  
19 if that's--and how we help them manage their  
20 behavior better and make better choices. I think  
21 that we need to focus on wellbeing and positive  
22 measures, how they're doing in the community, how  
23 they're achieving, what our responsibility is to  
24 really create those conditions for success in the  
25 community, but recidivism is an established

2 measure in the field and I will certainly look at  
3 adding that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Along those  
5 lines, there's a concept of the system and there  
6 being a schools to prison pipeline which you are  
7 trying to stop. How can we stop our children from  
8 getting into the system and how can they once  
9 they've gotten into the juvenile justice system  
10 get out of it and not come back in?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: [interposing]  
13 Whether as children or as adults.

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, you're  
15 absolutely right. The prison--it's a pipeline and  
16 I know that there is--when the Mayor announced  
17 the appointment of the new director for the  
18 office of criminal justice, Liz Glazer [phonetic]  
19 and the appointment of senior advisor Vinny  
20 Sheraldi [phonetic]. One of the issues that  
21 office will be dealing with is the school to  
22 pipeline problem and working very closely with  
23 the Department of Education. So there will be an  
24 initiative underway for us to look closely at who  
25 we are suspending, why we're suspending them and

2 what kinds of interventions we need to put in  
3 place to reduce that from happening in the first  
4 instance. If you talk to young people in my  
5 system, for many of them, their first interaction  
6 with the criminal justice system is in schools,  
7 and so we need to look at that transition very  
8 closely. We need to, you know, we fund  
9 alternatives to detention and alternative  
10 diversion programs. We need to continue those  
11 investments. I'm happy to report the investment  
12 from ACS and the other city partners to diverting  
13 young people from coming into the juvenile  
14 justice system. We need to do a lot more to  
15 resource our communities and to build capacity in  
16 our communities to take care of their children.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So we're  
18 spending 1.8 million dollars on alternatives to  
19 detention, what kind of decrease can we see in  
20 the juvenile justice program with appropriate  
21 funding to education, interventions and  
22 alternatives to detention?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, I will tell  
24 you that the way I calculate our investment in  
25 diversion is much more than 1.8 million dollars

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2 because we have to look at the whole spectrum and  
3 just not ACS investments, though ours are  
4 substantial, but also our other partners. And so  
5 my very preliminary calculation is that as a city  
6 we spend at least 36 million dollars right now in  
7 diversion programs at different points in the  
8 continuum. And so because we've made these  
9 investments already and, you know, at the state I  
10 certainly was able to see a real substantial  
11 reduction in children coming into the system. My  
12 ability to be able to close 21 state juvenile  
13 justice facilities in the state speaks to the  
14 fact that we've done a good job of diverting  
15 young people from coming into our system. We can  
16 do better. We will continue to do better. We need  
17 to take a very close look at where those  
18 investments are going now and how we can improve  
19 those, the work that we're doing.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I love what  
21 you're saying. I'd be honored to work with you in  
22 making sure that the Mayor and the City Council  
23 are including you in the conversations. Thank you  
24 very much for your leadership.

25 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you, Council  
3 Member Kallos. We'll now have a follow-up  
4 question from Council Member Cabrereras.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Just a quick  
6 question. I noticed you mentioned you didn't have  
7 the data. Any regarding the nonsecure my  
8 colleague had just asked? Is there any--I notice  
9 you brought a lot of staff with you. I'm really  
10 happy to see. Is anybody here who has that data?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we have the--  
12 we have data on our population. The ability to  
13 determine recidivism and the way to do it  
14 appropriately is that you need to track them for  
15 at least a year if not two to be able to know  
16 what pathways they're taking. Are they coming  
17 back into the system, at a rest, right, at  
18 conviction, and then do they come into the system  
19 actually into placement? Those are three  
20 different juncture points that you measure. We're  
21 too early on in terms of you know, being able to  
22 have a cohort that we can scientifically measure  
23 what the opportunity for recidivism is at any  
24 point in time. We will be there when we have--the  
25 system is a little more mature.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay. Thank you  
3 so much.

4 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: We will now hear  
5 from Council Member Menchacca.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Thank you,  
7 Chair Cumbo and thank you Chairs Cabrera and  
8 Levin for giving me this opportunity and welcome  
9 Commissioner Carrion. I'm looking forward to  
10 working with you and your staff. I wanted to  
11 follow up a little bit on Council Member Cumbo's,  
12 or Chair's, questions about protective services  
13 and looking at specifically the neglect reports,  
14 child abuse neglect reports and the response rate  
15 within the 24 hours. You haven't yet reached 100  
16 percent which is clearly where we want to go.  
17 Can you tell us a little bit about that gap and  
18 how and what kind of resources you'll need to get  
19 to that response rate of 100 percent. Can you--

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Sorry. You're  
21 absolutely right that our goal is to be able to  
22 respond, you know, within the seven days and you  
23 know a first safety assessment and the 30 days in  
24 100 percent of the cases. So we're taking a very  
25 close look to determine what is it that we need



2 in order to get there, and where it is and what  
3 particular places within our child protective  
4 system in our offices, that there's a particular  
5 gap meeting that, and what are the challenges  
6 that we're experiencing. So we're doing that  
7 analysis right now.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Is there  
9 anything that's coming out right now of the  
10 analysis? Is this a budgetary issues? Is this  
11 just a kind of systematic?

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: You know, you  
13 know, I want to say that these are very  
14 complicated cases and we're seeing more  
15 complicated cases that take more time and so we  
16 have to make sure we're looking at caseloads,  
17 looking at the type of cases that we're  
18 assigning, you know, looking at workload, which  
19 is, you know, a measure that we need to focus on  
20 more, and so we're looking at all those  
21 variables, but I agree with you, we need to do  
22 that 100 percent of the time.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: And just on  
24 the specific 24 hour response, does that change  
25 as well? I mean, you kind of gave us the whole

2 kind of spectrum of services that would happen  
3 post report, but on the 24 hour, is there  
4 anything that--

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]  
6 We're out there.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We're out there.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Okay. Now,  
10 let's talk about the same report, the child abuse  
11 and neglect reports that have increased by 3.8  
12 percent in first four months of this fiscal year  
13 2014, can you tell us a little bit about what you  
14 learned about that uptick? What's happening?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: You know, it's  
16 difficult to be able to look at a four month  
17 picture. We really need to look at the 12 month  
18 to be able to have a sense and see whether  
19 there's a pattern or a trend even maybe within  
20 the first six months. It's difficult with a four  
21 month period to be able to look at trends and see  
22 what is happening.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Okay. Well,  
24 we're looking forward to seeing any reports that  
25 come out after your 12 month report or

2 information gathering. So the next set of  
3 questions are about our LGBTQ children that are  
4 interacting with ACS, and I'm really looking for  
5 any kind of data. You know, in 2006 you came out  
6 with a report. It kind of outlined a lot of  
7 different reforms and staffing up and systematic  
8 changes to ACS and how to respond to the specific  
9 LGBTQ youth and children. Is there any indication  
10 that you might be looking to revamp that and re-  
11 view how you've kind of accomplished--I know  
12 you've accomplished several of those things, but  
13 one, are you looking to create a new report and  
14 an action plan for the LGBT youth, and second,  
15 are there any things that you haven't yet  
16 accomplished that you'd like to prioritize and  
17 where the budget reflects that?

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, Council  
19 Member, I must share with you we've done a  
20 tremendous amount of work and I'm very proud of  
21 the work that we've done as I look, you know, and  
22 analyze and get familiar with my agency, the work  
23 that we've done with LGBTQ youth. It's very  
24 extensive, it's very deep and it's ongoing, not  
25 only within ACS, but also with our partner

2 agencies. We've promulgated a very comprehensive  
3 policy. We've done tremendous training across the  
4 system. We've developed liaisons in each of our  
5 provider agencies. We meet with them. We have  
6 events and resources, and so I'm thinking that  
7 we're doing a really good job and would welcome  
8 the opportunity to brief you more deep--you know,  
9 in more detail in terms of the tremendous work  
10 that we've been doing at ACS to really ensure  
11 that this population's safe, it's discrimination  
12 free, is treated with respect as any young person  
13 in our systems should be, and that our work is  
14 affirming and so that's important for ACS, for us  
15 and our entire system.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: And again, I  
17 understand the vision. The vision is definitely  
18 there and it's great that I'm hearing that today  
19 at this budget hearing. Is there anything about  
20 the budget, though, that you can kind of point to  
21 or show us the commitment to the LGBT community,  
22 specifically in our foster care program or  
23 anything that you kind of share beyond the vision  
24 that we clearly share?

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we, you know,  
3 we actually have a unit that is staffed and whose  
4 responsibility is to do this work. I don't. I'm  
5 not aware of any budgetary challenges. For  
6 instance, we've also been able to leverage  
7 private dollars in working with foundations for  
8 support. We are publishing a guide that's going  
9 to be issued to the entire field about the work  
10 and what our standards and expectations are. So  
11 that's going to come out very shortly. I just in  
12 fact reviewed it and signed off on it, and we're  
13 doing that with the support of New Yorkers for  
14 Children and so, you know, it's not only our own  
15 budget resources for our ability to leverage  
16 private funders which we have received private  
17 dollars to support this work.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Okay. Well,  
19 again, I look forward to work with you and your  
20 staff, and the LGBT caucus has grown to six  
21 members in the City Council and so we're all very  
22 excited to continue to work with you to kind of  
23 build out some of the vision that both you and  
24 the council share. So thank you so much.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
3 much, Council Member Menchacca. Next up we'll  
4 have Council Member Corey Johnson. And I want to  
5 welcome Council Member Donovan Richards.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: I thank you,  
7 Chair. Nice to see you, Commissioner. Thanks for  
8 testifying today and for your opening remarks. I  
9 appreciate it. I apologize I wasn't able to be  
10 here. I was coming in and out of the other  
11 meeting, but I do have some questions. I just  
12 want to follow up on what Council Member  
13 Menchacca just said, which is we know that LGBTQ  
14 youth face in many times a different set of  
15 circumstances that maybe the general population,  
16 though they're all at risk and vulnerable as we  
17 know, and I'm happy to hear that ACS has a  
18 dedicated person or persons doing this type of  
19 work. I would look forward to us as an entire  
20 council, but specifically the LGBT caucus working  
21 with you all and understanding in a greater way  
22 the work that the services you're providing in  
23 greater detail so maybe we can arrange for a time  
24 that the members of the LGBT caucus can learn in  
25 a greater way about those services.

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We welcome that  
3 opportunity.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Great, thank  
5 you. I wanted to ask a question and forgive me if  
6 it already has been asked when I was not here  
7 about first of all, the performance measures that  
8 are detailed the target numbers, whether it be  
9 Early Learn, voucher enrollment, enrollment in  
10 contract family childcare, how are those target  
11 numbers come up with? You know, how do you pick  
12 those target numbers? What are they based on?

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: They're based on  
14 the utilization of the services.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. And you  
16 guys have been--you know, it looks like the  
17 target, it's hitting 100 percent in some of  
18 these, which I guess is a--the target's 100  
19 percent, but in previous years, whether it be the  
20 Early Learn utilization on family childcare, it  
21 was only really 52 percent or 53 percent. So what  
22 is actually realistic? You know, we can make a  
23 target of 100 percent, but where can we--what can  
24 we actually increase it to?

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, you know,  
3 given the tremendous need for childcare and early  
4 childhood in the city of New York, we actually  
5 think there should be a 100 percent utilization  
6 and that we should really incentivize our  
7 providers to ensure that they're meeting the  
8 needs of their communities. I think when all of  
9 us go out and meet with--you meet with your  
10 constituents, I meet with people in the  
11 community, they all want more services and  
12 certainly childcare and early childhood programs  
13 are on the top of their list. And so if we have  
14 the capacity, we must make sure that every single  
15 slot is utilized and we need to work better with  
16 our providers, our provider agencies, our  
17 programs, our contracted agencies to make sure  
18 that they're meeting the need and we have to find  
19 ways to build their capacity to do that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: I don't  
21 disagree with you on that, and I would love it to  
22 be 100 percent. Basically, what I'm asking is  
23 what do we think is realistic? How high can we  
24 get the number in the next fiscal year given that  
25 the actual number for fiscal year 2013 was, you



2 know, 71 percent on utilization, 76 percent on  
3 center-based Early Learn utilization and only 52  
4 or 53 percent on family childcare? I think all of  
5 us would love to see 100 percent, but how do we  
6 bring that number up?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: First of all, I  
8 think that, you know, the challenge in responding  
9 to your question is the--is really now measuring  
10 the impact, what universal pre-k is going to do  
11 in the system. So now it's much more difficult to  
12 be able to answer that question, and I think that  
13 after we roll that out, we'd be in a better  
14 position to be able to make those assessments as  
15 to what the capacity of my system should be like  
16 and what--and setting those goals, 'cause I think  
17 that with universal pre-k it's a new day, a  
18 totally different, you know, structure is going  
19 to be in place and a new set of services, that's  
20 going to impact on my system.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: I appreciate  
22 that. I know my time is coming to a close. But I  
23 wanted to just, you know, briefly come back to I  
24 think what you said in your opening statement,  
25 which is unfortunately the timing of your

2 appointment was also timed with some tragic  
3 deaths that we saw amongst children in this city  
4 which was devastating, particularly, you know,  
5 Miles Dobson [phonetic], and I just would say  
6 that I'm happy to see the preventative services  
7 that are done and hopefully if we invest more in  
8 the preventative services and focus on that and  
9 making sure that families that need it or  
10 children that need it are actually receiving  
11 those services. That may be our best way to avoid  
12 some of these really tragic deaths in the future.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I agree.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you. Before I  
16 turn it over to Council Member Gibson, I just  
17 have some follow-up questions that I just wanted  
18 to ask very briefly. The first one is, prior to  
19 your leadership, I understand, and please correct  
20 me if I'm wrong, that at age 18, young people  
21 would transition "out of the system" and that  
22 that rule was changed so that young people could  
23 opt into staying until age 21. Is that correct?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Not exactly  
25 correct.

2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay.

3 COMMISSIONER CARRION: New York City,  
4 New York State has always for many years has been  
5 a state where young people can stay in care until  
6 the age of 21.

7 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Recent federal  
9 legislation was passed that allowed, that  
10 required states to move toward--there are many  
11 states that youth could stay in foster care until  
12 18.

13 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Right.

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: New York State  
15 was always 21 for many, many years. What you're  
16 referring to, I think, Councilwoman, is  
17 legislation that was passed to allow young people  
18 who sign out at 18 to come back into the system.

19 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Correct.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: And stay until  
21 21, and so that, there is that possibility now  
22 for a young person who decided for a variety of  
23 reasons to leave, who finds that they're having  
24 some struggles to come back into our system.

2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Correct. Okay. And  
3 wanted to ask, I guess, along those lines were,  
4 has there ever been any discussion when we think  
5 about medical benefits and programs that have  
6 been extended to 26 and they're saying that young  
7 people are taking a bit longer to establish  
8 themselves, even summer youth programs are up to  
9 age 24. Has there been some kind of conversation  
10 to continue to provide critical support services  
11 to young people beyond the age of 21?

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, you know,  
13 there's some states like California that actually  
14 do age of 24. You know, I think that that is  
15 something that we should be discussing and  
16 certainly at the state level that would, you  
17 know, would decide something like that, as to  
18 whether or not we would extend the age to 24.  
19 There are lots of considerations to make that  
20 decision, and it's--but it's certainly something  
21 worth talking about.

22 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: IS there something  
23 in terms of, because I think that's so important  
24 that young people have that level of support, is  
25 there any way of understanding that measuring

2 young people that opt out at 18, those that stay  
3 until 21, are there cost benefits to young people  
4 staying supported longer than not because of  
5 other types of services that they'll need if they  
6 don't have that level of support?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well, as you  
8 know, and you're referring to is that young  
9 people in care have access to a multitude of  
10 benefits, including educational benefits, medical  
11 benefits and supports, and particularly, young  
12 people that are in college. As you know, you  
13 don't graduate from college at 21, and you--

14 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing]  
15 Right.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Right? You need  
17 support beyond that. So, you know, I would not be  
18 surprised if there isn't some national study that  
19 measures that and talks about the cost benefit,  
20 does a cost benefit analysis to help in form that  
21 question.

22 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: That even brings up  
23 a better question for me, even on an educational  
24 standpoint that would be helpful for me, is are  
25 young people that do decide to, as they hopefully

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2 all should, attend a four year institution or to  
3 receive an associate's degree as a part of what  
4 you provide in that level of additional support?

5 Is there any kind of special support services  
6 that young people can receive for their higher  
7 degrees of education?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So you know they  
9 get--there's and educational training voucher,  
10 ETVs, which young people that are engaged in  
11 higher education get a 5,000 dollar grant a year--  
12 -

13 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER CARRION: while they're in  
15 school, and you know, our partner's, New Yorkers  
16 for Children, for instance, has a guardian  
17 program that helps support young people--

18 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing]  
19 Excellent.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: through the four  
21 years of college, we really need to build on that  
22 and there's interest in the foundation, and I  
23 think it's an area for us to be able to do more  
24 and work in partnership with others that are  
25 interested in supporting that.

2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you. And just  
3 two other brief questions. Wanted to know is  
4 there any discussions about a relationship with  
5 programs like Teach for America, in terms of the  
6 UPK initiative, in terms of training staff on a  
7 more aggressive level, maybe allowing more young  
8 people to enter into that program in order to be  
9 prepared for UPK.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Absolutely.  
11 Yes, I just recently met with the New York  
12 Director of Teach for America and was pleased to  
13 learn that they actually are placing teachers in  
14 our pre-k and early education settings and in  
15 fact, they're in 39 programs, and so we are  
16 talking about a collaboration and how we can  
17 further enhance that--create a relationship and  
18 further enhance that. So, yes, I actually did  
19 meet them a couple weeks ago.

20 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I'm glad to hear  
21 that's happening. And then my final question I  
22 have to ask, do you have a relationship--I heard  
23 you mention partnerships with DYCD. Is there a  
24 relationship that's been established previously  
25 with the Department of Cultural Affairs? Has

2 there been a previous relationship, and is there  
3 one in the plans for the future moving forward?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So I don't know  
5 the answer to that. Does anybody in my staff know  
6 whether we have a relationship with the Cultural-  
7 -but it's certainly a relationship we should  
8 have.

9 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Absolutely.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We should  
11 definitely have a relationship and I've been  
12 making the rounds of trying to meet with my  
13 colleagues, and so I will definitely make sure  
14 that I meet with the new Commissioner for  
15 Cultural Affairs.

16 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: And I just want to  
17 add with that, what's so important with that is  
18 that many cultural, culturally based institutions  
19 would be excellent CBOs and providers for a lot  
20 of these programs and to also provide cultural  
21 support which I think is the foundation that so  
22 many of our young people, particularly young  
23 people of color are lacking, and the ability to  
24 create the types of programs or activities such  
25 as the first avenue center, something that would



2 draw them back to a continuous project or a  
3 program or trips.

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Or opportunities  
6 for them to partner with cultural institutions  
7 would be very valuable and very important.

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah, I agree  
9 with you. You know, we actually do that now, but  
10 we don't do it in collaboration with our sister  
11 agency. So we have collaboration with Carnegie  
12 Hall that comes in. We have a robust, you know,  
13 set of community programs and cultural programs  
14 that come into our detention centers. We have a  
15 program with cool--is it cool culture--cool  
16 culture. But I think that having a more formal  
17 relationship will give us more access to the vast  
18 array of cultural opportunities in the city of  
19 New York and really be able to introduce our  
20 young people to that.

21 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Council Member  
23 Gibson?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very  
25 much all of my colleagues. Thank you Chairs for

2 hosting us today and welcome and congratulations  
3 Commissioner and to your Deputy. It's a pleasure  
4 to see you here in this city. I, too, served as  
5 an Assembly member and remember your days of  
6 Commissioner of OCFS, so I appreciate your long,  
7 long time commitment to children and families,  
8 not just in the city but across the state of New  
9 York. So I'm looking forward to working with you  
10 and your Administration. My question focuses on  
11 alternative ATIATD programs. I serve as the Chair  
12 of Public Safety, and the criminal justice  
13 coordinator which is now rolled under the new  
14 Mayor's Criminal Justice Director, Elizabeth  
15 Glazer who will be starting soon. I know that the  
16 city council has always historically supported a  
17 number of alternative programs, so I wanted to  
18 know being that you're talking about so much  
19 creativity and focusing on cross-over youth and  
20 young people who experience a number of  
21 challenges in their home life, in their  
22 community. So I wanted to know since the last  
23 budget hearing, have there been any changes to  
24 the alternative programs and specifically your  
25 roll in working with juvenile justice, working

2 with the Criminal Justice Coordinator as it  
3 relates to expanding on a lot of these programs.  
4 These are incredible programs across the city and  
5 I want to make sure that we're focusing not just  
6 on the detention, but we're focusing more on  
7 prevention and preventive efforts.

8 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So Councilwoman,  
9 there was a change from I think last year where  
10 we were funding a particular program, Boy's Town,  
11 that that program has now been terminated based  
12 on the needs that we see, the different  
13 population that's coming on and the program  
14 really wasn't meeting those needs, though I will  
15 say that Boy's Town runs a very good program, and  
16 we enjoy a good relationship with them. This  
17 particular program is no longer meeting the needs  
18 of young people. As you know, Liz Glazer was the  
19 state Deputy for--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]  
21 Public Safety.

22 COMMISSIONER CARRION: public safety  
23 and we worked very closely together and I--it is  
24 my hope and expectation to continue that close  
25 working relationship with Director Glazer. In

2 fact, we've already met and had a number of  
3 discussions about our work moving forward. I  
4 think that I want to take the opportunity to take  
5 a close look at where our investments are in  
6 ATDs, investments that ACS is making and  
7 investments at our partners to make sure that  
8 those are the right investments, that they're in  
9 the right communities, and that they're meeting  
10 the needs. We do have a lot of capacity and the  
11 question is, is it the right capacity, and is it  
12 in the right modality, and it is meeting the  
13 needs that are being presented now. We have a  
14 very different population coming into our  
15 juvenile justice system as we move to divert more  
16 and more young people and so what is that we're  
17 seeing and being able to use the science and  
18 research that shows us what works, implementing  
19 what works, and being critical about what, you  
20 know, taking a very critical eye to make sure  
21 that our investments are the right investments,  
22 but I agree with you, they're very important that  
23 we continue and that we divert as many young  
24 people coming into the system as possible.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Absolutely. And  
3 during my Assembly days I was a huge fan and  
4 supporter of the Raise the Age campaign. New York  
5 sadly is only one of two states in the nation  
6 that continues to prosecute young people, 16 ages  
7 and older. So my question is, does the agency  
8 anticipate any changes and if we do, is there a  
9 cost associated with that, with the fact that  
10 there could be additional youth in the juvenile  
11 justice system? I was glad to hear the Governor  
12 talked about it in his state of the state  
13 address. I would love to see it happen this year,  
14 before they commence with the legislative  
15 session, but is the agency prepared to serve more  
16 children that would be coming into the juvenile  
17 justice system?

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So,  
19 Councilwoman, as you know, the Governor has  
20 called for the creation of a Commission. In his--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]  
22 We love Commissions.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Right. In his  
24 charge to the Commission, he did say that the  
25 state was going to raise the age of criminal

2 responsibility. The purpose of the Commission is  
3 to map out a blue print on how we would do that  
4 as a state. And so that really would inform the  
5 impact that it would have on ACS. So I'm not  
6 prepared to tell you right now what that impact  
7 would look like, because it could take a lot of  
8 different, you know, different directions. And  
9 for instance, in the state of Connecticut, when  
10 they increased the age of criminal  
11 responsibility, they first--they did in two  
12 tiers. They first increased it to 17 and then  
13 moved to 18, but they did not see an overall  
14 increase in young people coming into the system  
15 because they were able to do many, many more  
16 programs in communities and do a better job of  
17 assessment and looking at what the needs of young  
18 people were in developing those supports in  
19 communities. So it's very difficult without  
20 having that blue print, without understanding how  
21 New York State is going to do it, to be able to  
22 gauge the impact that it would have on our  
23 system. None the less, it's something that we  
24 need to start looking and focusing on, you know,  
25 very early on.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right, okay.

3 And I appreciate that and I would love to work  
4 with you and look forward to working with you,  
5 not just as a member of General Welfare, but  
6 certainly in my role as Chair of Public Safety.  
7 There's a lot of collaboration that's currently  
8 underway and I certainly look forward to working  
9 with you as well as Elizabeth Glazer.

10 Congratulations and best wishes to you and your  
11 new role, and thank you very much.

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
14 much, Council Member Gibson. Council Member  
15 Richards, questions?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Good morning.

17 Oh, good afternoon, rather. Pleasure to see you  
18 here, Commissioner. It's an honor to be--to work  
19 with you and I look forward to continuing to work  
20 with you. I think Vanessa said it all. I just  
21 wanted to add a few things. Wanted to speak on  
22 hurricane Sandy and wanted to know--I know there  
23 was several sites that were impacted across the  
24 city. I don't know if this question was asked  
25 already, but just wanted to raise it. And wanted

2 to know are the sites operating? Are all sites  
3 operating, in particular the Rockaways? I know we  
4 lost several sites and I wanted to know are you  
5 having challenges with enrollment and if you are,  
6 will the numbers be held against these daycares  
7 this fiscal year? Because I know you guys allot  
8 a certain amount of seats every year, and I know  
9 this is a new Administration, so it just was  
10 interesting in hearing more of what's happening  
11 with these sites that were affected by the storm.

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, you know  
13 that over 20 sites were impacted by the storm,  
14 but I'm happy to report that all of them are back  
15 on their original site, except for one, but  
16 they're all operating and they're back on the  
17 original site. There is one that is not, and  
18 that's a PAL program. They're operating but  
19 they're operating out of the local YMCA. We've  
20 been working with them to do the design and  
21 planning for the new facility that has to be  
22 rebuilt. That should be completed in a couple of  
23 months, shortly, and then we are looking forward  
24 to working with them to be able to identify funds  
25 for the actual construction. Their impact has



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2 been because of the co-location with the Y,  
3 they're down one classroom.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: What center  
5 is this?

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: La Puenta  
7 [phonetic].

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Oh, okay.  
9 That's not in my district. Okay, gotcha, La  
10 Puenta, okay. And are you guys giving any  
11 additional resources towards these centers?

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: We did, very--  
13 you know, we did provide substantial amount of  
14 money that we were able to receive from the  
15 federal government, from private foundations,  
16 from city resources to be able to have them  
17 repair, rebuild their classrooms, the supplies,  
18 the educational material. So they're up and  
19 running.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay. And I  
21 just want to go back to the enrollment question.  
22 Will enrollment be held against these centers in  
23 this fiscal year? Because I know you guys slide  
24 a certain amount of numbers.

25

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, I think  
3 we'll look into that, but my information is that  
4 enrollment has not suffered. It's about the same  
5 that it was before, and they were able to make  
6 up, but having said that, if their enrollment was  
7 low to begin with, then you know, we have a  
8 challenge. You know, we are trying very hard to  
9 incentivize our providers to do everything they  
10 can to fill those seats.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay. I just  
12 raised that because I know there were a lot of  
13 families displace, for instance, in the  
14 Rockaways, and I know some of the directors were  
15 having challenges early, so I just would ask that  
16 that not be held against them and sort of help  
17 give them a little bit more time to bounce back,  
18 and that's it. So, thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
21 much, Council Member Richards. Council Member  
22 Barron?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. I  
24 want to thank the co-chairs for hosting this and  
25 I want to thank the panel for the Commissioner

2 for coming to be a part. As was expressed earlier  
3 by the Public Advocate, I also have a great  
4 concern. It was not under your Administration,  
5 but the awarding of contracts for Early Learn,  
6 there are allegations that they lacked  
7 sensitivity in terms of cultural awareness of the  
8 students that would be serviced, and that they  
9 lacked objectivity in the scoring and there are  
10 allegations that at least one proposal that I  
11 know was told to go back and be rescored because  
12 the score was too high, and it was a program that  
13 had a track record of over 30 years of experience  
14 and was nationally acclaimed. So, going forward,  
15 I would be very concerned and want to get  
16 assurances that the scoring will be objective and  
17 it will reflect the sensitivity to the culture  
18 and the ethnicity of the students that will be  
19 served.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Absolutely. We  
21 share the same concern.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Good. In your--  
23 in the budget there is a proposal to eliminate  
24 support for supplemental child welfare funding.  
25 Can you elaborate as to what will be impacted by

2 eliminating the post adoption services and what  
3 impact do you think that would have on parents  
4 that would be considering adopting children?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So that's part  
6 of the state budget, and post adoptive services  
7 are preventative services of different former  
8 preventive services for families that adopt  
9 children out of the system primarily. And so, you  
10 know, my experience has been that every year  
11 those dollars are removed from the budget and  
12 then by the time their budget negotiation,  
13 there's a realization of the importance of those  
14 service supports and there's a restoration of  
15 some of those services. That's been my past  
16 experience. I think that we have to be cognizant  
17 that our families need support. You know, budget,  
18 you know are very challenging, but the impact is  
19 we don't want to see more disrupted adoptions  
20 taking place. We want to make sure that families  
21 that adopt are supported and are able to receive  
22 the supports that they need in order to keep  
23 families intact.

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Can you  
3 elaborate as to what some of those services are  
4 that those families receive?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well, they can--  
6 it could be a range. I mean, it could be  
7 educational services. It could be family therapy  
8 services. It could be respite. So it could be a  
9 range of those supportive services. A family  
10 comes in and says, you know, and we experience it  
11 particularly when their children become  
12 adolescents, and so you might have you know, some  
13 behavioral problems or challenges that the young  
14 person's presenting. You could have school  
15 related problems. It could be a grandma that  
16 adopted and needs some respite and needs some  
17 help, and so those agencies that provide that  
18 work with the adoptive parent to identify the  
19 sets of supports they need, but they usually  
20 involve some family therapy, some family  
21 mediation, some respite care, some educational  
22 supportive services, that there might be some  
23 disability that the child is experiencing that  
24 didn't manifest itself before, that they're  
25 seeking some support with. Now, there's some

2 general programs in the community that they can  
3 access, but the post adoptive programs in my  
4 experience have specialized knowledge and the  
5 ability to know how to work and interface with  
6 adoptive parents.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you so  
8 much, look forward to working with you.

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Same here.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
11 Member Barron. Chair Cabrera?

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so  
13 much. Just two quick questions. One is you know,  
14 you mentioned one of the three providers for the  
15 limited secure placement, and for some reason I  
16 remember there was an incident and I just googled  
17 it and it was Lincoln Watts in Yonkers. There  
18 was a young man that was restrained. He was  
19 playing basketball and he was restrained. I'm  
20 sure you're familiar with the--

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] I  
22 am.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: incident. Does--  
24 were the changes in terms of restraining  
25 procedures that were made as a result of that

2 young boy basically dying? From what I  
3 understand, the young boy, the teenager said he  
4 was--he couldn't breathe. He had three gentleman  
5 on top of him, and I understand that there's--  
6 there are procedures, but were there any changes  
7 in procedures that were made, and did that come  
8 into consideration, and also in having them being  
9 one of the providers coming into this limited  
10 secure placement?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So I do have a  
12 recollection because that happened while I was  
13 State Commissioner. There was, as you know, no  
14 criminality found or charges brought, nor did the  
15 state find that there was any breach of  
16 regulations on the part of Lincoln Watts. I think  
17 that as a result of that tragedy, 'cause it was  
18 truly a tragedy, whenever we lose the life of a  
19 young person or a child, that there were some  
20 changes in procedures at Lincoln Watts and how,  
21 when and how they can utilize restraints and also  
22 training for all of the staff. I was not at ACS  
23 when the determinations were made as to who would  
24 be the providers, but I do know that Lincoln  
25 Watts took this very seriously and really

2 reviewed all of their practices and instituted  
3 some changes.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay, I'm glad to  
5 hear that. And my last question is for those  
6 youth who have gone AWOL, is there any  
7 conversations around electronic monitoring and  
8 how much it will cost to implement? And the  
9 reason I ask is, let's suppose you have a child  
10 who is limited secure placement, he goes AWOL the  
11 first time, the second time. Instead of them  
12 going to more secure kind of environment that  
13 this would be kind of a way to be able to for  
14 lack of better word track them down and to make  
15 sure that they are safe, and I think it would  
16 raise maybe the level of consciousness in the  
17 youth to know they know where I'm at.

18 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, you know, in  
19 a--we don't anticipate that there were AWOLs from  
20 limited secure in any great number. We certainly--  
21 -I'm trying to think about whether there is a  
22 precedent for something like that. While a young  
23 person is already in placement, it's something  
24 that I'm willing to explore. You know, our young  
25 people are pretty creative in finding ways to



2 undo what adults do. So it's something that I  
3 certainly can review and tell you whether or not  
4 there's efficacy in doing something like that.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: If I recall,  
6 there was some kind of a pilot program every--one  
7 of your staff first will remember. I don't  
8 remember exactly where.

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we certainly  
10 do it in aftercare.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: In Brooklyn, it  
12 was in Brooklyn.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yeah, we  
14 certainly do it in after care.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Oka.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So that--and  
17 aftercare, that's certainly something that we use  
18 in order to monitor the coming and going of young  
19 people that are in aftercare status that are at  
20 risk of absconding. It's not something I think  
21 that we've done while they're in placement with  
22 us in a facility where we have a responsibility  
23 for keeping them there, but it's certainly  
24 something that I can explore.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay, good. I'm  
3 looking forward to have this kind of level of  
4 conversations when we get together. Thank you so  
5 much, Commissioner.

6 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Chair  
8 Cabrera. Thank you Commissioner. I just have a  
9 couple of more questions and then we'll wrap up.  
10 I wanted to ask with regard to family childcare  
11 providers, are you aware, have you heard from  
12 providers in the FCC network that they are  
13 receiving payments below market rate or that they  
14 are experiencing an increase in administrative  
15 fees lately? Have you been hearing this at all  
16 from providers?

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: I hear a lot  
18 from providers over a wide range of issues,  
19 including their rates and the adequacy of those  
20 rates. I think that we've had some challenges. I  
21 understand from a technology perspective in  
22 implementing some of the rate increases. For  
23 instance, for legally exempt providers if they  
24 take 10 additional hours of training they're  
25 entitled to enhanced rate. So we're trying to

2 figure out--you know, we're challenged very much  
3 with technology and the lack of systems, and in  
4 our early care and learn system, and so that's a  
5 challenge that we're working on. We will be  
6 implementing the market rate that the state just  
7 issued and we are confident that we're going to  
8 be able to implement that or so my staff tells  
9 me, and if they tell me that, I'm sure it's going  
10 to happen. I think that in the past we've had  
11 some challenges and we've addressed some of that.  
12 I think that there is a larger issue that we need  
13 to work on and that's improving our technology  
14 tools and creating a system that allows us to be  
15 able to do changes and fixes in a more prompt way  
16 than we are able to do them now. Susan, would you  
17 add anything to that?

18 SUSAN NUCCIO: Just that it--the  
19 administrative fee is based on enrollment as  
20 well. So if there is an enrollment issues in a  
21 home, it could be that's why there's a complaint.  
22 I'm not sure. I'm just guessing.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. We've heard  
24 some issues coming from the provider community,  
25 family childcare provider community. So if we

2 could just kind of keep in touch about that,  
3 because if there's anything that I'm hearing, I'd  
4 like to bring it to you.

5 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Absolutely.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Also,  
7 with regard to rates, are you hearing from Early  
8 Learn providers that rates are sufficient? Are  
9 you--we're hearing frankly that rates are not  
10 sufficient in the Early Learn program for  
11 contracted providers and also, the issue around  
12 healthcare has been something that has--we've  
13 been hearing from the outside of the Early Learn  
14 contract. I was wondering if you could speak to  
15 those.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Yes, I've met  
17 with many of the groups already and I'm hearing  
18 the same things that you're hearing around the  
19 adequacy of the rate and around the increased  
20 cost, particularly in healthcare and workers  
21 compensation to areas that they have flagged for  
22 me. I think the challenge that we have continues  
23 to be how well we've resourced the system and the  
24 fact that we have this continuing deficit. So  
25 it's very difficult to be able to address that

2 with the resources that we do have and we do the-  
3 -we, you know. All the money that is available  
4 is invested in the system. I, you know, I think  
5 that's, you know, some of the challenges that we  
6 continue to experience with our system. I think  
7 that if we are able to enhance our enrollment,  
8 you will see that they would have more revenue to  
9 be able to sustain their cost. There have been in  
10 2012 and 2013, there have been some rate  
11 increases for the providers. So that's really the  
12 state of affairs right now, but yes, I have heard  
13 that.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Thank you.

15 And one last question on Early Learn is we've  
16 been--we understand due to the Early Learn  
17 implementation that there are many former  
18 childcare workers who lost their jobs and are  
19 legally owed vacation and sick time in the  
20 collective bargaining agreements, and that was  
21 still in effect when they lost their jobs. Does  
22 ACS, is this on your radar and how does ACS plan  
23 to resolve the issue and in what timeline?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So, you know,  
25 yes it is, and I shared earlier we've paid out 66

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2 percent to the providers and we've paid out eight  
3 million dollars. The challenge continues to be  
4 that the providers must give us their audit, and  
5 so we have providers that have not submitted  
6 their audits yet. We're working with the daycare  
7 counsel to help facilitate that and expedite it.  
8 Once we get those audits, we're able to review  
9 it. Then we're able to pay out if they have funds  
10 still available after that. You know, we review  
11 that audit.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Thank you.  
13 Couple more questions here. With regard to the  
14 state budget, there seems to be a cut in the Safe  
15 Harbor Act of 1.65 million dollars. The state  
16 contribution was eliminated in the FY 15 state  
17 executive budget. This is for funding to address  
18 the needs of youth who may be or have been  
19 sexually exploited under the Safe Harbor Act. Are  
20 you familiar with--

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]  
22 Yes, I am.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: that cut and how is  
24 that affecting ACS's mission.

25

2 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So what we think  
3 that the state did was spread the money out  
4 across more counties, but we recently received  
5 over 600,000 dollars from the state which we're  
6 using once again to continue some of the  
7 initiatives and some new initiatives and  
8 partnership also with DYCD. So we think that we  
9 have the sufficient funding right now to be able  
10 to continue the work that we have been doing in  
11 Safe Harbor.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but there's  
13 going to be a net loss of a million dollars or is  
14 that--

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing]  
16 Well, we're not sure yet how that's really going  
17 to, you know, impact us and how it's going to  
18 look at the end of the day.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Okay.  
20 Another question around state budget. The state  
21 budget does not include ACOLA [phonetic] this  
22 year. How would that affect agencies that work  
23 with ACS?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Well,  
25 unfortunately, we will not have the money to

2 provide them with ACOLA increase. We have funds  
3 for ACOLA increase from the federal government  
4 for Head Start. It's a 1.3 percent increase, but  
5 that would be the only segment in the system that  
6 would be eligible for ACOLA increase.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: From the city as  
8 well from the state?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRION: From the state.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: From the state. Now  
11 is the city--

12 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] I  
13 mean, from the federal government we received an  
14 increase of--for ACOLA for 1.3 percent.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRION: For the Head  
17 Start providers

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. Is the city  
19 looking at potentially working on ACOLA this year  
20 for city contracts?

21 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Not to my  
22 knowledge.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. That's--if we  
24 could follow up on that as the situation moves  
25 forward. One other question here. I just have



2 two more questions actually. One was with regard  
3 to foster care. We've heard from providers that  
4 youth who are placed back with their families but  
5 are still technically in the legal custody of the  
6 Commissioner, the providers, the foster care  
7 providers are still providing services but not  
8 receiving reimbursement for those services. We  
9 hear that there's 20 percent of case loads in the  
10 foster care system are in that circumstance. Is  
11 that something that's on your radar and is there  
12 a plan on ACS's part to change that moving  
13 forward so that there's funding provided for  
14 services rendered in that circumstance?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So let me give  
16 you the good new first and then share with you  
17 some of my concerns. So under the title 4E waiver  
18 that we receive from the federal government, we  
19 actually will have the funding to be able to  
20 reduce caseloads. And so that will really be able  
21 to address that concern that the agencies have.  
22 They will now have 10 cases plus two, what we  
23 call suspended cases that could include those  
24 cases that you referred to, but I think that one  
25 of the challenges that we have is, you know,

2 providers interpret this, which is a very good  
3 thing with title 4E and we're very happy to be  
4 able to do this and the providers know that.  
5 We've announced it to the providers and I think  
6 that we will see much, much better work as a  
7 result of the reduced work load that they will  
8 have now, caseloads. But you know, it is been  
9 historically the position of the city and the  
10 state that the rate that is paid to providers  
11 includes that responsibility and as part of their  
12 contract. So they know this when we contract with  
13 them, but we are now in a position to provide  
14 them with additional relief as we reduce  
15 caseloads and the staff to case ration and how  
16 they are able to increase their supervisory  
17 ratio. So we're very pleased about that.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you  
19 Commissioner. And lastly, I just wanted to ask  
20 very quickly about preventive services. Has--how  
21 is the new delivery system and models impacted  
22 access to preventive services for children and  
23 families and is there a plan, this with the  
24 evidence based model, is there a plan to roll out  
25 new models system wide and can you give us an

2 update on the status of that and feedback from  
3 providers that you've heard?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: So we have not  
5 seen an impact at all on access, and I think that  
6 with the roll out of the evidence based new  
7 interventions we've seen a better alignment  
8 between the need that is presented by the family  
9 and the interventions and the array of  
10 interventions that we have available now. There  
11 is no waiting list right now for any of our  
12 services. You know, we're still--it's a new,  
13 relatively new program so we're working closely  
14 with the providers. You know, we're also have  
15 retained the services of implementation expert to  
16 help the agencies and help us make sure that we  
17 have--we deal with the implementation challenges.  
18 As with any new program, some providers are doing  
19 better than other providers and we work very  
20 closely with them to make sure that we address  
21 the concerns and that families are receiving the  
22 services that they need.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Are you seeing a  
24 difference in the enrollment numbers or  
25 utilization numbers between evidence based and

2 non-evidence based? Is there any difference or is  
3 that--

4 COMMISSIONER CARRION: [interposing] So  
5 you know, we really are, you know, we have by  
6 modality so there's still general preventive  
7 services and there's a certain number of slots  
8 that are assigned.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRION: And then there's  
11 slots assigned by intervention. I don't think  
12 that we're seeing any, you know, shifts to speak  
13 of.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Do any of my  
15 colleagues have any further questions?  
16 Commissioner, I want to thank you very much for  
17 taking the time to be here this morning and this  
18 afternoon. I'm sorry?

19 COMMISSIONER CARRION: No, I just  
20 wanted the opportunity to thank you and I just  
21 wanted to clarify one of the remarks that I made.  
22 I don't want to leave any misimpression to the  
23 city council.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.  
25

2 SUSAN NUCCIO: I'm going to help  
3 clarify that. The parody that we're speaking of  
4 in UPK is CBO to CBO. ACS CBO to DOE CBO's, not  
5 to DOE staff.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Not to DOE, and  
7 just to be clear, not for UPK programs in the  
8 schools is what you're saying.

9 SUSAN NUCCIO: Exactly. Well, they  
10 might be some CBOs that run them in the schools,  
11 so I don't want to define it by location. But  
12 there are CBOs for UPK that contract with DOE and  
13 there are CBOs that contract with us. The parody  
14 we're speaking about in salaries for the lead  
15 teacher is between those two.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: CBO to CBO.

17 COMMISSIONER CARRION: CBO to CBO.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
19 for your time. I appreciate you being here. I  
20 look forward to working with you for the next  
21 many years, and we have a lot of good work to do  
22 together. This is the start of a very productive  
23 relationship. Do any of my Co-Chairs want to add  
24 anything?

2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I just want to echo  
3 the sentiments, and from the Women's Issues  
4 Committee and all of my Committee members, we're  
5 very excited to creating an agenda of equality  
6 for women and breaking the cycles of poverty that  
7 so many young women find themselves in throughout  
8 the years. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Just looking  
10 forward getting together in the near future.

11 COMMISSIONER CARRION: Thank you.  
12 Thank you so much and thank you for this  
13 opportunity and I look forward to working with  
14 each of you to improve the outcomes for our  
15 children and families. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
17 much, Commissioner. I want to thank my  
18 legislative counsel, Andrea Vasquez and  
19 Legislative Financial Analyst Nora Yaya  
20 [phonetic], thank you.

21 [gavel]

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good afternoon. I  
23 am Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of the  
24 General Welfare Committee. This is the second of  
25 our preliminary budget hearings for the General

2 Welfare Committee today. At this point we will  
3 hear testimony from the Department of Homeless  
4 Services, also referred to as DHS regarding its  
5 preliminary budget and general agency operations  
6 within its proposed 981.7 million dollar budget  
7 for FY 15 as well as performance indicators for  
8 homeless services within the fiscal 2014  
9 preliminary Mayor's management report or PMMR.  
10 DHS provides emergency shelter, rehousing support  
11 and services to single adults and families with  
12 little to no alternative housing options. As the  
13 homeless population continues to grow to  
14 unprecedented levels here in New York City, so  
15 does the demand for financial resources required  
16 to meet the needs for this vulnerable population.  
17 The proposed fiscal 2015 preliminary budget for  
18 DHS increased by 75.7 million dollars when  
19 compared to the FY 14 adopted budget which  
20 represents an 8.3 percent increase. Clearly, this  
21 Administration has wasted no time in adding  
22 resources to DHS with new funding starting in  
23 this fiscal year and growing in fiscal 2015. In  
24 the preliminary plan, the Administration has  
25 taken a step to reverse previously proposed

2 funding reductions or PEGS [phonetic] as well as  
3 included new funding for subway outreach and  
4 shelter security. I look forward to hearing more  
5 about the impact of the restorations that were  
6 proposed in the FY 15 plan as well as the  
7 agency's new needs. This fiscal year, the DHS  
8 shelter census has hit historic highs of over  
9 50,000 individuals including over 22,000  
10 children. The agency's preliminary 2015 plan  
11 includes an adult and family shelter re-estimates  
12 to accommodate the growing homeless population.  
13 This pattern of increased shelter spending causes  
14 concern for us. While we support the provision  
15 of shelter services and making sure capacity is  
16 adequate to accommodate every single person who  
17 needs it, we are concerned that this pattern of  
18 shelter capacity spending will continue to  
19 increase without a solid plan in place to  
20 transition families out of the shelter system and  
21 into permanent housing in a safe and ethical  
22 manner. In addition, we would like to see  
23 increased allocation towards preventive services.  
24 While we applaud this Administration's dedication  
25 to addressing the homeless epidemic plaguing the



2 city, we anxiously await to hear how and when the  
3 agency will implement a rental assistance program  
4 to replace the Advantage Program that was  
5 discontinued in 2011. It is of now surprise that  
6 when the Advantage Program was eliminated the  
7 homeless population living in shelter in a  
8 duration that the homeless--living in shelter and  
9 duration, that the homeless residing in shelter  
10 increased. I'll repeat that. It is of no surprise  
11 that when the Advantage Program was eliminated,  
12 the homeless population living in shelter, and  
13 duration that the homeless residing in shelter  
14 increased. The City is in desperate need of a  
15 program that will help individuals and families  
16 transition out of shelter and into permanent  
17 housing and I look forward to hearing what steps  
18 the agency has taken so far in creating a new  
19 rental assistance program. The New York Times  
20 article published in December of 2013 entitled  
21 Invisible Child, Dasani's Homeless Life, brought  
22 attention to the conditions at the DHS run Auburn  
23 Street Shelter. Last month, under the leadership  
24 of Commissioner Taylor, DHS announced that it  
25 will be removing 400 children and their families

2 from the Auburn and Catherine Street shelters and  
3 families will be placed in either subsidized  
4 permanent housing or temporary shelter. DHS will  
5 determine which families will be placed in  
6 subsidized permanent housing based on if they are  
7 suitable candidates and other factors such as  
8 medical needs and how many children in the family  
9 are school-aged. The Auburn and Catherine Street  
10 shelters will be converted into adult family  
11 shelters. I am curious to hear more about this  
12 plan and the associated costs and the timeline to  
13 transition families out of these two shelters and  
14 into other living arrangements. I'd like to thank  
15 the Committee Staff for their work, Doheni  
16 Sampora [phonetic] Finance Analyst, Andrea  
17 Vasquez, Counsel to the Committee, and Peter  
18 Dribus [phonetic] Legislative Analyst for  
19 preparing this hearing. I now welcome  
20 Commissioner Gilbert Taylor and his staff to  
21 testify. Thank you. Commissioner Taylor?

22 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Good afternoon,  
23 Chair Levin and members of the General Welfare  
24 Committee. I am Gilbert Taylor, Commissioner of  
25 the Department of Homeless Services. Joining me

2 this afternoon are Lula Urquhart to my left,  
3 Deputy Commissioner for Fiscal Procurement  
4 Operations and Audits, and Aaron Valari,  
5 Assistant Commissioner for Budget and Revenue.  
6 Today I'll outline Mayor de Blasio's Fiscal Year  
7 2015 Preliminary Budget of DHS. This year, the  
8 agency is fortunate to have several important  
9 financial restorations which reflect programmatic  
10 improvements that I hope will effectively  
11 demonstrate this Administration's priorities for  
12 the Department. The Mayor's Preliminary Budget  
13 reflects over 41 million dollars in new needs for  
14 Fiscal year 15, 2015, as a result of growth in  
15 both the family and adult shelter census. On  
16 Thursday of last week, the DHS' total shelter  
17 census reached 52,267 individuals, which includes  
18 over 22,000 children living in shelter throughout  
19 the five boroughs. The figures are overwhelming,  
20 however, with a new Administration and with a  
21 billion dollar budget we have an opportunity to  
22 develop effective policy solutions to help stem  
23 the tide of new shelter entries. Working through  
24 the Mayor's Office and with our partner agencies,  
25 DHS is establishing a strategic plan to reduce

2 shelter census with a goal of both preventing new  
3 shelter entries and by providing successful  
4 permanent placements to those who are already in  
5 shelter. In furtherance of these goals, we have  
6 recently begun advocating with the Executive and  
7 the Legislative bodies in Albany to remove  
8 budgetary language that restrict the city's  
9 ability to utilize state funds to provide rental  
10 assistance to homeless shelter clients. I note  
11 that the Council supports this measure and I  
12 welcome your effort to advocate for this change  
13 with us. I've expressed our request to remove the  
14 prohibitive language to the Governor's staff so  
15 that we have the ability to move forward with a  
16 viable state and city funded rental assistance  
17 plan. My office met with the State Legislative  
18 officials last week at the State Capitol to  
19 advance this plan and staff will return to Albany  
20 tomorrow to join the Mayor's State Legislative  
21 Affairs Office in recommending immediate action.  
22 Should the legislature remove the shelter  
23 restriction and allow the city to use Public  
24 Assistance funds for new homeless rental subsidy  
25 program, the City will propose piloting a program

2 targeted towards working families who have been  
3 unable to exit shelter. There are over 1,000  
4 families living in shelter who work full time. A  
5 rental assistance proposal is part of a larger  
6 housing strategy that includes Mayor de Blasio's  
7 commitment to building 200,000 units of  
8 affordable housing. And it also includes working  
9 with the New York City Housing Authority to place  
10 homeless families into public housing. The  
11 Administration, like the Council, also believes  
12 that preventing homelessness is a pivotal part of  
13 any strategy to address homelessness. We know  
14 that prevention works and we are committed to  
15 making it bigger, better, and stronger. For  
16 starters, we are developing a strategy to  
17 increase the home base presence in high need  
18 communities in all five boroughs. Part of that  
19 plan will include more anti-eviction legal  
20 services, and work with our colleagues and other  
21 city agencies to better coordinate these  
22 services. We also plan to launch a new public  
23 awareness campaign to continue to spread the word  
24 about prevention services, and we will continue  
25 to add new sophisticated tools to outreach to

2 families who are on the brink of homelessness  
3 before they come into shelter. The agency also  
4 recognizes how important it is to provide a range  
5 of aftercare services to families transitioning  
6 from shelter to the community. These services  
7 need to be tailored to individual family needs.  
8 For example, some families may need support  
9 furnishing the new home, enrolling their children  
10 in school, linking with community resources when  
11 they first move out of shelter. On an ongoing  
12 basis they may need help finding a new job or  
13 negotiating a dispute with their landlord. Other  
14 families may need more intensive services that  
15 begin while they are still in shelter and  
16 continue for a period of time when they exit. DHS  
17 is prepared to work with our city partners to  
18 make sure that the appropriate aftercare services  
19 are available for all families exiting shelter on  
20 a rental assistance program. DHS believes in  
21 bringing prevention services to families when and  
22 where they need it the most. We are pleased to  
23 partner with Fern Fisher, the Deputy Chief  
24 Administrative Judge of New York City Courts, on  
25 a new pilot program in Brooklyn Housing Court to

2 help unrepresented tenants by providing one on  
3 one assistance by experienced court navigators.  
4 We will continue to work with all of our partners  
5 to test new and innovative approaches to this  
6 very important work. The shelter exit  
7 transitional set job program, which was created  
8 and run in conjunction with HRA subsidizes  
9 private sector jobs that shelter clients and with  
10 the goal of helping them achieve and maintain  
11 independence. The program combines job readiness  
12 services, job placement and aftercare services  
13 and has achieved promising results thus far. We  
14 are in the process of analyzing data collected  
15 during our pilot period, conducted from May of  
16 2013 to December of 2013 and the early results  
17 are promising. The program had a job placement  
18 rate of over 50 percent and more than 90 percent  
19 of the program recipients who were placed into  
20 jobs have exited shelter and have not returned.  
21 In addition, 98 percent of set clients placed  
22 into jobs who have completed their subsidy period  
23 became permanent employees with the same  
24 employer. We are excited to continue this program  
25 and to offer job ready single adult this

2 opportunity. We have also begun to assess the  
3 shelter environment where clients reside. When I  
4 met with this committee last month I shared that  
5 I would focus on the agency's efforts to improve  
6 the quality of DHS shelters because every  
7 homeless shelter client deserves an environment  
8 that is safe, secure, and supportive. In  
9 November, DHS received five million dollars in  
10 additional funding to enhance security at several  
11 contracted and directly operated facilities. We  
12 have also received 36 million dollars in new  
13 needs for capital projects for building upgrades  
14 and information technology. These investments  
15 will improve the health and safety of our clients  
16 with projects focused on exterior renovations,  
17 heating, electrical and plumbing upgrades as well  
18 as enhancing security through the installation of  
19 security cameras. I also mentioned last month  
20 that we should be holding ourselves to  
21 consistently high standard by providing intensive  
22 case management and an abundance of support to  
23 our clients. To that end, at each meeting with  
24 our providers, I have asked them how they would  
25 accomplish this goal and what specifically they



2 would need to be successful in doing this from a  
3 programmatic stand point. While not every  
4 suggestion will work for every provider or  
5 population they serve, I am considering ways to  
6 enhance our service model and will continue to  
7 build on our mutual successes. Street outreach  
8 enhancements; DHS is committed to serving all  
9 unsheltered individuals across the city. In 2007  
10 we restructured services to street homeless  
11 individuals with one single provider in each  
12 borough. The new contracts were focused on  
13 chronic homeless individuals, emphasized  
14 placements, not just contacts and included  
15 performance based contracting. Since then, DHS  
16 has also developed a network of transitional  
17 housing specifically for this population in mind.  
18 Over 4,300 clients have been placed since the  
19 contracts began. Additionally, the overall number  
20 of people sleeping on the streets since 2005 has  
21 decreased by 62 percent. While we've seen a great  
22 success in reducing the number of clients  
23 sleeping on the streets, there has concurrently  
24 been an 118 percent increase in the number of  
25 people sleeping in the subways since 2005. This

2 culminated in 2013 when the number of people  
3 sleeping in the subways of overall percentage of  
4 unsheltered homeless rose to 58 percent, up from  
5 19 percent in 2005. DHS had been in conversations  
6 with the MTA about enhancing the subway outreach  
7 program for several years, and in 2013 after the  
8 homeless outreach population estimate also called  
9 Hope report was released, the MTA agreed to move  
10 forward and to coordinate with DHS around a more  
11 robust service program. The MTA is currently  
12 funding 800,000 dollars for outreach for 468  
13 subway stations compared to 11 million dollars  
14 that's funded by DHS for street teams. Due to a  
15 lack of funding, the services offered below  
16 ground were not as comprehensive as those  
17 accessible to clients working with one of the  
18 street teams. By managing the MTA contracts, DHS  
19 could implement best practices already seen  
20 through the work of the street population and  
21 decrease any duplication of services between  
22 street and subway teams. The MTA has agreed to  
23 fund three million dollars of its six million  
24 dollar contract for outreach services in the  
25 subway and allow DHS to manage the contract under

2 the existing umbrella of street services. As we  
3 look forward to enhancing our efforts to reach  
4 those seeking refuge outside of shelter, DHS has  
5 advanced our collaboration with NYPD. The  
6 wellbeing of the homeless and their impact on  
7 quality of life issues both on the streets and in  
8 the subway system are major concerns for the  
9 agency. Currently, DHS works closely with the  
10 homeless outreach unit of the New York City  
11 Police Department and at the precinct level with  
12 the community affairs officers to engage street  
13 homeless clients. In an effort to build on these  
14 existing relationship and expand our  
15 collaborations, we've set up monthly meetings  
16 with the NYPD to support our respective efforts  
17 to address homelessness on the streets and in the  
18 subway. DHS outreach teams will be a resource to  
19 offices both in precincts and in transit  
20 districts who are encountering homeless  
21 individuals with a variety of issues that may  
22 require clinical intervention and specialized  
23 placement options. DHS's current Fiscal Year  
24 2014 expense budget is 1.04 billion dollars. For  
25 the next Fiscal Year of 2015, the budget is 981

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2 million dollars. We expect a 62 million dollars  
3 difference to made up with grant funding that has  
4 added to our budget at the close of the Fiscal  
5 Year. Variances in the FY 14 Preliminary Budget  
6 and the projected FY 15 Preliminary Budget can be  
7 attributed to the following, 22 million dollars  
8 in emergency assistance funds, EAF, a portion of  
9 which will be added to the Executive Budget and  
10 the balance will be added in FY 15, 14.9 million  
11 dollars for the Emergency Solutions Grant, ESG,  
12 and a Homeless Management Information Systems,  
13 HMIS grants, will be added to the FY 15 budget at  
14 the beginning of the fiscal year. 13.7 million  
15 dollars in funding for expenses associated with  
16 hurricane Sandy in the National Emergency Grant,  
17 NEG, that provided temporary employment to assist  
18 with the clean-up after hurricane Sandy. Funding  
19 will be added as needed in Fiscal Year 2015. 5.4  
20 million dollars for PEGS that were restored for  
21 FY 14 only and have been deducted from the FY 15  
22 budget. 3.8 million dollars in funding for  
23 Catherine Street and Auburn that was proposed for  
24 FY 14 only but will be increased an annualized in  
25 the FY 15 budget. And two million dollars in City

2 Council funding that is added annually as a one  
3 time initiative. Of the 981 million dollars, 481  
4 million dollars is city funds, 116 million are  
5 state funds, 379 million are federal funds, four  
6 million are community development grant funding  
7 and 851,000 are intra-city funding. The 981  
8 million dollar budget allocates 393 million  
9 dollars to serve single adults, 526 million  
10 dollars to serve families and 62 million dollars  
11 for support services. The DHS capital plan for  
12 the five year period, fiscal year 2014 through  
13 fiscal year 2018 is currently 112 million  
14 dollars. Capital projects for homeless families  
15 total 33 million dollars. Projects for single  
16 adults total 51 million dollars. 18 million  
17 dollars has been allocated for support service  
18 and 10 million dollars is dedicated for City  
19 Council funded projects. The Mayor's budget  
20 charts a new course, one that invests in the  
21 necessary supports to help homeless households  
22 achieve independence. Focusing on progressive  
23 policy, I hope that we can count on your support  
24 as we move forward with the Mayor's agenda to  
25 bridge the inequality gap and assist our homeless

2 New Yorkers to reach their full potential. My  
3 staff and I are now ready to answer any questions  
4 that you may have.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
6 much, Commissioner. We are joined by Council  
7 Member Vanessa Gibson, Council Member Helen  
8 Rosenthal, Council Member Donovan Richards, and  
9 our Public Advocate Letitia James, and I will  
10 have the Public Advocate ask her questions. Oh,  
11 thank you. So Commissioner, thank you very much.  
12 I think everyone's going to have questions. So I  
13 will start off with a couple here. First off, how  
14 many additional units and/or shelter facilities  
15 have been brought online during fiscal 14 and how  
16 many will be or expected to brought online in  
17 fiscal 15?

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, for fiscal  
19 year 2014, year to date, we brought online  
20 approximately 500 units. We are projecting to  
21 need to bring on an additional 152 units between  
22 now and the end of this fiscal year. In fiscal  
23 year 2015, we'll need to bring on an additional  
24 500 units to meet our projected peak for families  
25 of children, a census of 11,760. For single

2 adults, DHS is planning to bring on 464 single  
3 adult beds by the end of this fiscal year. These  
4 additions will bring total single adult shelter  
5 capacity to 10,900 beds, and with a projected  
6 peak census of 11,076 by June of 2015 we'll need  
7 to add approximately 508 beds by the June 2015  
8 date in order to establish a three percent  
9 vacancy rate on that side of our system. Just to  
10 round it out, for adult families in FY 14, we had  
11 added one new 16 unit family adult shelter in  
12 Manhattan and plans are to add one more 14 unit  
13 site in Manhattan. These additions will bring the  
14 total adult family shelter capacity at this time  
15 to 1,531 units.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Wanted to touch  
17 base briefly. I'm just going to go over a few  
18 different topics here. One potential solution  
19 that has been discussed a lot amongst the  
20 advocacy community, and this is a solution that  
21 was in place up until 2005 when it was  
22 discontinued by the Bloomberg Administration is  
23 allowing families in the shelter system to have a  
24 priority for NYCHA placement and section eight.  
25 Has the Administration looked into this as a

2 potential solution for permanent housing for  
3 families? What subsection of families would be  
4 seen as qualifying for this, and how does that  
5 fit into our larger strategy for allowing  
6 families to have options for permanent housing?

7 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So the largest  
8 strategy includes our efforts on the front end to  
9 prevent shelter entries and certainly all of what  
10 we can assemble on the back end to exit families  
11 and individuals from shelter to permanent  
12 housing. Yes, we have begun conversations with  
13 NYCHA about re-establishing what would be the  
14 priority for homeless families to move into NYCHA  
15 units. Those conversations have begun but we  
16 don't have a final answer in terms of what that  
17 will look like or what the number will be. The  
18 families that we would target for NYCHA  
19 placements are those that would benefit from  
20 having a placement that matches their unique  
21 needs while they're in shelter, so families that  
22 typically have disabilities, families that have  
23 challenges either being employed or maintaining  
24 employment who may have subsidies from other  
25 sources, whether its SSI or disability. We're



2 looking for families who can really benefit from  
3 that stock and with respect to your question  
4 related to section eight, we're speaking with the  
5 federal government and with the state to get a  
6 sense of whether or not more vouchers can be made  
7 available, again, as a resource in order to exit  
8 families and individuals from shelter.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Does DHS has a  
10 sense of what a target number would be with  
11 regard to that type of option or that type of  
12 solution in the portfolio? So are we looking at--  
13 I know that Coalition for the Homeless has  
14 repeatedly said that 2,500 units would be an  
15 appropriate amount. Is there a sense from DHS  
16 what would be an ideal, what is feasible, you  
17 know, in the grand scheme of things? How--is  
18 there a number that's being floated out there?

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I don't have a  
20 magic number. I do know that we'd like to  
21 maximize the option to the extent that there are  
22 NYCHA units available. Part of the conversation  
23 with NYCHA has been to understand what is  
24 available and what could be, you know, more  
25 readily available for shelter clients sooner than

2 later. I do know that the number will be  
3 dependent upon our ability to establish a rental  
4 assistance plan and I do know that it'll be  
5 informed by to what degree we're able to exit  
6 families from shelter using rental assistance.  
7 The first step in that regard, as I had mentioned  
8 in the testimony, is to have the restrictive  
9 language removed so that we can start seriously  
10 and more deliberately thinking about ways in  
11 which we can put in place what would be rental  
12 assistance for shelter clients in New York City,  
13 but I don't have a full rounded out number for  
14 what the NYCHA allocation would be or what the  
15 section eight allocation would be except for to  
16 say as much as could be possible, that would be  
17 preferred.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We would  
20 definitely want that.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So the more the  
22 better from DHS perspective.

23 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: The more the  
24 better, yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm going to be  
3 going to Albany tomorrow with members of your  
4 staff and making the case to the State  
5 Legislature and the Governor's Office that that  
6 language needs to be removed from the state  
7 budget. Can you share with us what would be--what  
8 are the stakes? What would happen if that  
9 language is not removed? What is DHS--if DHS is  
10 looking at its year ahead, and obviously this is  
11 going to be decided one way or the other over the  
12 next week or so, what would happen if the  
13 language was not removed from the state budget?

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So if the  
15 language is not removed, it would preclude us  
16 from using state funds to subsidize any portion  
17 of the rental assistance plan. And it would make  
18 it more challenging for us to exit clients from  
19 shelter. We've experienced that over the past  
20 several years and we know that with some rental  
21 assistance it can be very much life changing for  
22 families and for individuals who were in shelter.  
23 We would continue our efforts to do the best that  
24 we could in order to achieve permanency for our  
25 clients. I think it's worth mentioning on behalf

2 of my staff that they have moved. They continue  
3 to find housing placements for individuals and  
4 families who are in our client--who are in our  
5 shelter census at this time, not at the numbers  
6 that we would like. And I think it would really  
7 be a benefit to all of those who are in shelter  
8 if that language could be removed and if we could  
9 formulate and structure a rental assistance plan  
10 with some state funding component as part of it  
11 in order to serve more families, then we would be  
12 able to do so if we can't have that language  
13 removed. And if we can't tap into state funds to  
14 help us with this work.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Now, in 2011 or in  
16 FY 11 was the last year, there was federal funds  
17 also attached to the Advantage Program as a  
18 subsidy. What--can you explain to us quickly  
19 what that structure was in terms of how the  
20 federal funds were drawn down? Were they matched  
21 to the state funds? How did that work?

22 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So my limited  
23 understanding was that the state controlled our  
24 access to the federal funds. I'd ask my Deputy to  
25 speak to, if you want more detail in terms of

2 what the actual structure was in claiming federal  
3 money.

4 LULA URQUHART: Yes, Lula Urquhart.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: If you could bring the  
6 mic up a little bit closer. Thank you.

7 LULA URQUHART: Lula Urquhart. Yes, the  
8 percentage was--it was close to 33 percent CTL and 66  
9 percent federal and state. That was the breakdown.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And the structure with  
11 the state, the federal draw down was based on the  
12 state dollars being there? In other words, if we  
13 didn't have the state dollars, could we have drawn  
14 down the federal dollars or is that--was that not  
15 feasible?

16 LULA URQUHART: I do not think that was  
17 feasible because I think that they were connected.  
18 The state controls the federal dollars. So with the--  
19 the state had to agree to give us the federal  
20 dollars.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And those were TANIF  
22 [phonetic] dollars, was that correct?

23 LULA URQUHART: They were TANIF dollars to  
24 my knowledge, yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And were those TANIF  
3 dollars, were they--was it tied to a PA case? So if  
4 an individual--did a family have to have an open  
5 Public Assistance case in order to draw down those  
6 TANIF dollars? Or is there a correlation there? I was  
7 thinking in terms of trying to develop a system  
8 moving forward, is there---if we want to be able to  
9 have access to federal dollars, does it require TANIF  
10 eligibility standards?

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Okay, so we'll have  
12 to get you an answer for that, Chair Levin, because  
13 I'm not really clear if that is a requirement, but we  
14 can let you know.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, 'cause that  
16 would be something I think long term if we're looking  
17 forward to instituting a new program. Obviously that  
18 would be an area of concern. I'm going to ask my  
19 colleagues if they have any--we've been joined by  
20 Council Member Carlos Menchacca. I want to ask my  
21 colleagues if they have any questions starting with  
22 Council Member Helen Rosenthal.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
24 much. And thank you, Chair for holding this hearing  
25 and thank you Council Member Richards for letting me

2 go first. So nice. Welcome, and really happy you're  
3 here Commissioner. So I represent the Upper West Side  
4 of Manhattan and we're experiencing a situation  
5 that's a little different than what's going on in my  
6 colleagues' districts. And correct me if you view  
7 this differently. But the way I view it is that  
8 having been very active in the community over the  
9 last 20 years is that the Upper West Side SRO  
10 buildings have become the buildings of last resort,  
11 that when DHS is in an emergency, so-called, sorry,  
12 but so-called emergency situation the homeless are  
13 bussed into SRO's in my district. Let me tell you,  
14 there was a big article about this in New York  
15 Magazine in December. I hope you had a chance to read  
16 it. It basically laid out how these SRO landlords are  
17 completely overcharging purposefully overcharging the  
18 city and taking advantage of the city's dire straits  
19 here by making a fortune off the city to place these  
20 residents. You know, they say they're partnering with  
21 social service providers. I'm just telling you, I'm  
22 on the ground. I'm there every day. My residents are  
23 emailing me every day. The social services are  
24 deminimous [phonetic] at best. And let's look at the  
25 larger picture, these SROs are buildings that have

2 been rent stabilized buildings. So we're getting a  
3 double whammy here, right? The rent, the reality is,  
4 the rent stabilized tenants are being harassed out of  
5 their homes because of course, as a rent stabilized  
6 tenant, the landlord gets maybe 500 dollars a month.  
7 This is an SRO room. So and then the city comes along  
8 and pays 3,6000 dollars per month. The landlords are  
9 taking--are displacing rent regulated tenants. I'm  
10 sure it would not be an exaggeration to say that some  
11 of these tenants then become homeless who then go  
12 right back into these same shelters and the city now  
13 pays these landlords 3,600 dollars a month. With all-  
14 -this doesn't make budget sense. It doesn't make  
15 management or planning sense. I would like to know  
16 how--a simple question first, how many buildings and  
17 then in each building, the number of units, so how  
18 many buildings in total, how many units in total in  
19 2014 are SRO buildings?

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I don't have that  
21 number, Council Member, with me right now. I can  
22 definitely get that number to you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: You can?

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I believe I can get  
25 that number to you?



2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: No, no  
3 seriously I'm curious. Is that something, like do you  
4 have that? Do you categorize it that way so you  
5 would--'cause hypothetically you're pulling it out of  
6 the adult shelter operations dollars or you contract  
7 dollars?

8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Go ahead.

9 LULA URQUHART: The SRO program's single  
10 room occupancy program is in our adult budget. We do  
11 have a listing of the facilities and we have a  
12 listing of the capacity and those facilities.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And similarly  
14 at those are the ones, can you--so I'd love to know  
15 the total number. Let's say the total, I'm going to  
16 make it up as x, I'm interesting in knowing what  
17 subset of x is getting over 3,000 dollars a month per  
18 unit. Can you--is that possible to pull out?

19 LULA URQUHART: Well, for the SRO program,  
20 we pay on single room occupancy program, we pay on a  
21 monthly basis. The adult shelters would be more rent.  
22 SRO's are about--we subsidize 190 dollars. Our 200--  
23 up to 200 and some dollars per month. Those--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]  
25 So I don't want to get lost in--I don't know

2 technically which is which. I think you understand  
3 what I'm trying to get at.

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yes. But to your  
5 point, Council Member, I mean obviously we can--we  
6 have information that can get detailed descriptions  
7 of each of the SROs, the occupancy rate, but to the  
8 broader conversation about where we're sheltering  
9 families, where we're sheltering adult families and  
10 individuals, it's something that I've started looking  
11 at since I've taken this seat. It's something that  
12 I've been discussing not just with our providers, but  
13 also with our staff to get a sense of how we are able  
14 to bring on capacity that makes sense and how it  
15 makes sense either for client needs as well for  
16 organizational needs. So the vacancy rate is  
17 something that I had referenced in my testimony.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Sure.

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And the vacancy rate  
20 right now for adult families as well as for families  
21 with children is very low. Alright? So we're talking  
22 about almost a little over one percent vacancy rate,  
23 which then causes us to have some constraints about  
24 about where we able to effectively shelter  
25 individuals and families and adult families as needed

2 on demand. So, but the vacancy rate can't be the only  
3 thing that's guiding the type of shelter that we're  
4 procuring that we're bringing on for families and for  
5 adult families. That begin said, the SRO model and  
6 understanding where they are and understanding how  
7 they're being staffed and understanding what social  
8 service components are available to clients who are  
9 in SROs. That's something that's squarely on my radar  
10 and it's something that I've begun speaking with the  
11 leadership within DHS and with our provider community  
12 understand better to know whether or not we're  
13 maximizing our investment and whether or not the  
14 services that are on site for clients at those  
15 facilities are those that will help them to achieve  
16 permanency beyond shelter stay.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So I really am  
18 so glad to hear you say that because I would, and I  
19 would ask you to come into the community.

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Oh, I will.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And really hear  
22 from the neighbors. So, can I just, with the Chair's  
23 permission, to go on for just another minute here. I  
24 just need to say for the record that when I was Chair  
25 of the Community Board on the Upper West Side, we

2 worked tirelessly with DHS and with a provider at  
3 that time called the Lantern Group to ensure that DHS  
4 and the city would be getting its money's worth. And  
5 the Community Board ultimately despite some push back  
6 from the community, the Community Board ultimately  
7 gave the green flag and encouraged you to go ahead at  
8 this site. We've had little problems here and there,  
9 but that was a year's dialogue, and a worthwhile  
10 dialogue. You know, turnaround and three years later  
11 or four years later, literally in the middle of the  
12 night DHS comes in with bus loads of homeless people  
13 and you know, I don't envy you, what you're trying to  
14 fix here. I'm not--that, you know, you guys are doing  
15 God's work, but from a situation where we had a  
16 year's long dialogue to, you know, taking a building  
17 where there is a unscrupulous landlord that, you  
18 know, has taken advantage of the city to get a lot of  
19 money, and DHS then comes, this is two blocks away,  
20 and brings in 400, you know, adults to an SRO. The  
21 SRO, first of all, I think your limit is 200, but  
22 through the emergency issue, you were able to get  
23 away--DHS, not you personally, was able to get around  
24 this. It's across from a school. It's in a three  
25 block, within a three block radius. You know, there

2 are five other DHS shelters, homeless shelters, and I  
3 will say this that on his last day, I happened to run  
4 into Deputy Commissioner, the first Deputy  
5 Commissioner of the last Administration who happens  
6 to live in my district, and jokingly I said to him,  
7 "Ha, now that you're my constituent, is there  
8 anything I can do for you?" And he said, "Quite  
9 seriously, my biggest regret is putting in that  
10 shelter on West 95<sup>th</sup> Street." It has seriously  
11 deteriorated that community and I will add on top of  
12 that we've pushed out the rent stabilized people in  
13 that same building. It makes no sense. It's  
14 atrocious, and I am laser focused on turning around  
15 this policy, and I will tell you that there is a  
16 building now a couple of blocks away on 79<sup>th</sup> Street  
17 where we have a similar situation, an unscrupulous  
18 landlord who, you know, when I hear you say that  
19 net/net you have 150 more units where you need to  
20 place people, I'm terrified. Because this building  
21 could fill your needs and this landlord wants you to  
22 step in, and as the City Councilwoman representing  
23 this district, I am--

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing]

25 Councilwoman, do you have a question?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah, no. Will  
3 you assure me that DHS will not contract with this  
4 particular provider, Imperial Court, to fulfill that  
5 need?

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I will assure you of  
7 this, I will assure you that I will look at the way  
8 in which siting had been done in the previous  
9 Administration in order to learn and to understand  
10 how we can have a better process going forward. I'm  
11 not familiar with the name that you just mentioned.  
12 So maybe we'll--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]  
14 let's keep it that way.

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: But I will say I'm  
16 very familiar with the shelter site that you were  
17 referring to in your original remarks.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yes.

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And you know, again,  
20 for better or for worse, understanding what the needs  
21 were at the time, I don't know, because I wasn't part  
22 of those conversations, but how can we learn from the  
23 process, how can we be more transparent in terms of  
24 having real conversations with Community Boards? How  
25 can we--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]  
3 Right.

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: ensure that we are  
5 not siting in the moment, but rather being more  
6 proactive and being more structured and deliberate in  
7 terms of choosing sites that make sense for our  
8 clients as well as for communities.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Right, and I  
10 appreciate that, but I didn't mean to dwell on having  
11 transparency. Really what I want to dwell on is 3,600  
12 dollars a month to a provider in a building that's  
13 not providing 3,600 dollars a month worth of  
14 services. So I'm wondering how long that particular  
15 contract is, if we can unwind that contract, if we  
16 can renegotiate it so that the number of people in  
17 there are a tolerable amount, and that you know, that  
18 we're not stuck with something that is fiscally  
19 irresponsible.

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So on that  
21 particular project, it's something that I've been  
22 having conversations about since I took this  
23 position. All the questions that you just raised are  
24 questions that we're actually looking at right now,  
25 in terms of the rate, in terms of the contracting

2 mechanism, in terms of the length of time that we  
3 will be there. There are still outstanding questions  
4 that need to be answered including some of those that  
5 you just raised. So it is being looked at. I don't  
6 have an answer for you right this second, but I can  
7 tell you that it is all over my radar, that  
8 particular building that you're referencing right  
9 now.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay. I  
11 appreciate that. Thank you for the extra time, Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
13 Council Member Rosenthal. Council Member Gibson?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very  
15 much, Chair, and good afternoon Commissioner to you  
16 and your team. Thank you very much for being here,  
17 for your presence today and truly I appreciate the  
18 engaging conversations that you and I have had over  
19 the past couple of weeks, including meeting on my  
20 birthday. I appreciate that. And to Lisa Black and  
21 your Commissioners, I appreciate you being here. So I  
22 looked at your testimony. I just have a couple of  
23 quick questions that I wanted to raise. You know, and  
24 as I said during the General Welfare hearing last  
25 week about my concern about the growing number of



2 families that are in the homeless shelter system;  
3 we're at an all time high. We know we're living in a  
4 crisis, so there's a lot of work that needs to be  
5 done. I too share the Chair's sentiment about the  
6 state's you know, prohibitive language and while I'm  
7 not traveling to Albany tomorrow, I have had multiple  
8 conversations and I'm truly hoping that we can come  
9 up with a plan. As I said before, New York City can  
10 be the ones to take the lead in proposing a rental  
11 subsidy program. So right now, being that we don't  
12 have a rental subsidy program we have very few  
13 options. There's a program called FETS [phonetic],  
14 that's a state program. We have other little  
15 opportunities with section eight, but right now what  
16 subsidy program or what services are we currently  
17 offering for homeless families that are trying to get  
18 into long term housing? What is out there for them  
19 right now?

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Right now the  
21 offerings are very few. I think I should be very  
22 clear--

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing]  
24 Commissioner, if you could speak closer to the  
25 microphone.

2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: The offerings are  
3 very few, and I should be very clear in just  
4 answering your question, Council Member, that you  
5 know, to the question that was posed to me before,  
6 rental subsidy without a state component, without  
7 state funding, it will be virtually impossible for us  
8 to administer and to pursue, right? The state funding  
9 is something that we absolutely must secure in order  
10 to have more tools in our tool box to help folks exit  
11 from shelter. There are limited offerings. There are  
12 some city offerings in terms of our anti-eviction  
13 efforts that I had spoken to. There are one shot  
14 deals that are available from HRA to help families  
15 who, you know, want to transition out of shelter to  
16 help them with some monthly payments, the first and  
17 last and a few months in between, but besides that  
18 there really is nothing else. There's no magic bullet  
19 that we have, which is one of the reasons why we are  
20 so aggressively at this juncture wanting to have the  
21 language removed so that we can structure a real  
22 rental subsidy plan that would have state funding  
23 attached to it, because the city can't do it by  
24 itself.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right. And in  
3 addition the city used to at a time take homeless  
4 families as a priority one, and they were able to get  
5 into public housing. Have we had conversations yet  
6 with NYCHA to see if that's something that we will  
7 entertain this year?

8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Absolutely. I've met  
9 with the Chair. We have had a very direct  
10 conversation about my interest and desire and wanting  
11 to relink the priority to DHS shelter residents. We  
12 are still in the process of looking at that and  
13 examining how that can work, but the conversations  
14 have begun. As I had made mention a month ago when I  
15 was here was something that I had flagged to do as  
16 soon as the Chair came on board and we've done it. So  
17 real intensive discussions are happening at this time  
18 in order to get us placed where we can partner with  
19 NYCHA in order to find housing resources for those  
20 who are in shelter.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, great. I  
22 love to hear the pilot program that you're starting  
23 in Brooklyn Housing Court, and once you determine if  
24 that pilot has been successful, I would certainly  
25 urge you to consider having it in the Bronx. The

2 Bronx is the home of the former EAU, the only intake  
3 capacity for all of New York City's homelessness  
4 population. We have a overflow of cases at Housing  
5 Court. I represent every court so I know firsthand.  
6 So I think once the program in Brooklyn as it has  
7 started if you could please consider looking to bring  
8 more services to the Bronx, I would certainly  
9 appreciate that.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Duly noted.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: And last month I  
12 talked about scatter site housing. I forget the other  
13 name that we're, that we often use for it, but the  
14 fact that we have a lot of transitional families that  
15 are in and out of different apartment buildings, is  
16 there a plan to eliminate or reduce the number of  
17 scatter site housing that we have?

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I note that there  
19 was testimony offered to this committee in the last  
20 Administration, I believe in November, about scatter  
21 sites and cluster apartments. They are still--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]  
23 Right, cluster.

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: They are still part  
25 of our portfolio. It is a part of our portfolio that

2 I am looking at very closely to understand how we're  
3 using it, to understand the volume of cluster  
4 capacity in our system and whether it is still needed  
5 at the volume in which it has been used historically.  
6 I am really contemplating ways in which we can move  
7 to a more traditional tier two models, because the  
8 services that are provided by our tier twos tend to  
9 be more robust and tend to be more, you know,  
10 consolidated so that we can work with our clients in  
11 a way that's strategic.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right.

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: To help them achieve  
14 permanency. So to your question, yes, I'm looking at  
15 scatter sites.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: And I want to  
18 understand whether or not we can minimize our use of  
19 the same and hopefully procure more tier two  
20 capacity.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. I appreciate  
22 that. There are many--they are problematic for many  
23 reasons and many of the traditional tenants that are  
24 in these buildings have complained numerous times and  
25 I would hope that we could have services that are

2 more centrally located for a lot of these  
3 transitional families. I guess the last point I  
4 wanted to make, and you know very well my concerns  
5 and how I feel about the current proposal to shift  
6 homeless prevention money to address subway  
7 homelessness. I know we're at an all-time high of 468  
8 subway stations. I recognize the growing problem.  
9 While I do not know BRC, I know that they have the  
10 contract with the MTA. I would urge the agency to  
11 really work with BRC to include those providers in  
12 our counties that have really done a great job in  
13 decreasing the number of homelessness on the street,  
14 and I always have to, you know, reference the Bronx  
15 because the Bronx has had tremendous success in  
16 reducing street homelessness, and I applaud many of  
17 my Bronx providers for doing that. Where I am  
18 concerned with this six million dollar contract,  
19 shifting a million dollars out of an 11 million  
20 dollar contract is my main concern and I will keep  
21 talking about it because I'm concerned about shifting  
22 money now that we've reduced street homelessness to  
23 address subway homelessness, but as the warm season  
24 approaches us, many of those homeless families that  
25 we do not reach in the subway will go into our local

2 parks and playgrounds with our children and families  
3 and I am really concerned about that. So, while I  
4 hope that you will share this plan that BRC has with  
5 the agency, I would love to see exactly how they plan  
6 to address the subway homelessness because it's a  
7 chronic issue. I recognize there's a need, but I also  
8 am concerned about shifting money from providers that  
9 have been doing incredible work, almost penalizing  
10 them for the good work they've done. SO I just want  
11 to make sure that I go on record in expressing that,  
12 but certainly my willingness to work with you so that  
13 we can try to include many of our providers as  
14 partners with the MTA so that we're giving them all  
15 of the resources that we truly need to identify  
16 subway homelessness. So I thank you for your work and  
17 your responsiveness and certainly look forward to  
18 working with you and the agency. Thank you very much.

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council  
21 Member Gibson. Public Advocate Letitia James?

22 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you, Mr.  
23 Chair. Commissioner, I'm here not to vilify the  
24 homeless but to infact provide them with support and  
25 urge the Administration to build more affordable

2 housing because I recognize that the vast majority of  
3 the residents who are in the homeless shelter  
4 represent the working poor in the city of New York  
5 and who basically share the same values as I have and  
6 most New Yorkers in the city of New York and they  
7 want a safe city. They want good schools, and they  
8 want the best for their family. Saying that, the  
9 question is, and I believe the Chair alluded to it  
10 earlier, the possibility of perhaps replicating the  
11 Advantage program or some sort of rental assistance  
12 program in the city of New York so that we could  
13 provide assistance to the working people and others  
14 who wish to have a permanent home in the city of New  
15 York, and I thank you for the--well, anyway. The  
16 snaps.

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So Public Advocate  
18 James, you know, again to go back to what I had begun  
19 with. At this juncture, every effort is being made  
20 by my office and I'm glad that we're working in  
21 partnership with the council as well as with the  
22 Coalition for the Homeless is going up to Albany with  
23 us tomorrow as well as Legal Aid to really get that  
24 language, that restrictive language taken out of the  
25 budget so that we can, you know, do exactly what



2 you're suggesting. What we need to do, which is have  
3 a state funded rental assistance program for all of  
4 the residents who are in shelter. We are at a place  
5 now where the shelter census has gotten so high that,  
6 you know, absent having some real commitment on the  
7 part of, you know, the state to help us to advance  
8 our efforts, we're going to have some challenges. So  
9 again, we will re-double our efforts in securing  
10 placements for shelter clients as we have done,  
11 absent having an advantage or a rental assistance  
12 plan but we're also going to re-double our efforts at  
13 this point in time to try to get that language, that  
14 restrictive language removed, and any assistance that  
15 the council can provide us in that regard. I'm glad  
16 to hear that the Chair is going up to Albany with us.  
17 We greatly appreciate.

18 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So I would--I  
19 didn't know about your visit to Albany, the Office of  
20 Public Advocate would have loved to join you to  
21 Albany. Seems like I have a permanent home in Albany.  
22 I've been there four times in 70 days, but the next  
23 trip, please call me, let me know. I would love to  
24 join you and if I could join you in a conference call  
25 or in a personal telephone call to the Governor or to

2 any other leaders in Albany, please, you know, let me  
3 know what I can do, the Office of Public Advocate can  
4 do. Let me also go on to say that in add--  
5 notwithstanding my earlier comments, the reality is  
6 that there's an--there are some individuals in the  
7 shelter system who have some challenges, mentally and  
8 emotionally, and so why we identifying that subset of  
9 individuals and perhaps providing them with  
10 supportive housing or assisted living or something  
11 that like.

12 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we are. My  
13 initial inquiry of our providers and of my staff has  
14 been what our programing or social services  
15 programming has been for clients who are in shelter  
16 system during their shelter stay, right? Because I  
17 think it begins with whatever our interventions can  
18 be in making sure that the services that we're  
19 providing while they are actively in shelter are  
20 those that will attend to whatever the mental health  
21 needs they may have or whatever challenges and  
22 barriers to housing that they may be faced with. So  
23 starting there and then hopefully continuing those  
24 efforts by way of aftercare beyond exit from shelter  
25 and entry into permanent housing to help bridge and

2 individual and to help bridge a family that's leaving  
3 shelter, moving into their own home with any support  
4 that they may need is something that we're looking at  
5 very closely, not just as one agency, but also I'm  
6 looking across all of the health and human services  
7 agencies to understand whether or not there are  
8 points of intersection with individuals and families  
9 who are in shelter who have issues that are being  
10 addressed by other systems and how we can bring to  
11 bear all our resources as a city system in order to  
12 help our clients. So to your--the very direct answer  
13 to your question is yes, I'm looking at it, but not  
14 just from the point of exit, but while they are  
15 actually in shelter.

16 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Right. We all  
17 read in New York City, the horrific story of the  
18 young man who unfortunately died in Department of  
19 Corrections. He was homeless. He was living in a  
20 stairwell at NYCHA. He was arrested simply for  
21 trespassing and unfortunately he died because of some  
22 would argue negligence on the part of Department of  
23 Corrections. The--so, is there any coordination  
24 between Department of Corrections and the Department  
25 of Homeless Services, because clearly I don't believe

2 individuals should be arrested simply because they're  
3 homeless, and perhaps we could have avoided that, the  
4 untimely death of that individual could have been  
5 avoided had there been coordination between  
6 Department of Corrections and Homeless Services and  
7 Department of mental health and I forget the name of  
8 the agency.

9 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, that tragic  
10 event, tragic loss of a life is something that I hope  
11 as we as a city system can learn from. To your  
12 question, you know, thinking of ways in which we can  
13 evaluate that case to know which agencies were  
14 involved in that gentleman's life and how perhaps if  
15 our efforts were more coordinated across the board,  
16 would there have been a different result. It's  
17 something that I want to learn more about. You know,  
18 I've asked my staff for a briefing of the gentleman's  
19 case with our agency and with that information then I  
20 intend to have conversations with the Department of  
21 Health and Mental Health and NYPD Corrections, you  
22 know, all those who touched his life in order to  
23 learn--

24 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]  
25 right.

2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: going forward how we  
3 can better serve clients who are in shelter who may  
4 present with similar circumstances. And in order to  
5 really find a way to do our work in a stronger and  
6 richer way.

7 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [off mic] and the  
8 subset of individuals who are suffering from mental  
9 illness. Look at all the money we could have saved?  
10 Him going through the criminal justice system, NYPD,  
11 had we identified him earlier in--I know there's a  
12 significant number of individuals in the homeless  
13 shelter who are suffering from mental illness. I see  
14 them in my former district. I see them at the Armory  
15 in Brooklyn. I see them in downtown Brooklyn. We need  
16 to identify those individuals in the mental health  
17 system who belong in the mental health system as  
18 opposed to our correctional system, who desperately  
19 need some type of assistance and medication so that  
20 they perhaps some medication to get them get their  
21 life in order. So I hope there is some--we can  
22 coordinate efforts going forward and we can learn  
23 some lessons as a result of the death of that young  
24 man. And lastly, I know that section eight vouchers  
25 are scarce, so again, just identifying a subset of

2 individuals in addition to those who are suffering  
3 from mental illness and individuals who also have,  
4 suffer from some type of a disability and perhaps  
5 prioritizing them for those individuals for public  
6 housing?

7 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I mean, to the  
8 extent that we could have access to public housing is  
9 we're pursuing at this point in time, as well as  
10 access to section eight vouchers for our shelter  
11 clients. It's something that we want. You know, in  
12 thinking about the category of clients who would best  
13 be served by those resources is something that has  
14 already been--something that's already begun and  
15 continues in our permanency planning work with all of  
16 our shelter clients. So yes, we are looking at what  
17 resources are available, aspiring to have more  
18 resources become available and hoping to make  
19 targeted placements that'll be longstanding for  
20 shelter clients beyond their exit so that they don't  
21 reenter.

22 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay. And what is  
23 the process for--I understand that 46 percent of  
24 families that are eligible for shelter are turned  
25 away, and what is the process? Is there a due

2 process hearing that individuals can access when they  
3 in fact are rejected for housing and what is the cost  
4 in the system when a DHS caseworker rejects a family  
5 and they have to apply over and over again? Aren't  
6 there cost factors involved? What can we do to assure  
7 that anyone who steps forward seeking assistance and  
8 who is entitled to housing, in fact, gets housing in  
9 the city of New York? And that is my last question,  
10 and I again, I want to thank the Chair for his  
11 indulgence.

12 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, Public Advocate  
13 James, to your question, I had asked my staff about  
14 that percentage that was spoken to before I arrived  
15 and since I arrived, and I wanted clarification in  
16 terms of what that meant to the 46 percent number. I  
17 would say that it is not 46 percent of individuals,  
18 families who are applying for shelter who are deemed  
19 ineligible. So on the single side, there's a right to  
20 shelter in New York, as you know, and there's no real  
21 eligibility requirement for any single individual  
22 who's presenting for shelter in New York City. The  
23 state does require that for families who present for  
24 shelter that we have to have an eligibility process  
25 in place in order to discern that they have a housing

2 need that would allow them to enter shelter. In the  
3 way in which it breaks down, there's a chart that I  
4 can share with the Council that was shared with me.  
5 So we have families who present who are diverted,  
6 successfully diverted from having to enter shelter by  
7 way of our efforts through diversion as well as HRA's  
8 partnership for diversion at path with us, where  
9 we're able to identify alternative housing options  
10 for those families that they can go to instead of  
11 coming into shelter. Additionally there are a  
12 percentage of families that make their own  
13 arrangements, and when I ask what does that mean,  
14 what does that look like.

15 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Right.

16 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: The information that  
17 I was given, this is also followed up with a visit to  
18 Path. I spent--I had been there before in my former  
19 life working at Child Welfare because we had ACS  
20 staff who were co-located at Path and I knew the  
21 operations really well, but going there as a  
22 Commissioner of the agency, I had some time and I was  
23 able to kind of witness the way in which our staff  
24 worked with clients who come in. Making their own  
25 arrangements really involves some real intervention



2 on the part of social workers who are currently in  
3 what we call the resource room there, and they're  
4 working with clients who identify resources that they  
5 may not have--they may not themselves have thought  
6 about when they came to Path seeking shelter. And to  
7 the extent that clients are able to access those  
8 resources and we're able to support them or provide  
9 them with whatever we can to help that other  
10 arrangement work, we're doing that. The actual  
11 ineligibility rate is reported to me from July of  
12 January as being 21 percent. Those who are found  
13 eligible, the rate is at 38 percent. To your  
14 question of how much it costs, so there are due  
15 process rights in terms of--

16 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Right.

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: when a family is  
18 found ineligible for shelter. A family is never  
19 turned away. So when they present, while we're  
20 determining eligibility we will shelter the family in  
21 a conditional shelter stay so it's not as though  
22 they're being told they cannot, you know, come into  
23 shelter and we will continue our diversion efforts  
24 during their shelter stay, and if they're deemed  
25 ineligible, then there's a conversation had with

2 social workers that I've referenced in that resource  
3 room to have a conversation of why that decision was  
4 made and there's a fair hearing that they are  
5 afforded. Actually two steps, a fair hearing at Path  
6 and then they can challenge that hearing at a state  
7 administrative hearing. So again, it's eligibility as  
8 you know, is something that I'm looking at very  
9 closely.

10 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Something that I  
12 want to understand how we're having conversations  
13 with clients who elect to make their own  
14 arrangements, and really kind of to get to the root  
15 of what's working, what's not working, what could  
16 work better, what could be revamped, what could be  
17 stronger, all towards the end of ensuring that those  
18 who have no other housing option and need to enter  
19 shelter can do so.

20 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Got it. And the  
21 main reason why they are rejected or denied?

22 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: The--so there are  
23 two reasons. One is an alternative housing resource  
24 has been identified and the other is that the process  
25 has not been completed, and I think at the term of ar

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2 that we use--do you know? In essence, we don't have  
3 enough information and it was information that we  
4 needed.

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Right.

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: In those instances,  
7 though, I did inquire what then, how do we help  
8 families get the information that we need if they  
9 don't have it themselves, and the information that  
10 I've been provided is that we actually have staff who  
11 do so. So it's alternative housing option and it's  
12 new information submitted by the family, so there  
13 wasn't sufficient information in the first instance.

14 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. And  
15 lastly, fraud investigators are at the shelters?

16 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yes. So--

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing] How  
18 many fraud investigators do we have in the city of  
19 New York or are hired by DHS and what is their  
20 purpose?

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So fraud  
22 investigators--

23 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]  
24 Other than the obvious, but.

25

2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Fraud investigator  
3 is civil service title.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: There are--here it  
5 is. It's a civil service title that exists in the  
6 city. We are not the only agency that have staff who  
7 are hired under that civil service title. The  
8 functional title for fraud investigators at DHS are  
9 family workers, team leaders, field investigators,  
10 resource--field investigators, those three. We have  
11 35 family workers. We have 27 team leaders, 54 field  
12 investigators. The term fraud investigator, while the  
13 connotation is one that suggests that--

14 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing] Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: individuals are  
16 committing fraud.

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yeah.

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: It's a term that was  
19 assigned to the title by I don't know who handles the  
20 civil service list or you know, who gives the  
21 moniker, but that's the moniker that we hire from and  
22 then we change it and give it a functional title. So  
23 again, they're to--they're working with our staff to  
24 get a sense of how--they're working with our clients  
25 to get a sense of what information they're providing

2 related to their application for shelter, and you  
3 know, trying to discern that the information is valid  
4 and that the information is accurate in order to  
5 support their application.

6 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And victims of  
7 domestic violence, are they treated differently than  
8 any other individual who presents themselves as being  
9 homeless?

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So there's a special  
11 screening at Path for victims of domestic violence.  
12 There's a no violence again, which is a NOFOR  
13 [phonetic] program that engages victims of domestic  
14 violence and safety planning as well as in connecting  
15 them with DV shelters that are managed by the human  
16 resource administration. If there are slots  
17 available, if there are not, then we as part of  
18 Safety Planning try to identify the borough, you  
19 know, another borough where the offender is not  
20 residing in order to target a shelter placement in  
21 that location and make other connections as we can to  
22 Safe Horizon, to all the DV providers, to the Family  
23 Justice Center, you know, to really make sure that  
24 there's a plan in place to attend to their safety,

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2 and our social work staff at Path manage that  
3 process.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you  
5 Commissioner.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Madam Public  
7 Advocate. Next we--I want to first acknowledge  
8 Council Member Lander, Council Member Barron and  
9 Council Member Rodriguez have joined us and the next  
10 questions are from Council Member Donovan Richards.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Good afternoon,  
12 Commissioner. Pleasure to be here. Thank you,  
13 Chairman. Just had a few questions I wanted to raise.  
14 First, I want to start off, I'm going to put on my  
15 Environmental Protection Chair hat for a second.  
16 Wanted to know your facilities, are you guys using  
17 number six oil or number two? Are you aware of what  
18 type of heating oil you guys are utilizing in your  
19 facilities?

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Council Member, I  
21 have to--I'd have to get you an answer to that  
22 question. I don't know offhand.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I know that I have  
25 someone who works at the agency who will know.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay, no  
3 problem.

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We will get you an  
5 answer to that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: You'll get a  
7 pass today. Just wanted to raise--so on facilities  
8 and obviously, you know, you guys may be looking to  
9 expand at some point, but I just want to speak of  
10 Community Boards 12, 13 and 14 in Queens, southern  
11 Queens, and the Rockaways. We've been overwhelmed  
12 with a lot of shelters and I want to know what are  
13 you guys going to do a little differently than what  
14 the prior Administration did in terms of when you're  
15 ready to put a shelter in our communities, are you  
16 guys going to come to us? Are you going to engage  
17 stakeholders much differently? And are there any  
18 plans for any more expansions or additional shelters  
19 in southern Queens or the Rockaways? And once again,  
20 I just to no fault of yours obviously, you guys are  
21 new, but you know, we would just hear about it coming  
22 instead of really being engaged in the process. I  
23 just want to know what you guys are going to do  
24 differently there.

25

2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So to your question,  
3 I've been briefed on where all of our shelters are. I  
4 realize that there's, you know, more concentration of  
5 shelters in certain areas than there are in others.  
6 We bring on shelters of our way of an open ended RFP  
7 process. So we have a standing RFP that remains open  
8 so that if and when we need capacity, it's dictated  
9 by demand, that providers can respond to our RFP and  
10 propose shelter. One of the changes that we are in  
11 the process of making to that RFP is related to  
12 addendum 10, I believe, which talks about the system  
13 of notifications to the Community Board's  
14 expectations related to what the providers must give  
15 note, who they have to give notice to, how they have  
16 to give notice and in advance of actively submitting  
17 the response to the proposal, demonstrating to us  
18 that they gave notice to the Community Boards that  
19 have your--the boards are aware that there's someone  
20 who is looking to site a shelter in a particular  
21 area, right? Towards the end of more transparency,  
22 towards the end of ensuring that there's dialogue,  
23 it's something that we thought would be a benefit in  
24 our process at this time, looking at the way in which  
25 shelters had been cited in the past and going



2 forward. I can't answer your question in terms of  
3 what our immediate needs will be outside of what I  
4 testified to and the initial question that was posed  
5 by the Chair of what our projections are for  
6 additional capacity. I do hope that if we're able to  
7 get rental assistance, if we're able to get that  
8 language removed in the state budget and if we're  
9 able to secure other options, that it will mitigate  
10 our need to bring on more shelter because we'll be  
11 able to exit shelter clients from shelter going  
12 forward. In the absence of us having an out strategy  
13 in order to find permanent placements for our  
14 clients, then as the need dictates and as the demand  
15 would require, we have to attend to the demand for  
16 shelter in New York City as it presents itself to us.  
17 So, right now we're trying to redouble our efforts on  
18 prevention, to prevent those from entering and trying  
19 to find strategies to exit and hopefully that will  
20 mitigate some of the need of what additional shelter  
21 capacity will be.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay. I just  
23 want to say spread the love a little bit, because  
24 we've been overburdened. I don't know if Helen  
25 wanted, Helen Rosenthal may want some more additional

2 beds. I'm not sure. Just--I'm on the Public Housing  
3 Committee and on Friday, NYCHA testified that there  
4 were 1,500, I think they had somewhere around 1,500  
5 empty units. So I would make sure--I just would urge  
6 you guys to make sure you're working with NYCHA, and  
7 I think they might have said some of the 1,500,  
8 obviously a small amount of them might not have been  
9 doable for people to move in, but I would urge you to  
10 look into that number. Just want to raise some  
11 questions on hurricane Sandy. In your testimony you  
12 spoke of the 13.7 million in funding expense  
13 associated with hurricane Sandy and the national  
14 emergency grant. I know you weren't the Commissioner  
15 then, but wanted to know, I see at the end of your  
16 para--your testimony you say funding will be added as  
17 needed in FY 15. Just wanted to know what did that  
18 actually mean? Does that mean there's going to be  
19 additional work, additional clean up work and you  
20 guys are planning on utilizing these resources for  
21 that?

22 LULA URQUHART: Yes, that means that any  
23 additional work or any additional work on shelters  
24 that hasn't been done yet, that's including those  
25 dollars.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay. So that's  
3 not--is that hiring out of--

4 LULA URQUHART: [interposing] No, it's not  
5 the--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: So it's just for  
7 work in the particular shelters?

8 LULA URQUHART: Yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay. And then I  
10 just wanted to raise, and I know Carlos Menchacca,  
11 his district was hit hard during hurricane Sandy.  
12 Mine was as well, and we were not happy with how some  
13 of our constituents are treated. You know, some were,  
14 you know, woken in the middle of the night and told  
15 pack your bags and you know, you're going to go the  
16 Bronx or you're going to go to Brooklyn or wherever,  
17 and I just wanted to urge you guys as the new  
18 Administration comes in to certainly look at your  
19 planning and certainly just to make sure that that's  
20 sort of thing never happens again. And one of the  
21 questions I wanted to raise is how many people are  
22 you aware of these numbers, how many people who were  
23 obviously came through the shelters, how many of them  
24 from Sandy damaged areas are still in the shelters?

2 Were any of them made permanently homeless? Are you  
3 aware of the numbers there?

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Unfortunately,  
5 Council Member, we don't have the numbers with us on  
6 that question, but we can get them for you.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay, no  
8 problem. So I'm going to--I think that was my last  
9 question, and I just wanted to echo what Council  
10 Member Gibson spoke of. I know the E-train [phonetic]  
11 in the Rockaways and I know the New York one did a  
12 particular story on it and as an avid train rider, I  
13 often see that the E train is problem in terms of  
14 people who are homeless, who, you know, obviously are  
15 not in the shelters for whatever particular reason,  
16 but also want to just urge you maybe as a way to  
17 split the budget to make sure that we're still doing  
18 prevention instead of just taking from one pot, you  
19 know, and not really dealing with preventive  
20 services. I just wanted to echo her sentiments. Thank  
21 you, Commissioner, I look forward to working with you  
22 and if you can get those numbers to me, that would be  
23 appreciated.

24 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We will. Thank you.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Council Member

3 Richards. Council Member Menchacca?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Thank you,

5 Chair, and hello Commissioner, and again thank you so

6 much. Like Council Member Donovan Richards said,

7 we've been engaging your agency for some time now,

8 and thank you so much for all the work that you've

9 done including Ms. Lisa Black for all her incredible

10 work. The question really that I wanted to drill down

11 a little bit more is on all--the funding

12 reprioritized for street--away from street and into

13 subway outreach, and actually I want to turn the

14 comment into a question from Donovan Richards about

15 whether or not this funding is going to be flexible

16 and get an understanding of how the subway outreach,

17 or sorry, the subway homelessness rates went up and

18 if you have any sense about why that happened? I'm

19 guessing it was the cold winter, but is there any way

20 that you can kind of give us data on how that

21 happened?

22 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: The data that I have

23 comes from our Hope survey that talks about the count

24 and how we actually extrapolate the results in order

25 to predict what the rates of street homelessness will

2 be. I don't have an answer to you in terms of how it  
3 went from the levels of 2005 I believe is what I had  
4 spoken to to 2013.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Right.

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We can certainly,  
7 you know, I can speak with my staff to get a sense of  
8 what their best predictions are in terms of what  
9 attributed to that, but I do know that as a result of  
10 it, you know, getting as high, the census in the  
11 subways getting a high as it has been, that  
12 reprogramming the MTA contract to add to it, and to  
13 really bring to bear some of the experience that our  
14 agency has had with working with street homeless as  
15 part of our outreach efforts to their program was  
16 something that we felt would have an impact, a direct  
17 impact to the phenomena of there being so many  
18 unsheltered people in the subways. It costs more  
19 money to do it because we wanted to do it in a way  
20 that was more robust than MTA had been doing it, and  
21 with their agreement, we decided to, as you know, add  
22 money to the contract in order to reach all 468  
23 subway stations in a different way. So not just more  
24 frequently, but also to consider what the engagement  
25 on behalf of the provider would look like, and the

2 second component is once we're able to identify those  
3 who are unsheltered in the subway, having a place for  
4 them to go should they elect to come into shelter  
5 with us. So having safe haven beds and having  
6 capacity that would be available to service them if  
7 our efforts were truly successful to have them come  
8 into shelter for ultimate planning towards permanent  
9 housing options off of the street and out of the  
10 subways. So I did ask how the calculations were made  
11 in terms of how the allocations for fundings were  
12 distributed across our current outreach providers and  
13 based upon what was relayed to me, there were numbers  
14 that were hard and fast percentages that would have  
15 resulted in some providers having deeper cuts than  
16 ultimately were--than ultimately we moved forward  
17 with. So we were able to mitigate some of the, and  
18 offset some of what our current providers would have  
19 lost in order to fund the MTA outreach subway  
20 outreach efforts in a new contract. So, again, I know  
21 that it's hard to think about how much money will it  
22 cost and how can we preserve the integrity of what we  
23 have in current outreach, but we're going to continue  
24 to re-estimate. We're going to continue to take a  
25 temperature in terms of what the numbers look like

2 and if changes have to be made, I was told that we  
3 can make changes.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Oh, great. So  
5 there's flexibility in the funding.

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: There is. That would  
7 be informed by what the efforts show us will be the  
8 need. So if our efforts at this juncture really  
9 result in there being a good yield in terms of  
10 bringing in those who are unsheltered and living and  
11 being in the subway, then we'll keep the levels as  
12 they are. If it's not, then we have to rethink it.  
13 Only other choices.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: And so my next  
15 question is about our veterans, and our veterans  
16 interacting with the Department and specifically  
17 anything that they can--you can point to in this  
18 budget or in programs that you're ready to launch.  
19 You might be aware of an introduction that the City  
20 Council has made regarding veterans and really  
21 tracking them through the system. So I'm just  
22 wondering what this budget presents for our veterans.

23 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So as my staff  
24 whispers into my ear, so as I knew we had specialized  
25 programing for veterans who are in shelter. There's a



2 third shelter that's opening in the Bronx, but I've  
3 been--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: [interposing] A  
5 third shelter opening up in the Bronx?

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yes, and it is--  
7 Thank you. There is a shelter that's being opened by  
8 way of the Dell Fund. The Dell fund is the provider.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Got it.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: That will have more  
11 units that are specialized for veterans.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: How many units  
13 is that?

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I believe it's 200  
15 units.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: 200 units.

17 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Actually, 200 beds,  
18 excuse me.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Okay, 200 beds.

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: 200 beds, yeah.

21 Additionally we're working with the Veterans  
22 Administration in order to really make sure that  
23 we're targeting our outreach efforts, not just our  
24 outreach efforts, but also our permanency efforts in  
25 coordination with their work and the benefits that

2 they can provide to veterans who are in shelter.

3 There is a convening that I'm going to be attending  
4 later this week that is being hosted by the federal  
5 government on this issue in Washington D.C. to really  
6 talk about ways in which we as one city and 24 other  
7 cities can come together to strategize on our efforts  
8 related to working with the veteran population who  
9 are in shelters. So I hope to bring back from that  
10 convening more information that can inform our  
11 practice going forward, and with this new capacity  
12 that we're bringing on board, hopefully we'll be able  
13 to definitely meet the need for shelter for those who  
14 are veterans and also plan accordingly going forward  
15 for what that census will look like.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: That's great,  
17 okay. Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council  
19 Member Menchacca. Council Member Barron?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr.  
21 Chair, and I want to thank the Commissioner for  
22 coming. I have lots of questions for you. In terms of  
23 siting of your shelters, how do you address the  
24 problem of over saturation? I represent Community  
25 Board five in east New York and a part of

2 Brownsville. How do you determine whether or not a  
3 community has been over saturated? And how do you  
4 address the situation of over saturation?

5 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So Council Member, I  
6 can only speak about what I know, and I can only tell  
7 you that in the few months that I've been at the  
8 agency and learning where our shelters are and how  
9 they're concentrated throughout the communities in  
10 New York City, it does cause one to reflect upon how  
11 decisions to site shelter are being made. Towards  
12 that end, I have--I've wanted to really get a sense  
13 of what we as one city system can do since we are the  
14 arm that provides shelter in New York in order to be  
15 more equitable in our fair share analysis going  
16 forward. So it began with the transfer request and  
17 then asking our providers as part of their response  
18 to an RFP to make certain notifications. But also  
19 having some real understanding of what is the  
20 footprint of shelter in a community, and getting a  
21 sense of whether or not there are other options, and  
22 whether those other options are viable. We don't go  
23 looking for shelters. The reality is there are  
24 proposals that are given to us, but it is our  
25 responsibility to review the same and to score them

2 and to evaluate them to make some rational decisions  
3 about how much density there can be for shelter in a  
4 particular location. So I can tell you going forward  
5 the question that you're asking is one that I will be  
6 asking and one that this Administration will be  
7 asking to make sure that there is more equitable  
8 distribution around the city as there is need. Now,  
9 part of that also from my perspective means looking  
10 at our shelter stock and you know, preferring the  
11 tier two model that tends to have more comprehensive  
12 services attached to it as opposed to the cluster  
13 capacity that could be spread throughout, you know,  
14 the city and finding ways in which we can, you know,  
15 move towards tier twos and perhaps convert some of  
16 our existent capacity to better program capacity. I  
17 note that something our providers want to do. I know  
18 it's something that we as a city system want to do,  
19 but really looking forward, it's--to answer your  
20 question, it's something that we're going to be very  
21 deliberate and very thoughtful about in terms of how  
22 we are siting and how we are procuring and bringing  
23 on shelter throughout the city.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, if a request  
25 comes for a shelter in an area that you know is over

2 saturated, will you deny that request and tell them  
3 to find another location?

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I believe that we  
5 have done that historically is what's been reported  
6 to me, that there has been, you know, a denial if not  
7 for that reason alone, but for other reasons related  
8 to what's being proposed. If it doesn't meet our need  
9 for a particular type of capacity and also the  
10 location of the capacity is something that's  
11 considered as we score proposals that we receive.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. And can you  
13 list for me the types of shelter that DHS has or that  
14 they contract out? There are different types, can  
15 you list those for me?

16 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we have tier two  
17 shelters, which I had referenced. We have families  
18 that are sheltered in cluster units which are  
19 apartments in various buildings. We also have  
20 families that are sheltered in hotels, hotel capacity  
21 and then we have shelters for individuals who are in  
22 shelter that are more dorm-like, you know, with beds,  
23 individual beds for those who are at those sites.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Next question is  
25 what coordination do you have with the Department of

2 Education? I have a friend who was a principal and  
3 her school received an inordinate number of children  
4 from the shelter, and she did not receive adequate  
5 support services from the DOE in compensation or  
6 recognition of that special population that was in  
7 her school. So what coordination are you looking to  
8 establish with the DOE that makes them aware that  
9 they have a certain responsibility to provide  
10 additional services to those schools?

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So my understanding  
12 is that in our tier two shelters for families with  
13 children that we do have DOE liaisons who are co-  
14 located at those sites. For families with children  
15 who are not in tier twos there are DOE liaisons that  
16 we can have access to in order to attend to the  
17 educational planning for children who are being  
18 sheltered in those units with their families. It goes  
19 to the point that I had, that I made mention to  
20 before in terms of the services being on site and co-  
21 located in tier twos. So having a DOE liaison who is  
22 there who can actually work with the parent and with  
23 the child on whatever educational issue there are,  
24 who can have a direct point of contact with the  
25 school system in troubleshooting what those issues

2 may be. That's a model that we've had in place that I  
3 would want us to deepen and to strengthen because the  
4 education of children as you know was paramount and  
5 if they're in shelter, it's something that we have to  
6 really be vigorous in attending to.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: In terms of  
8 services during the school day in the school building  
9 itself, what can you anticipate that you might be  
10 able to do?

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I don't know. I  
12 don't what is possible. I do know that part of the  
13 case planning work is being done by our shelter  
14 providers does require that they inquire about school  
15 attendance for children who are in shelter, and what  
16 that inquiry looks like, how deep it is, how it could  
17 actually be fortified or strengthened is something  
18 that I want to consider. Outside of attendance, I  
19 don't know if there's a real qualitative question  
20 about how is a young person doing academically. I do  
21 know that in some of our sites we have tutoring  
22 services that are available as needed to shelter  
23 residents, but not all of our sites. Could there be  
24 more of that? Could there be more synergy? Could  
25 there be more conversation and collaboration in the

2 benefit of children, you know, who are in shelter and  
3 who are attending school? Absolutely. Would I want  
4 that to happen? Absolutely.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. What  
6 percentage--you talk about programs, what is it  
7 called? SET, I think it's called, Shelter Exit  
8 Transitional Job Program, and I think that there's  
9 certainly a need for that, but I wanted to ask you  
10 what percentage of people in shelters are actually  
11 working and just can't afford to pay rent and are in  
12 this temporary shelter, 'cause I know that there are  
13 people and there were articles recently in the papers  
14 of people who work regular jobs but have to rely on  
15 shelters.

16 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] What  
18 percentage, do you have an idea?

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So it's estimated at  
20 25 percent of individual singles who are in shelter,  
21 and for families it's estimated somewhere between 25  
22 to 30 percent of families who are in shelter and  
23 working.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: That's a serious--  
25 that's a large number and that's a serious problem,



2 then. If these are people who are continually working  
3 and have jobs, how will we ever going to assist them  
4 in getting permanent housing? 'Cause they have jobs,  
5 so it's not that they need job training or that they  
6 need to find a job.

7 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So it go--it brings  
8 me back to the notion and to the request for rental  
9 assistance and, you know, thinking about families and  
10 individuals who are working in shelter and if there  
11 was some assistance that was available to them. If  
12 we're able to remove the restrictive language from  
13 the budget in the state then we'd be able to tap into  
14 that to support them.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Good. So before  
16 the Advantage Program, before that language  
17 prohibited, what was the percentage then?

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Thirty percent is  
19 what I'm being told.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So it's not much  
21 difference?

22 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, I certainly  
24 expect that the language removal would assist the  
25 program, but there's still something else that needs

2 to be done. If we're not seeing a difference in the  
3 percentage with or without the rental assistance,  
4 there's a problem and we need to really try to  
5 address how we can correct that. When you contract--  
6 when you have a provider give the services, what  
7 oversight do you have? What provisions, what  
8 protocols are in place? There's a shelter--one of  
9 the shelters is two blocks away from our office and  
10 we've had the residents from that shelter come with  
11 various complaints. When we went to the shelter to  
12 ask about that we were told we couldn't come in,  
13 you're not allowed to come in and we don't have an  
14 answer for you. So what type of oversight exists and  
15 what type of enforcement exists when you have  
16 providers who are not measuring up to what they need  
17 to do?

18 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So we by virtue of  
19 our contract with providers, we oversee a number of  
20 aspects of their work. We oversee those staffing  
21 levels. We oversee the actual facilities in which  
22 they provide shelter. We oversee their staffing  
23 ratios to clients. We oversee their permanent exits  
24 from shelter and monitor them against those to get a  
25 sense of whether or not they're able to help shelter

2 clients address and work through their housing  
3 barriers. There are record reviews through our  
4 electronic system in which cases, documentation for  
5 cases is actually made. We're looking at the  
6 qualitative contact with the client. We're looking at  
7 the unit inspections, how many they're doing. We're  
8 looking, you know pretty much from soup to nuts what  
9 is their engagement with clients who are in shelter  
10 around having it be a permanent, a temporary state  
11 and having them attain permanent housing outside of  
12 shelters. So again, it is an easier review if you  
13 have a discrete building, if you have a tier two as  
14 opposed to if you're overseeing cluster units that  
15 are spread out throughout various buildings. The  
16 oversight of those units tends to be a bit more  
17 challenging, but never the less is still in place by  
18 way of our contract.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: What are the  
20 conditions under which a provider might lose their  
21 contract, have a contract terminated, and how often  
22 does that happen?

23 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I can't tell you,  
24 Council Member, how often it did happen. I can tell  
25 you that I do know that there have been in the past

2 there have been a few providers that have lost their  
3 contracts, not many. I do believe that part of that  
4 was predicated upon their inability to find placement  
5 for shelter clients who were in their units who did  
6 not exit, who had been there for a very, very long  
7 period of time where shelter actually became housing.  
8 There may be other examples. I'd ask my colleagues if  
9 they have any to share.

10 LULA URQUHART: There were a few that lost  
11 their contracts because of the management of their  
12 finances, and there were some that lost their  
13 contracts because of the service, the work they  
14 provided.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Because of? I  
16 didn't hear you.

17 LULA URQUHART: Their performance.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Performance. Once  
19 a provider loses a contract, can they apply again,  
20 and would they be awarded another contract?

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I'm being told  
22 that they can apply. Apparently their vendex  
23 [phonetic] score will be affected if they lose a  
24 contract. It's something that would be considered as  
25 part of their application and I don't know if they're

2 precluded from having a contract again, but I do know  
3 that if they lose a contract with us that it does  
4 reflect adversely in terms of their prospects for  
5 wanting to contract again.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Thank you.

7 And Mr. Chair, I may have some other questions if we  
8 have a second round. I got to put them together.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,  
12 Commissioner. I'm just going to ask a few questions  
13 and then we'll go back to Council Member Barron.  
14 First, I wanted to ask about--I'd heard from members  
15 of the provider community, those that operate tier  
16 two facilities that they have a real challenge in  
17 getting capital repairs and large capital  
18 expenditures approved by DHS and that that's a long  
19 term challenge for them because they are potentially  
20 getting cited by OTDA for violations and conditions  
21 that are unsound, but they have no funding in place  
22 on their own to do major capital repairs and they're  
23 telling me that they're having a hard time getting  
24 requests approved from DHS. And so long term, that's  
25 a big challenge, and again, these are organizations

2 that are operating with very small margins and don't  
3 have huge amounts of capital reserve that they can do  
4 major repairs if you know, something is big like a  
5 boiler goes out, but something also small like they  
6 need to be able to do repairs to electrical equipment  
7 in a room. Add to that the challenge that we have  
8 such a high velocity of turnover and the vacancy rate  
9 is so low that say in a family shelter that they  
10 don't have enough time to do repairs anyway between  
11 the time that a family moves out and the new family  
12 comes in. So can you speak a little bit about this,  
13 and is there a willingness on DHS's part to start  
14 looking at a new way of addressing this so that we  
15 can deal in good faith with our partnership  
16 organizations?

17 ERIN VILLARI: Yes, Erin Villari. DHS  
18 funds improvements to non-city owned buildings in our  
19 expense budget and so we have a new need request for  
20 health and safety that are prioritized as soon as  
21 they come in. So the providers will submit their  
22 request to an established form and as soon as it's  
23 identified as a health and safety new need that is  
24 prioritized and reviewed by the both the program  
25 analyst, our facility maintenance and our budget

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2 unit. So in the last three years, family shelters in  
3 FY 12 we gave approximately 600,000 dollars new needs  
4 for these health and safety concerns. In FY 13 for  
5 family shelters that was 1.3 million and in FY 14 to  
6 date, we've given 122 million. So we continue--

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] 122--

8 ERIN VILLARI: [interposing] I'm sorry,  
9 122,000, yeah. We continue to work with our  
10 nonprofit providers to prioritize their needs and to  
11 work with them as they identify them and to make the  
12 process as seamless as possible for them.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I mean, it--I  
14 guess it--I mean, being involved in allocating  
15 capital funds over the last four years, I could tell  
16 you that 122,000 dollars doesn't get you much in  
17 terms of capital funds, and so that's a source of  
18 concern. I imagine, you know, between, I don't know  
19 how many tier two facilities there are in New York  
20 City, but you know, dozens that the capital needs,  
21 you know, far exceed, you know, even a million  
22 dollars. I would imagine that especially with the,  
23 you know, that the fact that there are families  
24 constantly using these facilities, and also because  
25 I've heard from providers that they are having a hard

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2 time getting their needs approved, we should really  
3 be looking into this and seeing if there's a way in  
4 which the city can use capital dollars for some of  
5 the larger ticket items as well so that it's not all  
6 coming out of your expense budget.

7 ERIN VILLARI: I believe the city, the  
8 capital funds can only be used for the city owned  
9 buildings, and so we do prioritize as I said the  
10 health and safety new needs and the 122,000 per  
11 family shelters represents the needs that have been  
12 submitted to date.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: There are also cap--  
14 city owned buildings--

15 ERIN VILLARI: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: that are run by not  
17 for profit providers.

18 ERIN VILLARI: And we use capital funds to  
19 fund those new needs.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And what's the process  
21 by which they are the new needs requests are  
22 submitted for those buildings?

23 LULA URQUHART: Well, our FMD facilities  
24 maintenance department, they manage those. They go  
25 out and they look at the city owned buildings and



2 then they assess how much repairs need to be done on  
3 those buildings. So it's not a formal new needs  
4 process. It is that they manage the buildings and  
5 they asses what needs to be done. So most of our--if  
6 it's a city owned building operating by a not for  
7 profit, then it is funded through our capital budget.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: If we could just keep  
9 in touch about this particular issue, because it is  
10 something again that I've heard numerous times from  
11 the provider community. Okay. Moving right along,  
12 and I do want to apologize to the HRA Commissioner  
13 and her staff who are patiently waiting in the  
14 audience, and we'll try to wrap up as quickly as  
15 possible. With regard going back to and I don't want  
16 to rehash all the questions around shelter intake  
17 eligibility, but one thing that--and I received this  
18 chart from your staff which shows trends going back  
19 to September of 2011. I don't quite understand what  
20 all, how to interpret it and we can go over that  
21 maybe later and offline, but one thing that's been  
22 brought to my attention is that a significant change  
23 happened around the time that Commissioner Diamond  
24 took over as Commissioner at DHS, and that prior to  
25 his arrival there was a lower percentage of

2 applications at Path that were rejected on the first  
3 round. So if we could just--if we could look at the  
4 trends going back say to 2008 or so just so that we  
5 can get a clearer picture because it's been brought  
6 to my attention that there may be an issue there that  
7 there was a change around the time that Commissioner  
8 Diamond took over at the helm of DHS. You don't have  
9 to respond to that if you don't want to.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We'll look into it.  
11 We'll definitely look into it.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I want to ask about  
13 the homelessness prevention fund. This is a city  
14 council restoration that was not base lined. This is  
15 a fund that is used extensively. Every cent of it is  
16 called for and I think that it serves a major  
17 beneficial role at any given time, and I was  
18 wondering if there was a potential that that funding  
19 could be potentially be base lined and I assure you  
20 that the council would be willing to work with you if  
21 it is base lined to see if we can increase that  
22 budget line as well. Is there a willingness to  
23 engage in that conversation about base lining the  
24 homelessness prevention fund? It's at 250,000  
25 dollars right now.

2 LULA URQUHART: Yes. There is certainly a  
3 willingness to engage with OMB in base lining that.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

5 LULA URQUHART: I think it's for three  
6 sites that we give it to, and so we can start  
7 conversations about that with OMB.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That would be great.  
9 That would be great. Moving over to Home Base, what  
10 is the budget--in our budget documents it was kind of  
11 aggregated prevention services. What is the FY 15  
12 budget for Home Base?

13 LULA URQUHART: The FY 15 budget currently  
14 is 25 million. Of that, 19.5 million is city tax levy  
15 dollars and 19.5 is EAF. That was incorrectly  
16 written here. 5.5 million is ESG.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. And what is the  
18 difference between EAF and ESG?

19 LULA URQUHART: Emergency Solutions Grant.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But they're both city  
21 tax levy?

22 LULA URQUHART: ESG is a federal grant.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ESG is federal.

24 LULA URQUHART: Yes.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And EAF is city tax  
3 levy.

4 LULA URQUHART: EAF is federal also.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Oh, okay. So they're  
6 both federal?

7 LULA URQUHART: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So there's no  
9 city tax levy that goes into Home Base?

10 LULA URQUHART: There's 5.5 million of  
11 city tax levy.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Is--so, okay.  
13 So there's 5.5 city tax levy, 19.5 federal.

14 LULA URQUHART: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So is there a  
16 willingness based on the evidence that has been shown  
17 by the study that DHS commissioned last year showing  
18 the effectiveness of the Home Base program in keeping  
19 families out of the shelter system. Is there a  
20 willingness to explore--one thing I'd love to see DHS  
21 do is use some analytical tools to see what the right  
22 funding ideally would be for Home Base so that it has  
23 the maximum impact, so that it's--you know, if  
24 there's a sweet spot, in other words, where, you  
25 know, we--it could be double or triple that would

2 keep families out of the shelter system in a way that  
3 would be saving the city money, particularly city tax  
4 levy money, I think is something that we would  
5 obviously be beneficial to the families for keeping  
6 them in their homes, providing them with services  
7 that they need and then also, you know, saving the  
8 city money. Is there a way in which--is there a  
9 willingness on DHS's part to use data and analytics  
10 to try to figure out what that sweet spot is?

11 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So there absolutely  
12 is. The work and the planning in that regard has  
13 already begun. It's part of our work to expand  
14 homeless prevention efforts in New York City, and  
15 right now because it is state claimed federal funds  
16 that pay for Home Base, what we've begun is talking  
17 with the state about ways in which we can draw down  
18 more funding in order to have more Home Base offices.  
19 So we have 14 now. We'd like to if possible double  
20 that number. That would actually enable us to do a  
21 number of different things. One, it would allow us to  
22 not just provide our Home Base interventions that are  
23 proven to work but also to target them towards rapid  
24 rehousing beyond a shelter entry to continue the Home  
25 Base intervention beyond the point of actual entry

2 into shelter for some period of time with hopes that  
3 we could then exit shelter clients more quickly from  
4 their shelter stays if Home Base stays with them  
5 after they enter the shelter system. And two, Home  
6 Base would also be considered as a form of aftercare  
7 for clients who transition to permanent housing and  
8 perhaps finding a way in which we could stretch our  
9 resources to have some type of touch in the life of a  
10 family that's exiting to ensure that if there's some  
11 need that they have beyond placed into a permanent  
12 home, that we could help to connect them with a  
13 concrete service or a community based organization or  
14 another provider. So it's ambitious but it's  
15 something that we think that from beginning to end it  
16 can support our efforts to reduce our shelter census  
17 and to have fewer people enter shelter and help those  
18 who are exiting shelter to exit to permanency without  
19 re-enter.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,  
21 Commissioner. So I just have a couple of more  
22 questions, two kind of assorted topics here. But with  
23 regard to medical services, mental health services,  
24 can you speak for a moment about what type of  
25 psychiatric services are offered to parents and

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2 children at family shelters? Are those services  
3 contracted out or does DHS partner with other city  
4 agencies like Department of Health and HHC in the  
5 family shelters and in the adult shelters as well?

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So with respect to  
7 medical services and also psychiatric services they  
8 are largely community based. They are through  
9 hospital clinics and school health clinics as well as  
10 community based organizations that partner with our  
11 providers. We have about two dozen sites where  
12 medical services are directly on site. Some include a  
13 psychological component for families with children.  
14 All shelters have to have a bonafide linkage by way  
15 of an MOU with a medical provider for clients who are  
16 in shelter. And for those children and adults who  
17 end up in like the emergency room per say than  
18 referrals for outpatient care are also made at that  
19 time. So these are just a portion of what we have  
20 available. There are some opportunity to access free-  
21 standing article 28 clinics and 338 grants to  
22 healthcare for the homeless medical providers we also  
23 partner with. So we're looking at this and trying to  
24 make sure that we have sufficient resources available  
25 to our clients who need healthcare services and

2 trying to make sure that, you know, they're available  
3 when they need them.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, 'cause I think  
5 the big--the concern out there is that without the  
6 services readily available and in the shelters  
7 themselves, that it's sometimes very difficult for  
8 families to define them and to make that match with  
9 the services out there, and so it might be a good  
10 thing to explore working with DOH and HHC to have,  
11 utilize some of, tap into some of those services that  
12 they provide.

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We will.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And two more  
15 questions. Recreation coordinators were eliminated  
16 from adult shelters in a PEG [phonetic] some years  
17 back. Is there any desire on DHS's part or  
18 willingness to restore the recreation coordinators in  
19 the single adult shelters?

20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I've heard that  
21 they were pegged some time ago. What we've asked our  
22 providers to do in the absence of having recreational  
23 coordinators is to ensure that there are again  
24 linkages with community based organizations that  
25 could provide some recreation for a shelter residents



2 on the adult side. There's also programming that's  
3 done by our shelter staff to connect our residents  
4 with other, you know, other forms of recreation  
5 whether it be concerts, movies, theatrical  
6 performances. What I read is that we can access by  
7 way of the community is something that we're trying  
8 to bring to bear on our shelter stock right now. If  
9 there was an opportunity for there to be some  
10 additional funding made available to us in order to  
11 hire recreational coordinators, we'd like to do that.  
12 We'd like to have that funding available if its  
13 possible, but in the absence of having it, we're  
14 going to try to be creative in terms of what we can  
15 offer.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. And then my  
17 last question is around COLA's [phonetic] the impact  
18 of the delay in COLA on the state level for your  
19 providers. If there's a willingness on the city's  
20 part to explore implementing a COLA on city  
21 contracts. It's a big challenge as people--nobody's  
22 getting rich in this line of work and it is a very--  
23 as we're all aware, a very expensive city to live in  
24 and that goes for those that work in the provider  
25 community as well, and so I wanted to know if you had

2 anything to say about the delay in the state COLA and  
3 if there's a willingness on the city's part to  
4 explore city funding?

5 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: We know it's  
6 something that we're looking at. I can't commit to us  
7 being able to make that available, but it's been  
8 raised with me and to the extent that there were  
9 funds available by the state if it were possible we'd  
10 want to pursue it, but absent having state funding  
11 available it's something that would be difficult,  
12 difficult for us to manage at this juncture.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Thank you very  
14 much Commissioner. Council Member Barron, do you  
15 have any follow-up questions?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, thank you. I  
17 just wanted to share with you to get back to my point  
18 about saturation. We were slated in 2012, Community  
19 Board Five, to have another shelter, a men's shelter,  
20 and we took issue with the report that was issued  
21 from DHS citing the need for the shelter, and a part  
22 of the letter which we wrote responding to that I'd  
23 like to share with you. DHS inaccurately states that  
24 there is "only one shelter within a half mile radius  
25 of the facility." That was incorrect. There are

2 actually three shelters within a half mile. So our  
3 concern is the inaccuracy of the reporting. It also  
4 says that--we also cite in our letter that there are  
5 eight other large shelters in the immediate  
6 neighborhood within one and a half miles of the  
7 proposed shelter. "The Fair Share Analysis Guideline  
8 encourages that these nearby facilities be taken into  
9 consideration." But they also left out the over  
10 saturation of half-way and three-quarter houses that  
11 also fall under the Fair Share Analysis category of  
12 resident facilities. In actuality, there are over 16  
13 such facilities in Community Board Five. Absurdly and  
14 insultingly DHS proposed that Community Board Five  
15 instead deserves more shelters because "Community  
16 Board Five has a low ratio of residential facility  
17 beds to population than the citywide average." This  
18 is purposefully deceptive in addressing the true  
19 intent of the Fair Share Analysis. DHS used the  
20 category of residential facilities which encompasses  
21 correctional facilities, nursing homes, homeless  
22 shelters, residential healthcare facilities and other  
23 kinds of residential facilities to conclude that we  
24 were not bearing our fair share. It lumped nursing  
25 homes with homeless shelters, while the two types of

2 facilities are not comparable for addressing the  
3 benefit to a community, and in fact the appendix of  
4 the Fair Share Analysis Guidelines contains a  
5 separate bed population ratio for nursing homes and  
6 shelters. So as we talk about the Fair Share  
7 Analysis, we had many problems which we cited in the  
8 letter which we sent. There were gross inaccuracies  
9 [phonetic] and omissions as well. So we're looking as  
10 we go forward that there's an honesty and a  
11 transparency and an openness to what the factual  
12 actual count is as we describe the facilities that a  
13 community has, and we certainly want to say that  
14 anyone can become homeless due to any number of  
15 circumstances and we acknowledge that, and we believe  
16 that housing is an entitlement and we think that a  
17 part of the reason that we're facing this problem is  
18 because we have low paying jobs that don't pay a  
19 living wage and people can't afford. So we've got to  
20 look at creating job opportunities so that people  
21 will be able to afford housing. And lastly, I heard  
22 you say that the Community Board should be notified.  
23 I think that the Community Boards are entitled to an  
24 involvement in making the decision, not just  
25

2 receiving notice that we intend to bring a shelter  
3 into your community.

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So, to that point,  
5 Council Member, the notification requirement was also  
6 followed up with that there be a meeting, that there  
7 be a discussion, that there be a conversation with  
8 the Community Board, not just giving tacit notice and  
9 walking away, but rather having some real engagement  
10 around what the proposer is presenting and what the  
11 issues are that would be raised by that proposal in  
12 the community.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So you're saying  
14 the Community Board will have a decision making  
15 input?

16 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I'm saying that the  
17 Community Board will have an opportunity to speak  
18 with the proposer about what's being proposed in  
19 furtherance of really understanding what the need is,  
20 what the concerns are and what the dialogue should be  
21 related to any particular site.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well, I would  
23 offer that the community should have part in making  
24 that decision, not just, you know, discussing it but  
25 making the decision, but I do thank you for your

2 testimony and we will be of course working closely  
3 together.

4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yes, thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council  
7 Member Barron. Council Member Rodriguez?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,  
9 Chairman. First I just wanted to say thank you to the  
10 Commissioner for being helpful to one of those cases  
11 that we have in our district, the case of Mr. Benito  
12 which was one of the typical cases, such as the one  
13 that Public Advocate Tish James acknowledge, which  
14 those cases where people been denied to stay in the  
15 shelter two or three times, and we knew that that's a  
16 policy that you inherit, because it was a policy of  
17 Mayor Bloomberg and as a result of that policy first  
18 of all we know that we didn't make an improvement  
19 because at the end of the day we had homeless  
20 population increase. And I think that as we address  
21 it before, it is unacceptable that that, you know,  
22 that the first--one of the question that we were  
23 asked in the past, and I don't know if still you have  
24 inherited that question is, will you like to go back  
25 to your country and then even offer to buy the flight

2 ticket. So that's completely, you know, going a  
3 different direction from what we as a city is  
4 supposed to have a policy that will providing a  
5 shelter to everyone who needs shelter in the city. So  
6 I thank you on how you addressed. It was a particular  
7 case where a person went to the entry shelters on  
8 Water [phonetic] Avenue with a woman pregnant six  
9 months and twice he--they were denied. So I really  
10 appreciated that you joined to that conversation that  
11 also you were helpful and I know that right now  
12 there's a whole process they're working through, but  
13 it's much better than what they were before. So  
14 thanks a lot. No doubt that even having this hearing  
15 with you we have a different type of atmosphere in  
16 the city. It's someone that is more open to listen.  
17 It's someone that is more committed working  
18 collaboration and I think that the Council Member,  
19 it's like one of the first ally that any department  
20 should be looking at. We are the one that are more  
21 closer than you to the constituents in the community,  
22 and we know that to review the shelter, the homeless  
23 population in the city would take a lot, because it  
24 was one of the legacy that the previous Mayor said  
25 that he would leave, and he failed. So now you as a

2 new Commissioner have to make that transition, and we  
3 know that this is something that will not be resolved  
4 in weeks or months. It would take a lot in to the  
5 commitment of everyone. One area which is a question  
6 that I have is about the student's homeless  
7 population, the student's homeless population. I know  
8 that in the past there was article in the Daily News  
9 highlighting that the large percent of students in  
10 New York City who live in some type of shelters. So  
11 do you have the number of--with you today that you  
12 can share how many students in New York City live in  
13 some type of shelters?

14 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So Council Member,  
15 are you referring to students who are in public  
16 school, like minor--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]  
18 Public schools. Public schools.

19 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: So I don't have that  
20 number with me right now. I can get that number to  
21 you because we do track it and I want to make sure  
22 that you have accurate information. We track that  
23 information because we want to understand as I was  
24 saying in one of the previous questions how children  
25 are attending school and understand how our providers



2 and how our staff are working with parents and with  
3 DOE to ensure that their educational stability is  
4 maintained during any stay in shelter. So I can get  
5 you a hard number in terms of how many children are  
6 enrolled in school in New York City who are also in  
7 shelter.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Great, and  
9 that's important because, you know, I remember like  
10 two years ago there was an article in the Times about  
11 these homeless student who use--was able to get all  
12 this support and he ended up being at Princeton as  
13 one of the honor student there, and I think that  
14 beside any student that we have in our city,  
15 especially that particular population who go through  
16 a lot of hard time being homeless and wants to go to  
17 school. If we provide all the support they need, they  
18 will be the next Mayor, the next President, the next  
19 Sotomayor. So I hope that, you know, that I just  
20 would like for us to look at the number and  
21 especially without the school program. I would like  
22 to see some partnership with your department and the  
23 DOE so that that should be one of the first groups of  
24 students that we should be committed to provide after  
25 school program is those students who live in any type

2 of shelters because after 3:00 or 4:00 p.m. they  
3 don't have where to go into the home where you can  
4 get the support. So I just hope that we can look at  
5 the numbers, see how can we work to provide those  
6 students, any students, but especially that  
7 particular group all the support they need. Thank  
8 you.

9 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
12 Member Rodriguez. Does anybody else have any  
13 questions? Alright, seeing none, Commissioner I want  
14 to thank you and your team. Look forward to working  
15 with you for many years to come. We have a lot of  
16 work to do. I look forward to going up to Albany with  
17 your staff tomorrow, and I want to again emphasize  
18 how important it is that we are able to get this  
19 language changed in the state budget. This Council's  
20 going to be passing out a resolution on Wednesday  
21 around this issue encouraging our colleagues in the  
22 Assembly and Senate and at the Governor's office to  
23 do this so that we can give New Yorkers in need of a  
24 helping hand an opportunity to get themselves into  
25 permanent housing. It is the right thing to do, but

2 we need to have all hands on deck. So I want to thank  
3 you very much for your dedication to the issue. Let's  
4 continue to work together. Thank you very much for  
5 being here.

6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. We're  
8 going to take just a couple minute break and then  
9 we'll have HRA to testify.

10 [gavel]

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good afternoon  
12 everybody. I apologize that we are running so late. I  
13 am Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of General  
14 Welfare Committee. This is the third and final  
15 preliminary budget hearing for the General Welfare  
16 Committee. At this point we will hear testimony from  
17 the Human Resources Administration, also known as  
18 HRA, regarding its preliminary budget in general  
19 agency operations within its proposed 9.5 billion  
20 dollar budget as well as performance indicators for  
21 social services within the fiscal 2014 PMMR,  
22 preliminary Mayor's management report. HRA provides  
23 cash assistance, food stamps, HIV/AIDS support  
24 services also referred to as HASA and many other  
25 public assistance programs to aid low income New

2 Yorkers. HRA's proposed fiscal 2015 totals 9.5  
3 billion dollars, an increase of 95.8 million dollars  
4 when compared to the fiscal 2014 adopted budget, or a  
5 one percent increase. I am happy to see that the  
6 Administration base lined 5.2 million dollars for  
7 HASA case management, HASA support housing contracts,  
8 and HASA money management contracts after years of  
9 City Council restoring funding to these programs. In  
10 particular I want to acknowledge former Chair Annabel  
11 Palma and former Speaker Christine Quinn for their  
12 efforts on that. These services help support HASA  
13 clients and it's good to see that this Administration  
14 is acknowledging the positive impact that these  
15 programs have. I'm also pleased that the state and  
16 city finally came together to fund a 30 percent rent  
17 cap for HASA clients living in independent housing.  
18 This policy was long overdue. The 30 percent HASA  
19 rent cap limits the portion of the rent for New York  
20 City residents living with AIDS at 30 percent of  
21 their monthly income. The fiscal 2015 plan includes  
22 17.3 million dollars in city funding and 9.3 million  
23 dollars in state funding for the rent cap in fiscal  
24 2015 and in the out years. I am eager to hear how  
25 HRA's plan to swiftly rebudget the 10,000 HASA

2 clients whose rent will now be capped at 30 percent.

3 Funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance

4 Program or SNAP, an emergency food assistance still

5 remains a very high concerns, particularly at this

6 time. I applaud the Administration for base lining

7 1.5 million dollars for the emergency food assistance

8 program or EFAP, but still more needs to be done. The

9 impact of the loss in federal funding for SNAP on the

10 city has been tremendous due to sequestration. Food

11 pantries are reporting shortages earlier in the month

12 because SNAP recipients are using up their food

13 stamps quicker due to SNAP benefits decreasing.

14 Although the city has no control over the federal

15 food program, it does control how much money is

16 allocated to emergency food pantries. More funding

17 needs to be allocated to emergency food pantries to

18 ensure that those who rely on them have a constant

19 means to access food. This is a program that is vital

20 in every single neighborhood in New York City. It is

21 important to note that Governor Cuomo, to his credit,

22 announced that the state will preserve approximately

23 457 million dollars a year in SNAP funding by

24 allocating six million dollars for additional federal

25 low income home energy assistance or HEAP funding to

2 maintain SNAP benefits for impacted households. I'm  
3 eager to hear how this money will make its way to New  
4 York City residents. Again, I want to applaud  
5 Governor Cuomo for that. That is in my opinion smart  
6 budgeting to make sure that we have access to almost  
7 half a billion dollars in SNAP benefits by allocating  
8 six million dollars in HEAP benefits. That is  
9 something that, again, has rankled Congressional  
10 Republicans and that's to my delight. I think that  
11 that's a good thing. The Administration also base  
12 lined this year, two million dollars for Teen  
13 Relationship Abuse Prevention Program, also known as  
14 Teen RAPP. This program is a school based domestic  
15 violence prevention program that serves approximately  
16 50,000 ethnically and culturally diverse students in  
17 approximately 64 middle and high school buildings  
18 citywide. Teen RAPP serves a very important purpose  
19 in the community and base lining funding this year  
20 ensures that resources will be allocated in FY 15 and  
21 in the out years. Earlier this year the Mayor  
22 announced a new initiative for municipal ID cards.  
23 The goal of this program is for all New Yorkers,  
24 regardless of immigration status, to obtain a valid  
25 ID that would allow them to gain access to basic

2 services. HRA's budget this year includes--excuse  
3 me. HRA's budget includes 430,000 dollars in funding  
4 for FY 14, our current fiscal year, for this  
5 initiative to go towards preliminary staffing and  
6 planning for the implementation of this program. I'm  
7 eager to hear any updates regarding this initiative.  
8 I'd like to thank the Committee Staff for their work,  
9 Doheeney Sampora [phonetic], Finance Analyst, Andrea  
10 Vasquez, Council for the Committee, Peter Drivus  
11 [phonetic], the Legislative Analyst in preparing this  
12 hearing and I now welcome acting HRA Commissioner  
13 Kathleen Carlson for her testimony. Thank you,  
14 Commissioner for your patience this afternoon.

15 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: My pleasure. Good  
16 afternoon Chairman Levin and members of the General  
17 Welfare Committee and Public Advocate James. I am  
18 Kathleen Carlson, Acting Commissioner and Chief  
19 Administrative Officer of the New York City Human  
20 Resources Administration. Joining me this afternoon  
21 are Ellen Levine, our agency's Chief Financial  
22 Officer and Jill Berry, Executive Deputy Commissioner  
23 of Finance as well as some of our program staff. As  
24 you know, Mayor de Blasio recently appointed Steven  
25 Banks as HRA's new Commissioner and he will

2 officially begin his tenure with the agency a week  
3 from today on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Incoming Commissioner Banks  
4 very much looks forward to meeting with the General  
5 Welfare Committee at your convenience and at that  
6 time will be able to share and discuss with you more  
7 specific details regarding his, the Mayor's, the  
8 First Deputy Mayor's and Deputy Mayor for Health and  
9 Human Services, Lilliam Barrios-Paoli's vision,  
10 policy priorities and directions for HRA moving  
11 forward. Today, I am here to review HRA's 2014  
12 approved budget and the FY 2015 preliminary budget  
13 proposal and answer any questions you have related to  
14 them. In April, Commissioner Banks will be available  
15 to address broader questions about various programs  
16 within HRA as well as other policy questions. Since  
17 there are new members to the committee, I would also  
18 like to give a brief overview of the programs  
19 administered by HRA and our agency's dedicated  
20 workforce of 14,000 public servants. As a local  
21 social service district of New York State, HRA  
22 administers programs that are state supervised and  
23 often times further governed by federal agencies.  
24 This includes the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance  
25 Program, also known as SNAP, formerly called food



2 stamps, which currently serves nearly 1.8 million  
3 recipients in the city every month, resulting in  
4 annual benefits of 3.4 billion dollars in 2013. Our  
5 Cash Assistance Program comprised of both single  
6 individuals and families with children serves 337,400  
7 recipients as of February 2014. The Medicaid program  
8 serves 3.2 million New Yorkers, although HRA's role  
9 in the program is currently in flux as a result of  
10 the newly created state healthcare exchange also  
11 known as the New York State of Health. Established as  
12 part of the state's implementation of federal  
13 healthcare reform, the exchange is assuming the  
14 responsibility of determining eligibility for  
15 Medicaid for most new applicants under the age of 65  
16 as well as for residents eligible for newly available  
17 federal financial assistance to lower the cost of  
18 private coverage. This means that 80 percent of new  
19 community Medicaid cases are now determined eligible  
20 through the exchange instead of by HRA. However, HRA  
21 still maintains responsibility for Medicaid renewals  
22 this year for those we determined eligible prior to  
23 the exchange, those who will seek Medicaid related to  
24 disability, and to more than 110,000 individuals in  
25 longterm care. We will be offering application

2 assistance and some of our Medicaid offices to  
3 consumers applying for coverage through the exchange.  
4 HRA will also continue to educate New York City  
5 residents and small businesses about health insurance  
6 options and new financial assistance benefits, both  
7 in person and online. In addition, our child support  
8 enforcement program serves approximately 400,000  
9 cases and in 2013 collected over 742 million dollars  
10 in child support income from noncustodial parents  
11 with over 90 percent distributed directly to families  
12 and benefitting a quarter of a million New York City  
13 Children. HRA's Emergency Food Assistance Program  
14 assist low income New Yorkers in stretching their  
15 food dollars through a network of emergency feeding  
16 programs. Through an annual food budget of 8.3  
17 million dollars, approximately 120 community kitchens  
18 served an average of 273,000 individuals and 370 food  
19 pantries served 850,000 individuals each month. In  
20 addition, our home energy assistance program offers  
21 low income households assistance with their energy  
22 costs, and last heating season issued 800,000  
23 benefits worth 33 million dollars. In addition to  
24 the already mentioned benefits and services, HRA also  
25 has staff dedicated to supporting some of the most

2 vulnerable New Yorkers. Our adult protective  
3 services program mandated by New York State provides  
4 protective services to adults 18 and older who are  
5 physically and are mentally impaired and at risk in  
6 the community with no one willing and able to  
7 responsibly assist them. Today, APS provides  
8 assessment services to approximately 3,500 clients  
9 and ongoing services to over 5,500 clients a month.  
10 HRA also provide domestic violence emergency shelter  
11 to more than 1,000 families every day and community  
12 based support to over 3,000 families dealing with  
13 domestic violence each month. In addition, our Home  
14 Care Program, which is largely been transferred to  
15 state administered managed long term care programs  
16 still includes approximately 4,500 home care cases  
17 for people exempt or excluded from managed long term  
18 care. These are primarily Medicaid waiver, child and  
19 hospice cases. In addition to all of the programs  
20 that I mentioned that are state supervised there are  
21 several others that are unique to New York City. Our  
22 HIV/AIDS services administration also known as HASA  
23 currently serves over 32,000 medically eligible  
24 clients and their families totaling over 43,000  
25 individuals. HASA provides intensive case management,

2 timely delivery of benefits and services, and  
3 emergency housing for New Yorkers living with  
4 HIV/AIDS. In addition, our Teen Relationship Abuse  
5 Prevention Program known as RAPP which aims to reduce  
6 violence within relationships among middle and high  
7 school students supports approximately 50,000  
8 students at 57 schools and directly serves 11,000  
9 each year. With regards to the budget, HRA manages  
10 over 35 billion dollars in city, state and federal  
11 resources, although much of the funding including  
12 SNAP benefits and the federal and state shares of  
13 Medicaid do not pass through the city's budget.  
14 HRA's actual fiscal year 2015 expense budget is 9.6  
15 billion dollars of which 7.4 billion dollars comes  
16 from city tax levy and 2.2 billion dollars is federal  
17 and state revenue. A majority of the tax levy budget  
18 consists of the 6.3 billion dollar city share of  
19 Medicaid costs. In addition, our capital budget for  
20 the four years beginning in FY 14 is 251 million  
21 dollars of which 170 million dollars is city tax  
22 levy. Major capital projects include 80.5 million  
23 dollars for interior construction of the new HRA  
24 administrative headquarters which will be an  
25 important tenant for Four World Trade Center, and

2 47.8 million dollars to support our re-engineering  
3 initiative which aims to include customer service by  
4 offering clients more efficient ways to interact with  
5 HRA through new and improved technology. In FY 13,  
6 HRA's expenses were supported by 2.3 billion dollars  
7 in federal and state revenue from a variety of  
8 different revenue streams. Most notably, 736 million  
9 dollars in temporary assistance to needy families,  
10 known as TANF, 597 million dollars in medical  
11 assistance administration, 108.5 million dollars in  
12 SNAP administration, 286 million dollars in Safety  
13 Net, and 245 million dollars in additional TANF  
14 funding for administration and employment services as  
15 part of the New York State flexible fund for family  
16 services. It is important to note that funding for  
17 many of these sources is limited by caps and any  
18 spending cost above the limit are usually 100 percent  
19 from city tax levy. At the state level,  
20 administrative reimbursement for cash assistance,  
21 SNAP and child support enforcement was eliminated  
22 altogether over the last several state budgets. This  
23 reduction was further exacerbated by a change in a  
24 longstanding agreement between the state and  
25 localities to share equally in the cost of the actual

2 benefits. In the Safety Net Assistance Program, which  
3 has no federal funding share, the state reduced its  
4 share from 50 percent of program benefit costs to 29  
5 percent leaving localities to pick up 71 percent of  
6 the cost. At the same time the state changed its  
7 budgeting to cover the full cost of family assistance  
8 benefits with federal TANF block grant dollars which  
9 eliminated both state and local dollars. This  
10 transaction provided savings to the state, but leaves  
11 the city vulnerable if costs rise in the Safety Net  
12 Program or if the TANF block grant becomes over-  
13 extended. I would also like to highlight several  
14 changes to our budget in the November plan, including  
15 restoration of funding for several important  
16 programs. Within our HASA program, supportive housing  
17 contracts were restored by seven million dollars  
18 gross, five million CTL, and HASA Financial  
19 Management Services was restored to 200,000 dollars.  
20 We were also very pleased as I am sure the council is  
21 as well to see two million dollars restored to the  
22 Teen RAPP program, as well as 12 million dollars to  
23 fully fund the Parks Job Training Partnership  
24 Program. The November plan also included 1.5 million  
25 dollars for the Emergency Food Assistance Program,

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2 known as EFAP, funds that were also typically added  
3 to HRA's budget every year during the adopted budget.  
4 By including them for FY 15 in the out years, they  
5 are now base lined into HRA's overall EFAP budget.

6 The November plan also included additional funding to  
7 create a family justice center in Staten Island that  
8 will be the fifth center to be established in  
9 partnership with the district attorney's offices.

10 Once established, there will be a center in every  
11 borough. HRA's total budgeted full time head count is  
12 14,096 as of the 2014 January plan and our FY 15  
13 budget includes a planned head count reduction of 587  
14 attributable to our re-engineering initiative to use  
15 technology in order to better serve our clients. We  
16 anticipate achieving this head count reduction  
17 through attrition and redeployment while making sure  
18 to maintain enough staff to continue to serve clients  
19 in the ways that best meet their needs. It is  
20 important to point out that embracing the use of  
21 technology to better serve clients in the human  
22 services domain and for the delivery of public  
23 benefits is occurring across the country. Research  
24 indicates that across different income levels many  
25 people want to utilize technology to handle

2 transactions. According to an HRA internal survey  
3 completed in 2011, 61 percent of recipients use the  
4 internet daily. A follow-up survey last year found  
5 that 93 percent of clients have cell phones with 75  
6 percent of the phones being smart phones. This is  
7 very much in line with the national trend out lined  
8 by the Pugh Research Center Survey on internet usage  
9 which found that of people living below the federal  
10 poverty level, 83 percent had access to the internet.  
11 Starting with the SNAP program we are including more  
12 ways to for recipients to interact with HRA either  
13 online or through the telephone. The end goal is a  
14 self-directed service model where city residents will  
15 be able to view their HRA account online 24 hours a  
16 day, seven days a week. They will be able to submit a  
17 applications, recertification, or required documents  
18 online, view upcoming benefits, review program  
19 notices or easily submit changes to case information.  
20 Eventually, applicants and recipients will not be  
21 required to physically come into our offices for  
22 services as often. This will make the program easier  
23 to access because clients will not have to miss a day  
24 of work or make childcare arrangements just to submit  
25 an application, report a change or deliver a



2 document. However, individuals who still want to come  
3 into the office and speak to someone in person will  
4 continue to be able to do so. This is a very large  
5 initiative that the prior Administration initiated  
6 and incoming Commissioner Banks will be reviewing it  
7 very closely as soon as he is formerly in the role.  
8 The January plan also included several additional  
9 changes to HRA's overall budget. These changes are  
10 also things that incoming Commissioner Banks will be  
11 reviewing and therefore will not be finalized until  
12 after his start date. In order to give the new  
13 Administration time to reassess the impact of selling  
14 HRA's city owned buildings used as multi-service  
15 centers and to gather further community input  
16 especially from Council Speaker Mark-Viverito and  
17 other elected officials, the FY 14 budget includes a  
18 year delay in savings associated with that original  
19 plan. To that end, 25 million dollars was restored in  
20 FY 14 and these savings were shifted to the FY 15  
21 budget. Incoming Commissioner Banks will be reviewing  
22 this initiative before it proceeds. The January plan  
23 included 430,000 dollars for the planning process to  
24 launch the city's municipal identification card. HRA  
25 has been in meetings with the Mayor's Office of

2 Operations and Immigrant Affairs and many other  
3 agencies to determine how to operationalize and  
4 launch this important city-wide initiative. HRA will  
5 receive one million dollars each fiscal year  
6 beginning in FY 14 to develop a city-wide campaign to  
7 connect to New Yorkers who aren't aware they may be  
8 eligible for benefits such as SNAP, cash assistance  
9 and emergency assistance known as One Shots.

10 Currently, we outreach to hundreds of community  
11 organizations and moving forward we will utilize  
12 earned, owned and paid media and other innovative  
13 strategies for touching as many New Yorkers as  
14 possible with the message that our programs are here  
15 to help them. Incoming Commissioner Banks will be  
16 leading this overall effort once he starts. We're  
17 also very excited about the 1.3 million dollars in  
18 targeted funding over five years identified in the  
19 plan to hire staff to train on policies governing  
20 immigrant access to public benefits. We are in the  
21 first stages of this process of discussing the  
22 training needs internally with HRA program areas and  
23 will be working in close coordination with the  
24 Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to ensure the  
25 training is strategically designed. Funds were added

2 to the January plan to help move forward on the  
3 Administration's priority to cap the contribution  
4 towards rent for clients at our HASA program to 30  
5 percent of their income. This type of rent subsidy  
6 would be provided through cash assistance and as  
7 such, 6.7 million dollars was added to our budget for  
8 FY 14, and 26.7 million dollars for FY 15. This  
9 policy change is a joint initiative between the City  
10 and the State and as such, we look forward to the  
11 state sharing in the cost of the implementation both  
12 financially and through necessary changes to the  
13 state's management information system. The total cash  
14 assistance budget is 1.37 billion dollars in 2014, of  
15 which 557 million dollars is city tax levy funds, and  
16 in 2015, the budget increases to 1.39 billion dollars  
17 of which 570 million dollars is city funds. The  
18 increase is due to the annualization of the funds  
19 added to the cash assistance budget for the HASA rent  
20 cap. The 2014 and 2015 cash assistance budget was  
21 also reforecast as part of the January plan based on  
22 the actual caseload at that time and resulted in  
23 about 17 million dollars in total savings and 30  
24 million dollars in city savings each year. The  
25 incoming Commissioner will also be reviewing the cash

2 assistance budget and the underlying reasons for this  
3 change. In looking at over at HRA's overall budget  
4 there was a decline of 37.3 million dollars between  
5 FY 14 and FY 15 with an increase of 67.8 million  
6 dollars in city funds. The overall budget decreases  
7 in FY 15 are due to reduced administrative and  
8 personal funding related to benefits re-engineering  
9 and Sandy housing recovery. The increased city tax  
10 levy can be attributed to the increased city weekly  
11 share of Medicaid in FY 15. I believe this covers the  
12 intricacies and details of HRA's budget, and my  
13 colleagues here with me today and I welcome your  
14 questions related to it.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
16 Commissioner. Thank you for your testimony. I want  
17 to acknowledge my colleagues Carlos Menchacca and  
18 Inez Barron who have joined us for this portion of  
19 the hearing. Let's see, I'm going to ask just a  
20 couple of questions and then I'll turn it over to  
21 them for a few questions as well. Wanted to start off  
22 with discussion around the proposed action around the  
23 30 percent rent cap with HASA. Can you take me  
24 through this a little bit? I tried to do the math  
25 myself and I didn't quite understand how it's--how

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2 there's going to be enough funding in place to make  
3 it work. So there's 10,000 or 12,000 depending on who  
4 you ask, HASA clients that would qualify here.

5 There's 26 million dollars that is to be allocated  
6 between city and state funds. That's--I can't

7 remember exactly what the math was, but it's around  
8 2,000 some odd dollars per client per year, and I

9 didn't--I don't quite understand how that would help  
10 make up the difference in rent that the 30 percent

11 cap would entail per client. Two thousand 600 dollars  
12 is not enough per client to make that to go across an  
13 entire year. So can you take me through how 26

14 million dollars is going to be a sufficient amount of  
15 money to make it work?

16 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Okay. I'm going to  
17 refer this question to our Chief Financial Officer  
18 and Finance Deputy Commissioner.

19 ELLEN LEVINE: I can assure it does work,  
20 and it probably would best for us to send you a  
21 spreadsheet but we can go over this at the high level  
22 here. One of the things that--

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] So if  
24 you could speak into the microphone.

25

2 ELLEN LEVINE: Oh, sorry. It's pretty  
3 intricate, so I think what we would want to is send  
4 you a spread sheet and walk you and your staff  
5 through it, but we can start at the high level here  
6 at this hearing.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure.

8 ELLEN LEVINE: One of the things to bear  
9 in mind is although there is 10 to 12,000 people in  
10 rental assist--in independent housing who will get  
11 this benefit--

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Right.

13 ELLEN LEVINE: We've already got 3,300 or  
14 so people in supportive housing who are already  
15 receiving it. So we reduce the cost by that factor,  
16 because it's already budgeted for.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

18 ELLEN LEVINE: And that I think explains  
19 it, if you just do that simple math. In other words,  
20 we're already spending money to do this, so that's  
21 not a new cost to us.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: On the--on the  
23 supportive house--

24 ELLEN LEVINE: [interposing] Right.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Those clients  
3 receiving supportive housing.

4 ELLEN LEVINE: Right. So we--

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] So  
6 there's--

7 ELLEN LEVINE: [interposing] The cost is  
8 another eight million dollars that you're not seeing  
9 in the budget 'cause it's already in our budget.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. Sorry. You  
11 said 3,500 support--

12 ELLEN LEVINE: [interposing] About 3,300  
13 in supportive housing.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So even if you  
15 were to take the smaller end of that, and I'll do the  
16 math here, 10,000 minus 3,300 is 6,700 clients that  
17 would be receiving the new 30 percent rent cap and  
18 that's 26 million.

19 ELLEN LEVINE: Well, what we're saying is  
20 that the total cost would be about 35 million  
21 dollars.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thirty-five million  
23 dollars.

24 ELLEN LEVINE: But we have to--we're  
25 already spending eight million dollars, so that

2 essentially reduces, and I'm rounding a little. That  
3 reduces it to the 27 that you saw in the budget.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So how much then  
5 how much per client is it over the course of a year?

6 ELLEN LEVINE: But that's per month. So  
7 rough--it's roughly 200 dollars per month per client,  
8 additional.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, so then but is  
10 that going to--so 200 dollars per month, is that  
11 going to be enough to help bridge that gap? If  
12 they're paying a max of 30 percent of their income,  
13 how is--and they're in a, you know, thousand dollar  
14 apartment and they're making 18,000 dollars a year. I  
15 don't know how that's going to make up the  
16 difference.

17 ELLEN LEVINE: It's the difference between  
18 the 30 percent and what people are contributing now  
19 based on the cash assistance budgeting rules. So  
20 that's where you get the 200.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I see.

22 ELLEN LEVINE: But one thing to also bear  
23 in mind is the way we're viewing this and the way we  
24 plan to implement it is through the cash assistance  
25 budget which is an entitlement. So to the extent that



2 we're over or under, it gets accommodated there, and  
3 if we would need more money we would go to OMB to  
4 have that discussion.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So there's a  
6 commitment not matter what on the Administration's  
7 part that whatever that difference is between what  
8 they're receiving now and the 30 percent cap is going  
9 to be made up.

10 ELLEN LEVINE: That's my understanding,  
11 yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Thank you. I  
13 wanted to--staying with HASA, talk for a moment about  
14 the financial management allocation. This is a  
15 funding that was base lined and there seems to be  
16 some confusion or some--the funding has been switched  
17 out, if you will. In the past, the Administration  
18 it's my understanding has come up with 350,000  
19 dollars for this and the Council has put in 200,000  
20 dollars. In this instance now, the Administration has  
21 base lined the 200,000 dollars of which is what the  
22 council normally put in, and so we have 200,000  
23 dollars in a program that in previous years was fully  
24 funded at 545,000 dollars. Does that make sense?  
25 Where is the rest? Where is the difference? Where is

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2 the 345,000 dollars going to come from? Is it coming  
3 from the Administration or is it coming from the  
4 Council?

5 ELLEN LEVINE: Well, I'm not sure that we  
6 have exactly the same number as you have, but based  
7 on what the contract had expended in the prior  
8 period, this year our contribution was roughly  
9 100,000 dollars, meaning above the 200,000 that the  
10 Council contributes, but regardless, the money that  
11 was not base lined--the base line money was  
12 essentially the Council contribution. The other money  
13 is still in our budget and any discussion I think  
14 about what would happen in the future would be  
15 something that Commissioner Banks would be looking  
16 at.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And then the past--

18 ELLEN LEVINE: [interposing] But that  
19 money--

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] it's  
21 been at 545?

22 ELLEN LEVINE: Excuse me?

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In previous years its  
24 been at 545, is that right?

25

2 ELLEN LEVINE: yes, in previous years it  
3 was. In FY 14, the budget was 380--is 383 and the  
4 planned budget for FY 15 including the 200  
5 restoration and the 100 contribution that we continue  
6 to plan on is 300,000.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So then we still  
8 need--

9 ELLEN LEVINE: 15 is 83,000 dollars less  
10 than 14.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And 14 is some--that  
12 difference between 545 and 383. So in order to get  
13 back to ideally we would--really we would be going  
14 well above the 545. There are, to my understanding  
15 there are 400 clients that are being served. This is  
16 a very important service that could be--it could do  
17 a, you know, could do a better job with more funding.  
18 SO I think that it should be our collective goal to  
19 not only get it back to the 545, but to exceed that  
20 and either, you know, we could either serve more  
21 clients or we could serve the clients that are in the  
22 program better.

23 FRANK LIPTON: If I may just comment on  
24 that. Frank Lipton. Currently there are  
25

2 approximately a little more than 300 clients being  
3 served through the--

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Okay.

5 FRANK LIPTON: financial management  
6 contract, and at maximum it would have the capacity  
7 to serve 400 clients at any given point in time, and  
8 we project that that would be adequate.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'll turn it over to  
10 my colleagues for a moment. I have a number of more  
11 questions. So do either of my colleagues have any  
12 questions? Council Member Menchacca? I'm sorry.  
13 Ladies first. Council Member Barron.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr.  
15 Chair. Thank you to the panel for coming and sharing  
16 your information. On page two of your testimony you  
17 talk about community Medicaid and the exchange, the  
18 new health exchange. So are you saying in your  
19 testimony that you're only handling the  
20 reapplications for Medicaid and going forward they  
21 will be handled by the exchange?

22 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: I'm going to have  
23 Karen Lane who is our Executive Deputy Commissioner  
24 for the medical--for our MICSA [phonetic] area.  
25 That's the acronym.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

3 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: She can say it for  
4 you, but I want her to answer your question because  
5 it's a little complex.

6 KAREN LANE: Hi thanks. So basically,  
7 the Medicaid program has over the past year, parts of  
8 it have already transitioned over to being run by the  
9 state through New York State of Health or the Health  
10 Exchange, but so in essence they've taken over to try  
11 to keep it simple, and again, at the highest of  
12 levels. They've taken over about 80 percent of the  
13 new application work. They have not taken over any of  
14 the Medicaid work for disabled, aged or blind, or for  
15 individuals who receive their benefits through cash  
16 assistance or through some other program through SSI,  
17 etcetera, but what HRA has kept is all of the  
18 renewals. So there are 3.2 million people who are  
19 currently on Medicaid in New York City. HRA, whether  
20 you're part of what they call this 80 percent that  
21 was taken over or the 20 percent that we're keeping,  
22 basically for all renewals, HRA is keeping that  
23 population and we're continuing to do their renewals  
24 and any under care activity, meaning any changes that  
25

2 need to be made to their case while they currently  
3 have an active benefit.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And will that  
5 continue next year and the years going forward?

6 KAREN LANE: I really can't answer that.  
7 It's the state is making these decisions regarding  
8 the state takeover of the Medicaid program. As it  
9 stands now we've been told that the renewal component  
10 is likely to go over to the state at the end of this  
11 year. Nothing is set in stone at this point, and  
12 there's been a lot of back and forth in terms of the  
13 timeframe of the state--the timeframe for the state  
14 takeover. So I hesitate to really give you a hard and  
15 fast answer on that. For now, HRA is managing that  
16 process and you know, over the next few months we'll  
17 likely know more.

18 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: I would just add,  
19 Council Member, that the incoming Commissioner, we're  
20 planning for him to meet with the State Department of  
21 Health on these very issues within the first week to  
22 two weeks of his tenure because it's really important  
23 to us that our consumers in New York City are, you  
24 know, have the continuity of service. So we're in  
25

2 close discussions with the state and I know incoming  
3 Commissioner Banks is looking at this very seriously.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: As you know, it's  
5 very complex. It's a very complex process. It's not  
6 very straight forward and direct, and if by keeping  
7 it with HRA we can better assist persons who are  
8 eligible, assist them in getting them what benefits  
9 they're entitled to, I would certainly want to see  
10 that. On page five of your testimony you talk about a  
11 reduction in employees, and you said the full time  
12 headcount is 14,096, and you anticipate a planned  
13 head count reduction of 587. That's about four  
14 percent reduction in your workforce, and you then go  
15 on to talk about some of them will be through  
16 attrition and others will be redeployed. What  
17 percentage are you anticipating through attrition as  
18 opposed to redeployed and what other kinds of areas  
19 will they move into?

20 UNKNOWN: We haven't been able at this  
21 point because we're still moving towards that goal,  
22 have any distinction between attrition and  
23 redeployment. Part of this is the process that  
24 Commissioner Carlson referred to that our new  
25 Commissioner, incoming Commissioner, is going to be

2 looking at, how the re-engineering initiative is  
3 implemented. There are many other areas within HRA  
4 that employees can work in. We are a large agency and  
5 we'll be looking at every area at that time.

6 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: And I would add  
7 that the incoming Commissioner, I think really does  
8 want to look at all the resources that HRA has in its  
9 portfolio, staff and so on and ensure that the focus  
10 for him is reflected in where we're putting the  
11 workforce. So but the goal is through attrition and  
12 redeployment.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So he's going to  
14 look at the areas and decide which ones he can have  
15 some shrinkage in and which ones people will be moved  
16 over to?

17 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Possibly. As I  
18 said, you know, when he gets here next Tuesday I know  
19 he's going to take a very, very close at the  
20 workforce, the head count issues, any pegs that we  
21 have on the table and ensure that wherever the agency  
22 is headed is reflective of his vision and the Mayor's  
23 vision and the Deputy Mayor's vision.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. And in that  
25 same, on that same page, you say "according to HRA



2 internal survey completed in 2011, 61 percent of  
3 recipients use the internet daily." And I think you  
4 had that there is a part of talking about having  
5 online services for people who want to use that.  
6 When you say they have, they use the internet daily  
7 are you saying they have computers in their homes?

8 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: You know, I don't  
9 have the information from the survey with me to look  
10 at. I can get that for you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I would be  
12 interested to know because that's kind of vague to  
13 say that they have--that they use the internet daily.  
14 I would like to know in what capacity because it  
15 seems to suggest that they have ready access to the  
16 internet, and I don't know that that's the case, and  
17 as we're talking about people signing for the elderly  
18 trying to get on Medicaid and people with  
19 disabilities, I don't know that that's--I mean, you  
20 do, in your testimony say you will certainly still  
21 provide one on one assistance, but I don't know that  
22 there's that ready availability for people who use  
23 HRA services to have ready access to the internet. So  
24 I'd be interested to know how that plays out.

2 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: We'd be happy to  
3 follow up with you on that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
6 Member Barron. Council Member Menchacca?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Thank you,  
8 Chair, and thank you Commissioner, acting  
9 Commissioner and the team that you've brought here  
10 with us today. My first question is around the  
11 broker's fee. So something that we've been following  
12 for some time now. In 2011 the PEG [phonetic] was  
13 implemented and I wanted to know if you're tracking  
14 the rental assistance clients and how long it's  
15 taking them now to find housing. I know this was a  
16 big issue for us in the City Council and previous  
17 sessions and I want to see if you have any data to  
18 share with us today.

19 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: It's my  
20 understanding that we don't have data on our general  
21 cash assistance clients. I think there might be a--no  
22 data on the HASA clients? It's something we can look  
23 into and see if there's anything we can pull from you  
24 and when incoming Commissioner Banks starts we can  
25 sit with you and go through it.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Okay, but  
3 nothing was implemented thus far or attempted to  
4 track the effect of this PEG?

5 FRANK LIPTON: We have data on how much  
6 was saved, right?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: I think you  
8 saved 26.6 million, is that right?

9 UNKNOWN: Yes, I mean, we can track the  
10 expenses and how much we projected we would spend,  
11 and that's the savings against that projection, but  
12 as Commissioner said we don't have what you're asking  
13 for which is how long it took people to find--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: [interposing]  
15 Okay.

16 [cross-talk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Was it  
18 something that was asked before of the Council or of  
19 others and advocates?

20 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: You know, I don't  
21 know if it was asked.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: I'm not sure.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Okay. Well, let  
25 this be a question that we can maybe--

2 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: [interposing] Sure.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: move forward.

4 This is clearly a real major issue for the rental  
5 assistance clients and we're hoping to get a better  
6 understanding of what that PEG did. In the opening  
7 remarks from our Chair, he mentioned the municipal ID  
8 program and the 430,000 dollars going into it. Can  
9 you tell us a little bit more than what you've given  
10 us in the testimony about what that is being used for  
11 now and in preparation for it? Is there a final  
12 report that's going to come out? Any sense you can  
13 give us on that initial preparation.

14 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: So I have been  
15 meeting with the Mayor's Office of Operations and the  
16 Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to just talk  
17 through some of the mechanics. And the incoming  
18 Commissioner, I know when he starts next week we're  
19 going to sit down with them and see sort of how the  
20 430,000 dollars can be best used. Is it to hire some  
21 people? Is it to have consultants take a look at the  
22 best practices? As you know, this is a very  
23 important initiative to you and to the  
24 Administration. So HRA wants to do our best to be a  
25 great team player, but I don't have a ton of detail

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2 yet. We are really looking to the Mayor's Office of  
3 Operations to give us some directions. So those  
4 conversations are continuing.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Okay, great.

6 And I have another question about the food stamps  
7 operations. And you explained that this is due to a  
8 staff reduction and a loss of federal funds, yet the  
9 number of people benefitting from this program has  
10 increased steadily since the fiscal year 2011. What  
11 will the effect be to the budget reduction on the  
12 people who need this kind of nutritional for SNAP in  
13 this--in the difference?

14 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: In the terms of the  
15 federal cuts?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: The federal  
17 cuts, specifically, and there's an uptick too as  
18 well.

19 UNKNOWN: Are you talking about the change  
20 in our administrative budget?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Right, yes.

22 UNKNOWN: Okay, so what we were talking  
23 about before.

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: I think that's  
3 what your--I think that we're talking about the same  
4 thing.

5 UNKNOWN: Yeah, so there's city, state and  
6 federal funds that support those staff we were  
7 talking about. So it's related to that staff  
8 reduction. Those federal funds are the salary costs,  
9 part of the salary costs if those positions--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: [interposing]  
11 Okay.

12 UNKNOWN: are reduced. Which is in our  
13 budget right now.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: But there isn't  
15 also an increase in the number of SNAP?

16 UNKNOWN: There has been an increase in  
17 the number of SNAP participants over the last several  
18 years, yeah.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Okay. Okay.  
20 And I wanted to ask also about the adult protective  
21 services and the assessment cases that have also  
22 steadily increased since 2011, from 11 to 13, yet the  
23 funding for APS remains stagnant and APS suffers from  
24 a lack of resources and case management ratios remain  
25 high. Curious about the--I don't believe we saw an

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2 increase in the budget for that and kind of wanted ot  
3 know a little bit about that, whether or not you will  
4 need an increase. The numbers are saying that we  
5 need an increase and I'm hoping that we could hear  
6 from you about why that increase hasn't shown up in  
7 this budget.

8 UNKNOWN: I think probably Cecile can  
9 answer that question, Deputy--

10 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: [interposing] So  
11 I'm going to invite Cecile Noel up who oversees the  
12 APS program.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Great, thank  
14 you.

15 CECILE NOEL: Good afternoon, Council  
16 Members. I apologize I sound a bit froggish, but I'm  
17 suffering from a pretty bad cold.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: You and me  
19 both.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Me too.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Yeah, me too,  
22 yeah.

23 CECILE NOEL: My name is Cecile Noel, and  
24 among the programs that I oversee, I also oversee  
25 Adult Protective Services. Currently, the caseloads

2 right now for our workers are about 28 cases, which  
3 is under what is the cap. So you know, at this  
4 point, even though our assessment cases have gone up,  
5 a lot of those cases we've been able--our--some of  
6 them are not APS eligible so assessment means that  
7 the community is just calling the case in. We go in.  
8 We make an assessment. We make a determination. Only  
9 a percentage of those assessment cases make it into  
10 under care. And so there's a bit of fall off there,  
11 which ensures that overall our case loads haven't  
12 increased that much, but we will certainly keep an  
13 eye on it. It's important to us that we deliver that  
14 service well. It's some of the most vulnerable in the  
15 city and I know that APS is very important to our  
16 incoming Commissioner, and he's going to be taking a  
17 close look at what we do there, how well we do it,  
18 and what resources that we need.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Okay. Okay.

20 Well, we're looking forward to hearing more about  
21 those plans as well. And my final question, if I  
22 could, is in fiscal year 2014 in the HASA program,  
23 which we've been talking about today, the target for  
24 the average number of days for submission of a  
25 completed application to either be approved or denied



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2 of enhanced housing benefits was at about 7.9 days.

3 However, in 13, in FY 13 you were able to do this in

4 an average of seven days and I think the report says

5 that you're now targeting eight days. And so I'm

6 wondering if there was--if there's a reason why we

7 can't keep it down to seven and further decrease that

8 target.

9 FRANK LIPTON: I'm sorry, I missed the  
10 beginning of your question. This was for emergency  
11 placements?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: This is for the  
13 specifically for the submission, the HASA submission  
14 applications.

15 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: For enhanced  
16 benefits?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: I believe those  
18 numbers are for the enhanced. Yeah, enhanced housing  
19 benefits. I believe these are numbers for the  
20 enhanced, enhanced housing benefits.

21 FRANK LIPTON: I'll have to review that.  
22 I'm not familiar with the numbers that you're talking  
23 about.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Okay. Yeah, it  
25 would--

2 FRANK LIPTON: [interposing] I'll  
3 certainly get back to you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: This is  
5 clearly--we want to get those, the average numbers  
6 down.

7 FRANK LIPTON: Absolutely.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: And so I'm just  
9 noticing the discrepancy in your targets, and if you  
10 could bring that down to seven days. You've clearly  
11 met that goal. It'd be great to adjust that if you  
12 can.

13 FRANK LIPTON: I think that would be for  
14 any rental assistance, not just the above enhanced.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACCA: Not just the  
16 enhanced housing, okay. Okay. And I'll keep it for  
17 now. Go ahead. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
19 Council Member Menchacca. Thank you. I'm going to  
20 just kind of go through topic by topic with questions  
21 that I have. So if you'll bear with me, I might be  
22 kind of veering all over the place. People might have  
23 to stand up and sit down and move chairs and stuff,  
24 so. But I wanted to start going back to the 30  
25 percent rent cap, when does the Administration plan

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2 to implement the affordable housing protection and  
3 will it--is it going to be retroactive at all? Is it  
4 going back to a start date or is it starting, you  
5 know, on July 1<sup>st</sup> and then that just starts then.

6 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: In the city and the  
7 state have been in some very close discussions.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm sorry,  
9 Commissioner, if you could speak closer to the mic.

10 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Sure. The city and  
11 the state are counterparts at OTEDA [phonetic].  
12 We've been in constant contact with them about the  
13 implementation of this. So as far as questions as on  
14 retroactivity and so on and so forth, until the  
15 budget is finalized, we're talking with them, but  
16 once we have that information we're going to know  
17 more fully sort of retroactivity, dates and some of  
18 the mechanics of the plan.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So it's still being  
20 discussed.

21 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: It is.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In terms of that  
23 portion of it. And then with regard to the sources of  
24 income, is it going to be available to clients that  
25 are receiving SSI and SSD, veterans benefits in

2 addition to earned income, or is it--are sources of  
3 income treated all the same or are they going to be  
4 treated differently?

5 UNKNOWN: Yes, they're all being treated  
6 the same. It's earned and unearned income.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry, say that again?

8 UNKNOWN: It is earned and unearned  
9 income.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

11 UNKNOWN: All those benefits you  
12 mentioned, any others and earnings as well.

13 FRANK LIPTON: As long as the legislation  
14 indicates that.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. With--okay.  
16 So staying on HASA, I wanted to ask about what's  
17 referred to as HASA for All. Currently HASA is  
18 available to individuals that have "symptomatic HIV"  
19 which is an obsolete term in this day and age. We've  
20 had a lot of advancements in treatment of HIV and  
21 AIDS over the last decade and what's concerning is  
22 that for somebody that's homeless living with HIV  
23 that they could perhaps weigh a symptomatic HIV or a  
24 AIDS diagnosis as something that would help them  
25 qualify for HASA and thereby help a, you know, help

2 their financial situation out, and so it's not a  
3 great incentive to seek medical treatment and anti-  
4 retrovirals early on because it precludes them from  
5 receiving the HASA benefits. So is there--is it  
6 something that you're looking at, you've cost it out,  
7 you figured out how much it would cost and 'cause  
8 that's something that it would be important to know  
9 how much it would cost and then make an informed  
10 policy decision moving forward, but that all starts  
11 with kind of having a clear idea of what the  
12 financial impacts would be.

13 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: And regarding HASA  
14 for All, I know that's something that the incoming  
15 Commissioner also really wants to sit and take a look  
16 at. I know that's been something that's been talked  
17 about over the last number of years. So that is one  
18 of the many things that he's going to be reviewing  
19 when he starts. So we'll look forward to other  
20 conversations with you on that.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Staying on  
22 HASA, the issue of rental assistance and apartment  
23 size, something that we've heard quite a bit about.  
24 It's HRA's policy as a PEG to only allow one bedroom  
25 apartments for single adults if it's medically

2 necessary for a HASA apartment. This has led to  
3 instances where people have found an affordable one  
4 bedroom apartment but have been told that they need  
5 to go to a studio, have lost the opportunity to find,  
6 to move into an apartment, and has HRA done a study  
7 to find out A, how much they've saved during HRA's--  
8 the city has saved through this PEG in effect over  
9 the last, since it was implemented, or you know,  
10 whether it's actually effective and then also is  
11 there a way for individuals in HASA to make an  
12 official complaint if they're--if they find an  
13 affordable place and then they're being directed A,  
14 to maybe a more expensive studio or a studio that's  
15 of inferior quality. If you could speak to that?

16 FRANK LIPTON: Okay, just a few comments.

17 First of all, this actually, this policy did not  
18 start as a PEG. It started looking the evolution of  
19 AIDS and how it can currently be managed. So the  
20 history of providing single individuals with one  
21 bedroom apartments goes back to the time when people  
22 were not living long and frequently needed family or  
23 home care to help them manage and they needed a place  
24 for those people to sleep. So now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century  
25 when AIDS has become more or less of a chronic

2 manageable illness, people can take care of  
3 themselves, it was determined that from a  
4 programmatic policy point of view giving every single  
5 individual a one bedroom apartment didn't make  
6 programmatic sense. It's subsequently turned into a  
7 PEG because there was a realization that renting  
8 studio apartments, there might be some savings in  
9 that. Since we began this policy we've approved, and  
10 this is through November 2013, we've approved 437  
11 studio apartments and we've approved 674 one bedroom  
12 apartments for single individuals.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry, can you repeat  
14 those numbers? I'm sorry.

15 FRANK LIPTON: 437 studios for single  
16 individuals, 674 one bedrooms. So you see that we  
17 have implemented this with flexibility. We are taking  
18 into account geography. In certain parts of the city  
19 studio apartments are not as available as one  
20 bedrooms.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

22 FRANK LIPTON: So it's not a hardened  
23 fixed rule but it is a preference.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.  
25

2 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: And I would just  
3 also add to follow up on your last point about if a  
4 HASA client or someone has a complaint, are they--

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Yeah.

6 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: to talk to us.  
7 They always, always, always can call 311 and they  
8 will get to us through our info line and the folks in  
9 the HASA program will follow up.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. And have you  
11 received any complaints you know off the top?

12 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: I don't. Off the  
13 top of my head, I don't know.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Maybe if we  
15 could look into that, because we've heard from  
16 advocates that and you know, neighborhood providers  
17 that there are, you know, that the people have come  
18 to them, so we should--

19 FRANK LIPTON: [interposing] I have heard  
20 that on Staten Island it's difficult to locate studio  
21 apartments.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But that's good to  
23 know that, you know, there's actually been more one  
24 bedroom placements than studios. That's positive. I



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2 want to ask Public Advocate James if she has any  
3 questions.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. First,  
5 let me apologize for being in and out of the hearing,  
6 and if these questions have been asked, please let me  
7 know and just move on. Two hundred thousand dollars  
8 was base lined in fiscal year 2015 for money  
9 management. Is it HRA's intentions to allocate the  
10 545,000 dollars for the money manage contract?

11 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: We did cover this,  
12 but we will recover it for you.

13 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Sorry.

14 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Ellen? That's  
15 quite alright. No worries.

16 ELLEN LEVINE: We have that money in our  
17 budget, the remainder of the funds that you're  
18 talking about. This year, FY 14 we've allocated the  
19 total budget for this is 383,000. In prior years it  
20 was the 500,000. Going forward our Commissioner, our  
21 incoming Commissioner would clearly be looking at  
22 this given the interest that the committee's  
23 expressed in restoring that funding to the higher  
24 level.

25

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2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Excellent. Thank  
3 you. And what steps is HRA taking to review and  
4 revamp its policies and procedure to accommodate to  
5 basically to overcome client's ability to access  
6 permanent housing such as broker fees and security  
7 deposits and studio apartments as you just mentioned,  
8 etcetera; did you talk about that in my absence?

9 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: One thing that I  
10 have been saying is that the incoming Commissioner  
11 starts next Tuesday.

12 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay.

13 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: So all of those  
14 questions I know are things that are very much on his  
15 mind and we want to give him the chance to be with us  
16 formally and sit down and really look at all of the  
17 policies, the procedure, the resources we have to--

18 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing] Got  
19 it.

20 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: ensure that they're  
21 synced up with his vision and the Administration's  
22 vision.

23 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And I'm sure that  
24 the new Commissioner will also have a plan in place  
25 to implement the 30 percent rent cap?

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2 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Yes. We are in  
3 quite a number of discussions with our oversight  
4 OTEDA on this matter and how it will be implemented.  
5 So we will be looking at that very closely.  
6 Obviously, that's a very important one.

7 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And to rebudget  
8 the 10,000 so that they too fall under the cap?

9 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Correct.

10 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay. And again,  
11 I join with others who have asked for an increase in  
12 food pantries, resources to food pantries to increase  
13 opportunity for individuals who often times rely on  
14 food pantries to get healthy and nutritious food. I'm  
15 sure that's part of the agenda of the new  
16 Commissioner as well.

17 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Point taken.  
18 Absolutely. We're looking very closely at all the  
19 food assistance we offer.

20 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And transitional  
21 jobs for individuals who are seeking public  
22 assistance who are seeking positions, is that also on  
23 the agenda as well?

24 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: It is. I would say  
25 that everything that we do, every policy that we have

2 and procedure and role that we play, everything's on  
3 the table for him to look at and review with us.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. I  
5 really appreciate it.

6 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Thank you.

7 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you, Mr.  
8 Chair.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Public  
10 Advocate. Council Member Barron?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, thank you,  
12 Mr. Chair. I have just two brief questions. What  
13 programs, what outreach do you have in place to help  
14 the community differentiate between community  
15 Medicaid and traditional Medicaid?

16 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Our Medicaid expert  
17 is making her way.

18 KAREN LANE: Hi, again. I'll introduce  
19 myself. I'm Karen Lane and I'm overseeing the MICSA,  
20 which is the Medical Insurance and Community Services  
21 Administration. It's a mouthful. I'm not sure that I  
22 really understand your question, though.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes. There's a  
24 difference between applying for a community Medicaid  
25 and applying for traditional Medicaid. So that, you

2 know, you talk about assisting the elderly and those  
3 who are disabled staying in their home, and that  
4 process is different from traditional Medicaid. So  
5 how do we help people--

6 KAREN LANE: [interposing] The  
7 distinction between I guess community Medicaid and  
8 traditional Medicaid is not something that we make  
9 within the program now. I think possibly, but by  
10 traditional Medicaid, you mean more of the long term  
11 care services Medicaid versus community Medicaid?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I understand that  
13 the income requirements are different and the  
14 requirements for the term, I forget the term, to  
15 qualify is different.

16 KAREN LANE: The--I'm still a little bit  
17 unsure if we're referring to in the old rules. There  
18 are new rules that have been put in place now which  
19 they're calling these MAGI rules, Modified Adjusted  
20 Gross Income versus the non MAGI rules which are--so  
21 there's--if this is where you're question is going.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So how are people  
23 begin informed that it's a change?

24 KAREN LANE: That's a very good question.  
25 That's something that the state has been handling the

2 communication around the transition between this MAGI  
3 and non-MAGI and the different rules. From our  
4 standpoint, from HRA, we--when someone comes into our  
5 offices we do a quick screening now to see if they  
6 fit, if they fall into the MAGI or non-MAGI category.  
7 If somebody falls into the MAGI category, meaning the  
8 group that is handled by the state we have two  
9 options. One is we give them a flyer, we let them  
10 know how they can apply through the state which they  
11 can do online or they can do by telephone. We also  
12 have certified application counselors, some of which  
13 are located or co-located in our HRA existing  
14 Medicaid offices. They're going to be on the floors  
15 within--again, we're waiting for approval from the  
16 state, but within I would say a couple of weeks, and  
17 they'll be able to assist clients locally.

18 Commissioner Banks, when he comes on board, again, as  
19 Commissioner Carlson has mentioned, he's going to be  
20 meeting with the state with folks from the state to  
21 see if we can get more CAC presence and if we can  
22 have a bigger role in that, but for now, basically  
23 folks are supposed to apply through the Health  
24 Exchange. What we do at HRA is just give them the  
25 information about how to do that. The rules

2 themselves sort of fall out from the questions that  
3 they're asked over the telephone or again, if they  
4 apply online. The actual nitty-gritty [phonetic] of  
5 what income level and this or that is not explained  
6 in the application process per say, but it's  
7 basically--I'm sorry. It's similar rules. It's very--  
8 it's complicated so that's why they don't ex--you  
9 know, we don't go into all of the details in the  
10 application process, but the state is handling the  
11 bulk of the transition communication.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I hope then that  
13 we can assist the state in making it clearer, making  
14 it simpler, making it more transparent--

15 KAREN LANE: [interposing] A 100 per--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]  
17 making it easier.

18 KAREN LANE: A 100 percent.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Because a lot of  
20 people are not getting what they're entitled to. And  
21 I have a second question.

22 KAREN LANE: I just want to say--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] Yes?

24 KAREN LANE: That is one of the things  
25 that Commissioner Banks and I have been speaking

2 about already. There's confusion in terms of this  
3 transition, because again, the rules are--it's  
4 complicated. I can't explain it to you, you know, in  
5 a couple of minutes. So it's very hard to explain it  
6 to clients what their situation is.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Certainly.

8 KAREN LANE: But we are working. We are  
9 having meetings with the state on a regular basis to  
10 try to figure out a better way to communicate, you  
11 know, the process to clients and also I know that  
12 Commissioner Banks is very interested in us getting  
13 more involved to ease that transition so there's less  
14 of a break between what the city is doing to assist  
15 clients and what the state's doing, and we're trying  
16 to make that transition easier.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And with that  
18 thought and that process in mind, it brings me to  
19 page four of the Preliminary Budget and it talks  
20 about the state executive budget and the fair hearing  
21 chargeback policy and it says the state's executive  
22 budget calls for the establishment of a fair hearing  
23 chargeback aimed at encouraging local social service  
24 districts to improve their administrative practices  
25 in regard to fair hearing on public assistance cases



2 due to a lack of evidence, and I think it's projected  
3 that it's a 10 million dollars loss due to the fair  
4 hearing chargeback policy. Could you expand upon that  
5 and how can we reduce that number? What are we doing  
6 to make sure that we don't lose that much money?

7 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Yeah, and I know  
8 that as a proposal that's been put forward by the  
9 state. In general, though, I would say, and since the  
10 budget has not yet been finalized. In general I would  
11 say though that again the incoming Commissioner is  
12 very interested in looking at our fair hearing  
13 process overall and the policies that we have that  
14 lead, could potentially lead to a fair hearing to  
15 ensure that those hearings are happening in a  
16 rational way and so that is--that' definitely very  
17 much on his mind a priority for him.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: You're welcome.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council  
21 Member Barron. Commissioner, I just wanted to follow  
22 up actually about some of the Medicaid issues. If--I  
23 had met with you and your staff, Deputy Commissioners  
24 and also with members of the union 1549 which  
25 represent Medicaid enrollment workers, and one

2 question that came up is if it would be possible for  
3 New York City to be its own district. Is that  
4 correct? Is it the right terminology in terms of  
5 enrollment for Medicaid? So where the state has  
6 given over that service to the marketplace and at  
7 Maximous [phonetic] as a private contractor that New  
8 York City could be exempt from that because obviously  
9 the complexity of the work and also because New York  
10 City is a very large and unwieldy city and is unique  
11 among cities in New York State. If there's a  
12 possibility that that could stay in the way in which  
13 it has traditionally been done and that would ensure  
14 that there's a professional workforce and that  
15 clients are receiving the service that they're  
16 entitled to.

17 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: That's actually a  
18 good question and I know that Commissioner Banks is  
19 interested in that and he has had preliminary  
20 conversations as well with the unions and with the  
21 state. I was asked to follow up with the state to  
22 see if that was a possibility. Again, it was not  
23 something that was on the table or discussed in the  
24 previous Administration. What we've been told so far  
25 is that what has already transitioned over to the

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2 state that they are in all likelihood not interested  
3 in converting back to be run by the local districts.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] and  
5 those are MAGI or non-MAGI, or not--

6 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: [interposing] It's  
7 a portion of the MAGI. It's not the full MAGI but  
8 much of it, and so one of the reasons why we set up a  
9 meeting for early April with Commissioner Banks and  
10 with the folks at the state is to just start engaging  
11 in that conversation. It's something that, you know,  
12 we're open to. I just, you know, we're basically  
13 going to have to see some of the cases that have  
14 already transitioned over are unlikely to be  
15 transitioned back.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I think it would be a  
17 good thing and I would be very supportive of that as  
18 an effort that HRA is willing to make, and again, it  
19 protects HRA--

20 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: [interposing]  
21 Definitely.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: workforce and also  
23 protects the client as well.

24 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Definitely, yeah.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. I just  
3 want to ask a couple of questions around state budget  
4 impacts. So they're not terribly large, but  
5 important. There's a decrease in the non-residential  
6 domestic violence funding of 500,000 dollars in  
7 funding to combat domestic violence. Is that due--I  
8 mean, do we know if that's going to be restored in  
9 the state budget or are we going to be--is there any  
10 conversations around that with the state or are we  
11 looking that we're going be out that 500,000 dollars?

12 ELLEN LEVINE: Because the state budget--  
13 excuse me, has not yet been enacted. We don't know  
14 what the final outcome will be. My understanding is  
15 that at least one party, the Senate I believe, has  
16 included it in their budget.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

18 ELLEN LEVINE: Oh, both houses have  
19 included it in their budget.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Both houses.

21 ELLEN LEVINE: So it's clearly on the  
22 table.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

24

25

2 ELLEN LEVINE: And it's been restored in  
3 the past for every year that the executives propose  
4 to cut it, and we of course, support the restoration.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. And the HPNAP  
6 funding as well, in the past that has been funded to--  
7 --in fiscal 13 to 14 the state allocated 28 million  
8 dollars for HPNAP, Hunger Prevention and Nutrition  
9 Assistance Funding and it's not, it was not base  
10 lined in the 14/15 Executive Budget.

11 ELLEN LEVINE: That money does not pass  
12 through the HRA budget. It doesn't pass through the  
13 money of--through the budget of any city agency. It  
14 goes directly to food providers, food pantries and so  
15 on. So we have not been that active in lobbying as  
16 far as I know, but clearly it could impact our food  
17 providers if it were not restored.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Do we have a sense of  
19 if its--if that's on the table right now?

20 CECILE NOEL: Hi, Cecile Noel. Again, I  
21 apologize. The Hunger Nutrition Assistance Prevention  
22 Program grants are given directly by the state to New  
23 York City soup kitchens and food pantries. It's  
24 administered by the state office of health,  
25 department of health.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

3 CECILE NOEL: So they really make those  
4 determinations and will lobby and adjust that funding  
5 as needed for those programs.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So we don't  
7 know. I mean, it's something that we can ask about.  
8 I'll be up in Albany tomorrow, so.

9 CECILE NOEL: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And then I wanted to  
11 ask very quickly, it's just one other state budget  
12 related matter. The delay in COLA for on the state  
13 side for Cost of Living, how would that affect Human  
14 Service Programs to contract with HRA?

15 ELLEN LEVINE: That traditionally we need  
16 to look into that further and get back to you.  
17 Traditionally, those COLAs were not part of the  
18 conversation with the state for HRA. It's more  
19 impactful on ACS and other social service agencies,  
20 but we'll check and see if there are any--

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] If there  
22 are any providers that might be affected. Okay.  
23 Just wanted to actually go back to a previous point  
24 that we were talking about with financial management  
25 on HASA clients. So we've been told that there, that

2 GMHC has 401 active clients currently being served  
3 and that they get a minimum of around 10 new  
4 referrals from HASA a month and that the number is  
5 growing. Maybe we could follow up on that or if you  
6 want to respond, but we should be following up on  
7 that just to make sure that we have our numbers, that  
8 we're all on the same page in terms of numbers.

9 FRANK LIPTON: Yeah, absolutely we'll  
10 follow up, but as of early this afternoon I was told  
11 that they had slightly over 300. So I'll have to  
12 check where the discrepancy is.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, thank you. Onto  
14 EFAP. There is a decrease of 252,000 dollars in FY  
15 15 or FY 14 that obviously is--while we're happy that  
16 there's 1.5 million that was base lined in the food  
17 pantries initiative, that's very concerning because  
18 we have obviously a great, great need with regard to  
19 SNAP benefits being cut in the Federal sequester and  
20 anecdotally, you go to any food pantry in New York  
21 City and the demand is up, and we're hearing that on  
22 the ground. So, you know, we obviously, we need more  
23 money in the EFAP program not less. So can you  
24 explain a little bit about the reduction of 252,000?

2 ELLEN LEVINE: That 252,000 were some of  
3 the other Council discretionary items. Those were not  
4 base lined along with that 1.5 million. The  
5 Administration didn't do that, but I think as acting  
6 Commissioner Carlson already said, we're very  
7 actively and our new Commissioner is going to be  
8 looking at the food budget overall.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So that 252 is the  
10 difference between what was base lined in the Council  
11 initiatives.

12 ELLEN LEVINE: The smaller council  
13 initiatives that are directed to individual food  
14 pantries.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I see. I see, okay. So  
16 the stuff that we do in our initiative, yeah, okay.

17 ELLEN LEVINE: That's correct.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. We've already  
19 spoken about SNAP food stamp operations and the head  
20 count there, but obviously that's a source of concern  
21 as its 226 jobs that are to be reduced. It's  
22 obviously a concern on our end. Let's see. Can you  
23 explain moving onto, I apologize, but back to  
24 Medicaid for a moment, the effect of ACA of the  
25 Affordable Care Act on Medicaid, on New York City's



2 budget for Medicaid. So where if we're, you know, the  
3 New York City tax levy's a very high portion of our  
4 Medicaid spending, greater enrollment, expansion of  
5 Medicaid services and eligibility, is that going to  
6 impact New York City's budget in any direct way?

7 UNKNOWN: Well, for on the program side,  
8 the state prior to the implementation of the ACA  
9 capped the local contribution to the Medicaid  
10 program. It had been growing at the--essentially we  
11 had been paying 25 percent of all Medicaid costs  
12 historically and that was growing along with the  
13 overall growth in Medicaid. When the state  
14 implemented Medicaid reform, they capped the local  
15 share. So despite this change, New York City is  
16 required under state law to contribute something over  
17 what you see in our budget, over six billion dollars  
18 towards the cost of Medicaid. That's going to  
19 continue even under this change. We'll be  
20 contributing to both our own, the cost of our own  
21 clients as well as clients who will be--whose cases  
22 will be administered through the exchange.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So then it's--  
24 so then that's going to be a fixed amount no matter  
25 what the enrollment numbers are, is that right?

2 UNKNOWN: Unless the law changes, yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Oh, okay. That's good  
4 to know. So then there's stability in that then  
5 moving forward and we know what that--

6 UNKNOWN: [interposing] We know that that  
7 number is.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: the dollar amount is  
9 going to be in the out years.

10 UNKNOWN: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. One thing  
12 that's come to our attention with regard to--sorry,  
13 that's it with Medicaid at least for now. I'm sorry.  
14 With regard to SNAP benefits, there's been a decrease  
15 of around 76,000 persons enrolled in SNAP over the  
16 last 13 months. Can you speak to that? It's not, you  
17 know, out of 1.85 million it's, you know, it's not,  
18 you know, it's not like a 15 percent drop or  
19 something like that, but there has been a reduction  
20 of 76,000 individuals. Can you speak to why that  
21 might be and what's going on there?

22 ELLEN LEVINE: Well, I think a number of  
23 things are going on and it's something that we're  
24 looking at very closely and Commissioner Banks is  
25 also very, very interested in and we're going to be

2 working with him to understand the data better. There  
3 have been fewer applications. There was a bump up  
4 after hurricane Sandy for a number of reasons. There  
5 are lots of things that influenced that caseload. I  
6 would say it's mostly the applications going down. I  
7 don't really know why that is and we'll be looking at  
8 it further.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Let's see. I'm  
10 going to turn it over to Council Member Corey  
11 Johnson. Did you want to ask any questions? One  
12 question before Corey sits down here. I wanted to  
13 ask about the cut in child support enforcement  
14 funding. There's a reduction of about 3.1 million  
15 dollars from FY 14 to 15 for also Child Support  
16 Enforcement, 2.1 million dollars and city funding it  
17 says other services and charges and one million  
18 dollars in decrease in city funding for contractual  
19 services. Is this going to impact programming?

20 ELLEN LEVINE: That's actually related to  
21 our federal funds which is called the Federal Child  
22 Support Incentive Grant. The state passes that  
23 through to local districts. It's a bonus for  
24 achieving certain benchmarks, and we typically budget  
25 that when the money comes on an annual basis. We

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2 don't expect any reduction in our services as a  
3 result of that. There will be no reduction in  
4 services or staffing or anything like that.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. It says--we have  
6 it just on our budget document as the city funds, so  
7 the CTL funds decreasing from FY 14 Prelim, 24  
8 million dollar--24,513,000. That's the curved  
9 budget? Okay. And but then a Prelim is down to  
10 23,474,000.

11 ELLEN LEVINE: 415, the changes is from 14  
12 to 15.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Changes from 14 to 15,  
14 a decrease in 3.1 million.

15 ELLEN LEVINE: Right, and those are--

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] In city  
17 funds.

18 ELLEN LEVINE: Yes. It's the incentive  
19 funds. It's the way that they are put into the  
20 budget, but it is the incentive funds. We fully  
21 expect to get all of those funds. We just don't add  
22 them to the budget until we get the award from the  
23 feds.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Got it. Okay. Council  
25 Member Corey Johnson?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr.  
3 Chair. I apologize for not being here for the  
4 previous part of your hearing and I'm sure some of  
5 the questions I may ask may have already been asked,  
6 but I just want to put them on the table as something  
7 that is deeply important to me. So I think I--I have  
8 a deep sensitivity with people living with HIV and  
9 AIDS. I'm HIV positive. I think I'm the only openly  
10 HIV positive member of the City Council, and I know  
11 there have been questions raised around HASA, how  
12 people are categorized, you know, asymptomatic HIV is  
13 a really out-dated weird thing to categorize people  
14 on. I mean, you could have a homeless person living  
15 on the street who have 400 T cells and they would  
16 not, I guess, qualify in some ways. So I just want to  
17 hear in greater detail what plans are for looking at  
18 HASA and expanding eligibility for HASA.

19 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Thanks, Councilman.  
20 We have our incoming Commissioner Steve Banks  
21 starting next Tuesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, and this--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: [interposing]  
23 Which is great news.

24 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Yes, and the HASA  
25 program as all of our programs are very important to

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2 him to really take a deep dive and look at everything  
3 and that your question is something I know he will be  
4 taking a look at when he starts.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. And again,  
6 I apologize, Mr. Chair and you all if this has been  
7 asked. Have the brokers fees payments been restored  
8 under HASA?

9 FRANK LIPTON: No, they have not.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: They have not  
11 been restored, okay.

12 FRANK LIPTON: I mean, we're still paying  
13 50 percent.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Great. And that's  
15 all I wanted to ask today. Thank you very much.

16 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
18 Member Johnson. So sorry, I again I'm kind of  
19 breezing through, but obviously you have a very  
20 diverse agency so you--I'm going through the various  
21 categories here. There--from FY 14 to 15 there's a  
22 decrease in funding for CEO evaluations, the Center  
23 for Economic Opportunities. Obviously it was a major  
24 part of the Bloomberg Administration. It was in the  
25 2014 adopted plan. It was funded to 2.--or about two

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2 million, a little over two million dollars and now  
3 it's at 35,000. Are we planning to restore funding  
4 for CEO evaluation in the executive budget?

5 UNKNOWN: The CEO funding is typically  
6 added throughout the city agencies where it resides  
7 by OMB each year. So any difference between 2014 and  
8 2015 is because that money has not yet been put into  
9 the agency budgets.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is it going to be put  
11 into the agency budget before budgeted option or how  
12 is that done?

13 UNKNOWN: I think that's a decision that  
14 the new Administration will be making. We do not--HRA  
15 does not operate the CEO program.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, right.

17 UNKNOWN: So we have not been part of  
18 those discussions as far as I know, but typically  
19 that happens.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But HRA had a role in  
21 developing the assessment strategy for CEO right?  
22 That's at least what our documents are saying.

23 UNKNOWN: Well, CEO is an independent  
24 entity and develop that under the egis of HRA because  
25 some of their staff reside in our budget.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. We can follow up  
3 with that. Moving over to Public Assistance. There's  
4 a reduction of 361 full time positions for Public  
5 Assistance Administration, Public Assistance and  
6 Employment Administration. Can you speak a little  
7 bit to that and what those positions are and what we  
8 could do to restore them or save them?

9 UNKNOWN: That's a component of the 500  
10 and some odd positions we already spoke of related to  
11 the benefit re-engineering initiative and to the  
12 extent that things change, you know, that will be  
13 part of that discussion, but again it was--it assumed  
14 to be all attrition and re-deployment.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: One thing that came up  
16 earlier in the hearing with ACS was around--this is  
17 really an issue around ACS's budget but I wanted to  
18 touch base with you guys to see how HRA approaches  
19 childcare enrollment programs and whether there is a  
20 coordination between ACS and HRA and whether HRA's  
21 staff are fully trained on the different programs  
22 that are offered by ACS, the opportunities that are  
23 available to parents that were receiving benefits for  
24 childcare because ACS is having structural problems  
25 and they say that there is, you know, they're not



2 getting--they're getting too many, too high of an  
3 enrollment in vouchers not enough in their contracted  
4 seats, and so I'm just wondering what's the  
5 coordination that HRA has with ACS?

6 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Well, when  
7 Commission Carrion was appointed we went over and met  
8 with her and senior team and I would say that the  
9 relationship between HRA folks who work on childcare  
10 issues and the ACS folks is a very close one. It's  
11 collaborative and we were talking to them almost  
12 every day and we know that the Administration's goal  
13 is to ensure that really high quality childcare slots  
14 are offered to everyone who wants one. So I think as  
15 far as it goes with Early Learn and some of the  
16 things that ACS is trying to engage our clientele in  
17 more we're working closely with them. There's been a  
18 couple of the sites in the Bronx where we've had ACS  
19 workers on site to talk about Early Learn in more  
20 detail. Again, I know when Commission Banks starts  
21 we're going to have a meeting between he and ACS so  
22 that we can talk about how we partner on these  
23 childcare issues more collaboratively moving forward.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Okay, and  
25 I'm going to go onto Employment Services. The

2 programs that HRA has, the WEP program, Back to Work,  
3 obviously as you know have been criticized heavily  
4 over the years. Is there any willingness on the part  
5 of HRA to explore doing away with the WEP program,  
6 which has individuals working in places where they're  
7 not receiving compensation, and the problem is that  
8 they're not, a, they're not receiving compensation,  
9 number one, and then that they're not eligible for  
10 unemployment benefits and this is all to ensure that  
11 they're meeting their work obligations under the Cash  
12 Assistance. So I was wondering if there's a, you  
13 know, a willingness on the part of HRA to start to  
14 reimagine what work programs look like in the 21<sup>st</sup>  
15 century for 21<sup>st</sup> century, you know, for 21<sup>st</sup> century  
16 society, that this is, you know. The WEP program is  
17 not something that is, I think demonstrates our--the  
18 best that we as New York City has to offer, and so.

19 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: And again, on this  
20 topic, I think that all of our employment program,  
21 WEP, Back to Work, what we do in terms of training  
22 and education, these are all going to be things that  
23 the incoming Commissioner wants to sit and really  
24 review with us and get some input from the community.  
25 HRA will be submitting an employment plan later this

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2 year to the state, and so this idea reimagining  
3 things and talking about things, absolutely that's on  
4 the table.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And that includes Back  
6 to Work as well because there's been some critique  
7 around not allowing a certain educational  
8 opportunities to qualify. So that's on the table as  
9 well?

10 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: The incoming  
11 Commissioner's looking at everything, and so  
12 everything's on the table for review, yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, thanks  
14 Commissioner. Council Member Johnson?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you. I  
16 just wanted to actually just make a brief statement  
17 and hopefully we can have a longer conversation when  
18 Commissioner Banks begins, and I'm very excited and  
19 happy that he's beginning. I just want to say that  
20 there has been this I think pretty widespread  
21 perception among advocacy groups, around people  
22 living with HIV and AIDS, that there has been sort of  
23 a punitive relationship that has existed with HRA  
24 when it's talking about either studios or the 50  
25 percent coverment [phonetic] of broker's fees reduced

2 from the 100 percent. I think these are issues that  
3 really severely impact people who are living with  
4 AIDS who have real difficulty surviving, especially  
5 before the 30 percent rent cap came into enactment.  
6 And so I just want to say that I look forward to re-  
7 envisioning this with you all, looking at HASA and  
8 talking about HASA for All. I mean, I do not look at  
9 HIV and AIDS simply as a chronic disease that people  
10 have to live with. I look at it as a something that  
11 actually severely impacts people who are having it,  
12 especially those who are more vulnerable, do not have  
13 healthcare, are living at or near the poverty line,  
14 and you know, it's my hope that we can have a  
15 collaborative relationship working together to  
16 improve some things that I think went on in the past  
17 that many members of the council had problems with  
18 and many of the people serving people with HIV and  
19 AIDS had a problem with. I, you know, I talked to  
20 Steve Banks about this when he was at Legal Aid,  
21 before he was named Commissioner, and so my hope is  
22 is that you all, the people who are specifically  
23 working on HASA and the delivery of services for  
24 people who are living with HIV and AIDS will be more  
25 receptive to looking at things differently with a new

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2 Administration, a new Commissioner, a new Council  
3 that we can actually have a more collaborative  
4 conversation about how these things move forward.

5 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Your points are  
6 well taken, and I can assure you that there will be  
7 collaboration and a discussion moving forward. So  
8 thank you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you  
10 Commissioner Carlson.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council  
12 Member Johnson. Let's see. The HRA just announced,  
13 right, last week, that they're supporting state  
14 legislation around sanctions. Can you maybe speak to  
15 that for a moment about the position of HRA now on  
16 the state sanctions bill?

17 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: It's my  
18 understanding that that bill is moving and we're in  
19 discussions on it. I think at this point I don't have  
20 anything super solid to tell you, but again this is  
21 something that the incoming Commissioner is taking a  
22 close look at.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: and then I kind of  
24 promised myself I wasn't going to do any gotcha  
25 questions throughout, and so far I've abided by that,

2 but I have, I think I have one last question that we  
3 found that would--didn't quite make sense. In the  
4 Mayor's Preliminary Management Report, the--it has  
5 that the number of persons receiving cash assistance  
6 in FY 13 totaled 357,000, and yet on the, a little  
7 bit further down it says that the number of cash  
8 assistance persons receiving SNAP benefits totals  
9 408,000. So there's a 50,000 person difference and  
10 it's saying that--but you couldn't be a person  
11 receiving cash assistance also receiving SNAP  
12 benefits if you weren't already receiving cash  
13 assistance. So can you explain why there are more  
14 people receiving both than just cash assistance?

15 UNKNOWN: So the number of people  
16 receiving SNAP benefits also receiving cash  
17 assistance, the difference is those people who are  
18 receiving SNAP transitional benefits after they left  
19 cash assistance for a job. So you--

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I see.

21 UNKNOWN: Folks leaving cash for a job are  
22 entitled to a transitional SNAP benefit.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: The one year? Is it  
24 one year?  
25

2 UNKNOWN: That's--I think it's actually  
3 four months, am I correct?

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Childcare is one year,  
5 I know that.

6 UNKNOWN: Right, childcare is. This is  
7 more of an administrative transition.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

9 UNKNOWN: That's allowed, right? So that  
10 they continue to receive the SNAP benefits, so we  
11 count them as cash assistance SNAP cases.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Even though they're  
13 not receiving cash?

14 UNKNOWN: Even though they're not  
15 receiving cash. At the end of that period when they  
16 recertify or reapply, whatever is required for to  
17 continue to get SNAP, they would move into the SNAP  
18 non-cash column.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Alright. That's  
20 sufficient. Thank you. Do any of my colleagues have  
21 any further questions? Corey, none? Okay. Thank you  
22 very much, Commissioner. Thank you to your staff. I  
23 look forward to continue to work with you and I want  
24 to acknowledge the good work that you have done as  
25 Commissioner. You've done an excellent job and I

2 appreciate your openness with my office and your  
3 staff which has been excellent and we have a lot of  
4 good work to do. So thank you very much for being  
5 here this afternoon.

6 COMMISSIONER CARLSON: Thank you for  
7 having us.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Okay. We're  
9 going to take a couple minute break and then we'll  
10 have public testimony. Thank you.

11 [gavel]

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Hello, everybody.  
13 Thank you very much for your patience. We are going  
14 to start the public testimony portion of the General  
15 Welfare Budget hearing. I want to thank everybody for  
16 being here all day. This is a real marathon every  
17 year, but vitally important and a key component to  
18 this hearing every year is your testimony. This  
19 Committee relies frankly on the advocacy community,  
20 on the provider community, on those that are out  
21 there in the field every day so that we know what you  
22 know, and so it's very gratifying for us to have you  
23 here today and we look forward to your testimony.  
24 Because we have a lot of folks that are here to  
25 testify we are going to keep testimony to three



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2 minutes. So we would very much appreciate if you can  
3 keep your remarks in that framework and if you look  
4 up and see that it's--you have 30 seconds left, if  
5 you could kind of look to summarizing your testimony  
6 we would greatly appreciate it 'cause we do have a  
7 lot of folks that are here to testify. The first  
8 panel that I'm going to call up are folks  
9 representing Organized Labor, Randi Herman, First  
10 Vice President of Council of School Supervisor and  
11 Administrators, Ralph Palladino from DC 37 1549, Luz  
12 Santiago, Associate Executive Director DC 1707 and  
13 Jeremy Hoffman of the United Federation of Teachers.  
14 If you could identify yourself for the record when  
15 you testify, really appreciate it. And again, I want  
16 to acknowledge the great committee staff that's here,  
17 Peter Drivus, Andrea Vasquez, Tohini Sampora  
18 [phonetic] and Nori Yaya [phonetic]. Thank you.

19 RANDI HERMAN: Good afternoon. My name is  
20 Randi Herman. I'm here representing the Council of  
21 School Supervisors and Administrators. We're  
22 gratified that so many policy makers are now  
23 recognizing that access to early education is vital  
24 to our community, and CSA supports the city's plan to  
25 establish high quality universal pre-k and high

2 quality after school programs for middle school  
3 youth. We have an opportunity here to build on this  
4 recognition and move forward with concrete ways that  
5 this city council can help improve education to  
6 benefit youngsters from pre-k through high school.  
7 First thing I'll talk about is early childhood  
8 education. Research has demonstrated that children  
9 who have enjoyed the benefits of universal pre-k and  
10 kindergarten are not only better prepared for first  
11 grade but perform better throughout their school  
12 experience. We're all in agreement that universal  
13 pre-k is a worthwhile investment for New York City  
14 and recognize that we cannot afford this significant  
15 fiscal burden that we will incur if we do not offer  
16 all students a chance to succeed in school and earn a  
17 good living afterwards. Today, oversight of the  
18 city's early childhood program is not centralized or  
19 accountable. Some contracts come under the  
20 Administration for Children Services, ACS, and others  
21 are supervised by the DOE. Private businesses also  
22 get involved. If universal pre-k is to be of the  
23 highest quality it must be in the hands of only one  
24 agency, one with education expertise and the ability  
25 to set high standards. The Department of Education

2 has an existing structure for early childhood  
3 education and can assure alignment with the public  
4 schools and consistent supervision of teaching and  
5 learning in every Early Childhood classroom. Now, we  
6 go onto the budget dance. Last summer, former Mayor  
7 Bloomberg's budget aimed at cutting 210 million  
8 dollars of city funding from children's programs,  
9 including the elimination of more than 47,000  
10 childcare and after school slots. The City Council  
11 thankfully wasn't having any of that. Thank you for  
12 maintaining the city's commitment to our youngest  
13 children by negotiating a budget that restored  
14 funding essential to maintaining critical services to  
15 children and families. This included more than 60  
16 million dollars for the out of school time after  
17 school program and more than 62 million for  
18 childcare. Unfortunately, almost all of those  
19 restorations are for only one year and will vanish on  
20 June 30<sup>th</sup>. City Council funding restoration spared  
21 many childcare centers and family childcare networks,  
22 but that funding is also due to expire on June 30<sup>th</sup>,  
23 2014. A more constant and consistent source of  
24 funding is needed. We know that there are discussions  
25 about whether to incorporate the slots from the City

2 Council funded centers into the Early Learn model.

3 We'd like to let you know that we continue to have  
4 reservations about this financially blended structure  
5 of early childhood education. Early Learn was  
6 intended to be an efficient way of merging child care  
7 and early education into a single seamless system.  
8 But the IBO report--

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] You  
10 could just work to summarize.

11 RANDI HERMAN: Okay. But the IBO report  
12 indicates a decline in enrollment and that is  
13 troubling. We continue to ask for fiscal transparency  
14 and accountability because there is a significant  
15 discrepancy in the amount of money per child that  
16 contracted providers receive for universal pre-k from  
17 DOE and from ACS. I reference that here because the  
18 ACD Early Learn model incorporates and leverages a  
19 blended funding model that includes universal pre-k.  
20 How can we expect the same standards for universal  
21 pre-k in an Early Learn center that has less than 25  
22 percent of the funding that DOE contract providers  
23 receive? The current Administration prides itself on  
24 promoting equity and access to quality public  
25 education. We hope that the Administration will note

2 that the underfunded Early Learn initiative is  
3 clearly moving the city in the wrong direction.

4 Although research to document the educational  
5 efficacy of the Early Learn model hasn't been  
6 offered, there is much discussion of the fiscal  
7 efficiency that the blended funding model is  
8 generated, but we should be paying more attention to  
9 the educational component of Early Learn and asking  
10 for the research to support the educational aspect of  
11 that model. It's a daunting task to figure out a  
12 sustainable budgetary support structure without  
13 making cuts elsewhere that might diminish the gains  
14 that the Early Childhood advantage gives. We know  
15 that you want to make decisions that are both  
16 fiscally prudent and supportive of our children and  
17 families. As always, CSA remains committed to working  
18 with our partners on the committee and with the  
19 various agencies to assure that we're doing what's  
20 best for our city's children and families. If we can  
21 be of any assistance in planning for the future, we  
22 hope that you'll call on us as part of the solution.  
23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Vice  
25 President Herman.

2           LUZ SANTIAGO: Good afternoon. My name is  
3 Luz Santiago and I work for District Council 1707.  
4 I'm Director of Daycare and Head Start, and I'm here  
5 today to read the testimony of our President Mable  
6 Everett [phonetic] who unfortunately couldn't be here  
7 today, and also Raglan George, Executive Director of  
8 1707. And it reads like this: "Good afternoon again.  
9 My name is Mabel Everett and I am the President of  
10 Daycare Employees Local 205 of the District Council  
11 1707. Over the last two years the Council has shown  
12 its strong support for city childcare system by  
13 restoring full funding to over 70 ACS childcare  
14 centers that were not funded by Mayor Bloomberg under  
15 his so-called Early Learn program. This Health  
16 Department certified centers continue to provide  
17 vital services to communities of need all over New  
18 York City and almost half of the City Council  
19 District. Unfortunately, these City Council  
20 discretionary funded centers again are in danger.  
21 Here is why: Our new Mayor de Blasio did restore all  
22 the Council's childcare center funding in his  
23 preliminary budget and we are very grateful for that,  
24 but this funding is not especially directed to the  
25 Council's discretionary funded centers. The reason I

2 am told is that when funding is base lined in the  
3 Mayor's budget it can only be spent through the  
4 city's procurement process. I'm also told that there  
5 are absolutely ways to procure contract with this  
6 particular centers that will satisfy the legal city  
7 charter requirements. Now, I admit that I do not know  
8 much about the city budget process, so I can't  
9 explain how this should be done, but we do know that  
10 it can be done and that these particular 70 childcare  
11 centers deserve to be funded and must be funded.  
12 They have proven their value by operating efficiently  
13 and continuously in contrast to some of the so-called  
14 Early Learn centers, many of which took months to  
15 begin operating. Some of them didn't even open at  
16 all. Working parents rely on quality childcare  
17 services so that they can go to work and not worry  
18 that their child is in the care of someone  
19 unqualified or overburdened [phonetic]. The loss of  
20 these childcare services would be devastating, a  
21 devastating blow to these particular communities that  
22 rely on them. We want to thank the City Council again  
23 and we want to ask you guys to help our friend, Mayor  
24 de Blasio to find a way to keep this City Council

2 funded childcare programs open." Thank you very  
3 much.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
5 Ms. Santiago. Mr. Hoffman?

6 JEREMY HOFFMAN: Hi, good--well, still  
7 afternoon. My name is Jeremy Hoffman. I'm the  
8 Director of childcare policy for the United  
9 Federation of Teachers and I have the honor and  
10 privilege of representing the concerns of our 20,000  
11 home-based family childcare providers. I've submitted  
12 written testimony, so I'll just hit upon a couple  
13 highlights. Originally we were hoping that our Vice  
14 President of Non-DOE employees Vice President Anne  
15 Goldman [phonetic] would be able to testify but she's  
16 previously scheduled for a contract negotiation,  
17 which I'm sure we can all appreciate. First and  
18 foremost, I want to thank the Chair of this committee  
19 and the Council as a whole for its tireless advocacy  
20 and support of childcare. The restorations that this  
21 council made for the last several years are historic  
22 and significant and we are ecstatic that over 60  
23 million dollars investment in base lined  
24 notwithstanding some of the operational and  
25 procurement challenges that have been referenced.



2 Just wanted to echo a lot of the sentiments that my  
3 sister Randi made from CSA regarding pre-k any points  
4 of that. We echo those remarks as well. A couple of  
5 other points and the I think the Commission Carrion  
6 mentioned this earlier in her testimony. There is a  
7 tremendous problem with ACS on data. They are  
8 struggling with data. There are problems with their  
9 computer systems that were magnified and taken to a  
10 new level when they moved Early Learn operational act  
11 in October of last year. This is a challenge. It's  
12 very hard for us. I'm sure it's very frustrating for  
13 the Committee Staff and Council Members to really  
14 make concise policy recommendations when we lack  
15 basic information on enrollment, enrollment by age,  
16 enrollment by modality and how that fluctuates from  
17 month to month. We used to receive from ACS a snap  
18 shot. We have not received that since Early Learn  
19 went live, and that's a real challenge. So it's  
20 incredibly hard to project the impact and the  
21 disruption and benefit of any policy changes that are  
22 under consideration. I know it's a frustration ACS  
23 shares. It's a reality. We need to figure out how to  
24 correct that reality. Specifically with Early Learn,  
25 I think the point to remember this committee and this

2 body to understand that within the childcare sector  
3 of like 20,000 family based home based family  
4 childcare providers, a very small fraction are in the  
5 Early Learn system. That used to be--prior to Early  
6 Learn reaches on to networks, that number used to be  
7 about 3,000 out of over 20,000 childcare providers.  
8 According to Commissioner's testimony, there's only  
9 1,628 family childcare providers affiliated with  
10 networks. That's a tremendous drop. Now somebody who  
11 deals with our members on a day to day basis, we hear  
12 constantly about challenges with networks and  
13 constantly providers have trouble gaining affiliation  
14 of networks, constantly problems about enrollment.  
15 And I know, I'm still trying to reconcile the data  
16 that your committee staff put into its briefing  
17 document data that we had not seen previously, but it  
18 doesn't bear out what we are seeing on the ground.  
19 And I'll just finish with a couple of real important  
20 but brief points. The fundamental concept in federal  
21 law as it relates to what the city calls Cash  
22 Assistance Benefits, TANF [phonetic] awarded  
23 childcare vouchers, vouchers that come from HRA, and  
24 that concept is Parent Choice. Parents by federal  
25 law are empowered with the right to make decisions on

2 the modality and type of care that best fits their  
3 need. Any efforts to begin to infringe upon that is  
4 of great concern. There is a problem with enrollment  
5 in centers, something that we at the UFT are very  
6 concerned about. I'm not sure what the enrollment  
7 challenge is being driven by. I don't know if the  
8 time of day, location of services, things along those  
9 lines, but the right of a parent to make that  
10 decision is really, really important. So this is  
11 causing an operational disconnect. As the centers  
12 continue to be under enrolled, I think 85 percent of  
13 enrollment goals according to the committees'  
14 information, that's creating a real revenue loss for  
15 the childcare centers. Now the networks are  
16 affiliated with childcare centers. We think that  
17 financial instability is magnifying itself now in the  
18 Family Childcare side. We've seen over the last month  
19 a number of networks are increasing their  
20 administrative fees. So as they are struggling, I  
21 think, as far as I can guess. They have less revenue  
22 because enrollment is down in centers. We have to  
23 make up that revenue, and to be blunt, they're making  
24 it up on the backs of very under paid predominantly  
25 women of color workforce and that's a tremendous

2 challenge. The city pays the centers a contracted  
3 rate. That rate is higher than the market rate that  
4 you received per child if you're serving a voucher  
5 child. However, I have yet to have meet a family  
6 childcare provider affiliated with the network that  
7 receives the market rate. All the one's I've spoken  
8 to receive less than the market rate. So the city  
9 pays higher than market rate to incentivize quality.  
10 The providers are paid at lower than market rate and  
11 then in addition, the centers are struggling with  
12 their enrollment, they're now charging higher and  
13 higher administrative fees. So they're taking money  
14 out of the providers that are already making less  
15 than market rate. And that's a real concern to us and  
16 a real puzzling question that I think is being driven  
17 as far as we can tell by the enrollment, under  
18 enrollment of the centers. The more that we can  
19 stabilize the center enrollment and figure out that  
20 quandary, I think that's going to begin to stabilize  
21 the rest of the sector, but we need to stabilize in a  
22 way that still allows children to gain access to  
23 childcare. And I'll just close in this one last  
24 thought. According to the city, only 27 percent of  
25 income eligible families receive subsidized

2 childcare. So to be trying--to try to stabilize  
3 center enrollment by taking parents who have vouchers  
4 is a wonderful fine thing to do as long as they're  
5 not in the process decreasing the overall capacity of  
6 childcare in the city as a whole. Otherwise, we are  
7 not serving parents. So there's a lot of struggles  
8 and a lot of financial stability. I think we need to  
9 work collectively to figure out as a system that does  
10 not pit one modality against the other, but actually  
11 supports the vast member of parents who actually need  
12 access to childcare. And once again, thank you again,  
13 Council Member, the rest of the members of the  
14 committee for their advocacy on this issue.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Real quick,  
16 Mr. Hoffman, so in--with family childcare providers,  
17 you are now seeing instances where they're getting  
18 paid less than the market rate on their--

19 JEREMY HOFFMAN: [interposing] I've never  
20 seen an instance where provider in a affiliated  
21 network is making the market rate. They all making  
22 it, as far as I know, the ones I've spoken to, the  
23 ones that I can see where this is specified where the  
24 rate is disclosed to them, lower than the market  
25 rate.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And this has been made  
3 clear to ACS? ACS knows that this is the current  
4 situation? Because we asked about this a couple  
5 hours ago.

6 JEREMY HOFFMAN: Yeah, and they've been  
7 helpful in engaging when they can. There's a lot--  
8 there are networks that have tried to change in  
9 midstream to claim that they--that one network in  
10 particular that told our members that the rate they  
11 got paid by the city decreased so they were trying to  
12 recoup what they called an overpayment. We called it  
13 an illegal garnishment of wages. ACS to their credit  
14 kind of engaged that. Then they came back and are now  
15 charging a higher administrative fee. And just  
16 another example, I just heard a network where the  
17 providers of the network was requiring them to use  
18 educational materials that cost them 500 dollars. So  
19 there, I think there's a financial issue going on.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but  
21 administratively, ACS, do they have authority to  
22 intervene in any manner, or how does--what authority  
23 does ACS have?

24 JEREMY HOFFMAN: We're trying to figure  
25 that out. The--

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] To  
3 produce a remedy.

4 JEREMY HOFFMAN: Yeah. I mean, the final-  
5 -the real question is, if the contracted networks are  
6 receiving from the city include an administrative  
7 cost, and that's what we're trying to get clarity on.  
8 Then is it appropriate to be making the  
9 administrative assessment of providers. If the  
10 contract is paying for those costs, then that's where  
11 it gets a little unclear, and that's--we're trying to  
12 figure that out. We're in lots of discussions, but  
13 we're hopeful. I mean, it's a new Administration and  
14 a Mayor that has been tremendous advocate of  
15 childcare historically, so we're hoping that some of  
16 the changes change in finality.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great. Thank you.

18 JEREMY HOFFMAN: Thank you.

19 RALPH PALLADINO: Ralph Palladino, Second  
20 Vice President Local 1549 DC 37. We represent  
21 workers in the eligibility specialists and also in  
22 the food stamp, SNAP program, and also in Medicaid  
23 eligibility as well as the community assistance  
24 counselors who will be working on healthcare reform.

2 First, I want to say welcome to the new Chair and  
3 congratulations. I also want to thank you for--

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] There  
5 shall be no applause.

6 RALPH PALLADINO: advocating and agreeing  
7 with us on the issue of the eligibility determination  
8 in terms of reform and having New York City be a  
9 district. That is something that Local 1549 came up  
10 with as early 2011. I just want to say in terms of  
11 childcare, we support also in our testimony, I'm  
12 jumping around, but we support increased childcare  
13 services. Many of our members use the services.  
14 They're involved also in the facilitate enrollment  
15 which is funded by the State, and there's a budget  
16 about that, and it's good if the City Council weighs  
17 in on that and supports that. We also were involved  
18 with building a childcare center at Bellevue  
19 Hospital. In agency of the Children Services, you  
20 should know that the clerical staff basically has  
21 been almost completely replaced, and the people  
22 taking over are college assistants, welfare  
23 experience program, work experience program people  
24 and also private contractors. So if we're looking at  
25 record-keeping issues in ACS, I think we need to



2 start having civil servants do the job and not having  
3 ACS continue as a basically a poverty program to hire  
4 people into like a poverty program. In terms of  
5 Medicaid and HRA, staffing at Medicaid must be  
6 increased. If you look at my testimony, there's two  
7 attachments. The last one deals with the issue of  
8 Medicaid which is information gotten from front line  
9 workers as well as another three pager from food  
10 stamps and SNAP program. Again, from the frontline  
11 worker. The issue about Medicaid is that there are  
12 too many people who are falling through the cracks  
13 right now. The navigators in the private sector who  
14 have been signing people up or encouraging people to  
15 sign up basically are not familiar with the Medicaid  
16 program, so they've been telling people basically to  
17 come into HRA to get servicing, which has led to a  
18 glutton of people coming in and it's just unprepared  
19 to be able to deal with all the folks. There's  
20 estimated close to one million, up to one million  
21 people may be on a backlog basis in terms of applying  
22 for Medicaid right now. They were--all of our member  
23 are working four to eight hours overtime right now to  
24 clean up that backlog. The surplus cases, the more  
25 difficult cases, our eligibility people take care of

2 as well. In terms of SNAP centers and also Medicaid  
3 centers, MAP [phonetic] Centers in hospitals were  
4 closed down somewhat by the last Administration as  
5 well as SNAP centers in different communities. We  
6 think they should be reopened and access would be  
7 helped by that. In terms of the SNAP program, there  
8 remains a shortage in terms of staffing there. They  
9 have private temp workers from Good Temps who are now  
10 helping people allegedly helping people in terms of  
11 the medication--the Medicaid application process  
12 online in the centers. Our members are being told to  
13 tell people its better off going to do your own  
14 online and you have people who are from the private  
15 sector who are temps. I don't know where the  
16 background is, what the education is and there's also  
17 question dealing with the issue about  
18 confidentiality. We think this is highly  
19 problematic. There's delays as you will see if you  
20 read the reasons for those delays are in the addendum  
21 from the SNAP worker herself. I'm not going to go  
22 into details on that, but it's dealing with staffing  
23 shortages and always has been that way. In Medicaid  
24 and SNAP there's been a line where you have  
25 facilitated enrollment from outside the agency. You

2 generate all this paperwork. It goes into the agency.  
3 There's not enough for people to close the deal and  
4 help people. So you have the last three or four years  
5 or longer these delays and people waiting. They need  
6 to invest in having people do the work who are civil  
7 servants, who take a test, are vetted and there's  
8 confidentiality and they will do the work. There's  
9 language barriers. The city does not use the  
10 interpreter title. They contract out all the  
11 interpreter services. None of its face to face which  
12 is the key and best way to do interpreting. So we  
13 think that should be done as well. So we're looking  
14 for an investment by the city. We're heartened by the  
15 fact that we have a new Administration and a new City  
16 Council, and we would like to move forward with  
17 providing proper service for the city, especially  
18 when we're talking about surpluses these days, and a  
19 little bit less about free rent and bicycles and  
20 other things which I think are secondary to human  
21 needs.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
23 Mr. Palladino. I want to thank this panel very much.  
24 I want to thank your members for the work that they  
25 do day in and day out. That's--it's really the tough

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2 work and the, you know, the blood, sweat and tears  
3 that goes into making our city run is done by your  
4 members and so I want to acknowledge their hard work,  
5 your hard work and look forward to working with you  
6 all for many years to come on making sure that we can  
7 have a more just and equitable city. Thank you. Okay.  
8 We're going to call up the next panel. Ray Barbieri  
9 from Center for Court Innovations, Donna Anderson,  
10 Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness,  
11 Randy Levine, Advocates for Children of New York,  
12 Stephanie Gendell from Citizens' Committee for  
13 Children, and Gregory Brender from United  
14 Neighborhood Houses.

15 [off mic]

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry?

17 UNKNOWN: Ray Barbieri submitted her  
18 testimony. She needed to leave.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Whoever wants  
20 to go first.

21 DONNA ANDERSON: Good afternoon to the  
22 City Council. Thank you for the opportunity today to  
23 make some remarks and speak with you today. My name  
24 is Donna Anderson. I am the Director of the Institute  
25 for Children, Poverty and Homelessness. We have

2 submitted our written testimony, so I will be brief  
3 and just point out some of the highlights there from.

4 We just want to point out that when it comes to  
5 homelessness, once again we're dealing with families  
6 and children, a multidimensional approach is going to  
7 really be the most effective way to meet the varying  
8 needs of homeless families and children, and this  
9 sort of one size fits all idea will meet the needs  
10 for some, but definitely not for all and we would  
11 like to sort of emphasize the need for a multiple  
12 responses to needs in order to satisfactorily meet  
13 the needs that families and children have. Clearly  
14 there's no silver bullet, and we firmly believe also  
15 that higher needs families would benefit greatly from  
16 a multipronged approach with services located within  
17 shelters themselves. We're encouraged by the  
18 Commissioner's testimony early today and his emphasis  
19 on using tier two facilities and understanding that  
20 they can often offer a more valuable approach to  
21 families who have further assistance. One obstacle I  
22 just would like to point out and one of the reasons  
23 why we think that it's important to locate shelters  
24 with, or services within shelters. I think the HRA  
25 job center that is available to homeless families,

2 there is one in Long Island City. I think that's a  
3 perfect example of why it's so difficult and how we  
4 have actually created barriers for families to access  
5 benefits. So we'd love for the Council to be able to  
6 look at that and address that in the future. We  
7 applaud the city's efforts to revamp some of the  
8 shelters that are out there as far as especially with  
9 consideration to Catherine Street and Auburn. We  
10 think that there is a need to address more than just  
11 facilities. The number of children living in shelters  
12 has increased by 50 percent since 2006, so there is a  
13 need to push more effective service provision for  
14 children including Early Childhood Services, not only  
15 daycare, but also early intervention services,  
16 parenting education as well as pre-k tutoring and  
17 after school programs. You know, I could throw a lot  
18 of statistics out there and I do appreciate and  
19 congratulate the new Chair on his very data focused  
20 approach. I've always admired that about your work,  
21 but I will suffice it to say that there are more than  
22 10,000 infants, toddlers and pre-k aged children  
23 living in shelter today, more than 10,000. The  
24 number in addition of their older siblings students  
25 ages six to 13 has increased by 73 percent since

2 2006. These are huge numbers and they are really  
3 require us to act now and to recognize that these  
4 children are living in shelters now. They need  
5 services now. They don't have time to wait. They  
6 don't have time to wait for legal language to change  
7 so that we have a housing voucher program, although  
8 that's going to be a great thing when it happens, but  
9 these kids need services and attention now, and we  
10 would be doing them a disservice if we didn't address  
11 those issues today. You know, the cost of  
12 homelessness on children are numerous and well  
13 enumerated. There's a lot of research out there. I  
14 think we just need to acknowledge that this is a time  
15 to reframe the discussion to consider the cost of not  
16 addressing these needs immediately when these  
17 children are at their most vulnerable, especially in  
18 that zero to five age range. So I will just finish by  
19 saying that, you know, shelters really are  
20 unfortunately temporary housing for thousands of New  
21 York City's families and the children in those  
22 shelters and in those families deserve our attention,  
23 and just to throw one more statistic out there at  
24 you, one out of every three homeless individuals in  
25 New York City is a child, one in three. So that's

2 something to keep in mind. I didn't hear a third of  
3 the discussion today with DHS talking about children.  
4 So something to keep in mind. I would encourage you  
5 to also keep it in mind as you're making your  
6 budgetary and policy decisions. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

8 STEPHANIE GENDELL: Good afternoon. My  
9 name--or evening. My name is Stephanie Gendell. I'm  
10 the Associate Executive Director for Policy and  
11 Government and Relations at Citizens' Committee for  
12 Children. Our mission is to ensure that every New  
13 York child is healthy, housed, educated and safe, and  
14 all three of the agencies that testified today touch  
15 on that work. Usually I use this opportunity at the  
16 preliminary budget hearing to beg and plead that the  
17 same 47,000 childcare and after school slots not be  
18 cut. This time I get to talk a little bit more about  
19 all three agencies. Our testimony includes a lot of  
20 the highlights, including all of the things that  
21 we're supportive of. It's a really exciting time to  
22 be working with these three agencies given the new  
23 Administration, the Commissioners and the new City  
24 Council. I'll use my two minutes to talk a little  
25 bit about some of the concerns we have. When ACS



2 testified earlier they said that they were not going  
3 to receive any savings when the universal pre-  
4 kindergarten came in. We're not sure how that could  
5 be because they should be getting an influx of UPK  
6 dollars and we were really hoping they'd use that  
7 money to age down their system and expand the work  
8 for infants and toddlers and we look forward to  
9 following up on that. In addition on homelessness, we  
10 just wanted to thank you for your trip tomorrow to  
11 Albany. We have, as we've said before, support that  
12 bringing back of a rental assistance program and  
13 think that's really important. We also agree in  
14 supporting more funding for capital improvements. We  
15 think that DHS should really do a review of all of  
16 its facilities, particularly the ones that have  
17 children in it, including the scatter sites to see if  
18 they're appropriate for children. Turning to HRA,  
19 we're hoping that this is a time actually to  
20 transform HRA into a place that really has serving  
21 families and helping them as their core mission in a  
22 way that perhaps has been a little more bureaucratic  
23 in the past. And we think that that might require  
24 looking at their agency and thinking about staffing  
25 and training and really what needs to happen there.

2 One of the--as much as we talk about everything being  
3 base lined, one of the items that was not base lined  
4 related to HRA is the use of the EBT in farmer's  
5 markets. It's 335,000 dollar Council initiative and  
6 we think this is really important and we hope that we  
7 can get this money back and ultimately we think that  
8 it'd actually be great to have SNAP and EBT in all  
9 farmer's markets and green carts. We support more  
10 funding for emergency food, and then as long as I  
11 have 30 seconds, I'll use it to talk about ACS and  
12 the Early Childhood and that we're really grateful  
13 for the money to be base lined, but as we've talked  
14 about before, we need to figure out how to get that  
15 money out after June 30<sup>th</sup> and to keep the programs  
16 that are serving children and functioning after June  
17 30<sup>th</sup>. I know the Commissioner said that all options  
18 were on the table when she testified earlier. We  
19 really believe extending the contracts for one more  
20 year is what we need to do right now. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much.

22 RANDY LEVINE: Good evening. My name is  
23 Randy Levine, and I'm the policy coordinator at  
24 Advocates for Children of New York. For more than 40  
25 years, Advocates for Children has worked to promote

2 access the best education New York can provide  
3 especially for students of color and students from  
4 low income backgrounds. For the past few years we've  
5 been at City Hall pleading with the city not to cut  
6 children from early childhood education programs.  
7 We're deeply grateful that the Administration and the  
8 City Council have changed the conversation to talk  
9 about how we expand and strengthen early childhood  
10 education for students in New York City. We strongly  
11 support, of course, the Administration's plan to  
12 provide universal pre-k to every four year old child  
13 in New York City. As we reach that goal, however, we  
14 want to make sure that we don't end the conversation  
15 there and that we focus on the tremendous unmet need  
16 for zero to three year olds who also need high  
17 quality full day early childhood education options.  
18 To that end, we were confused by the testimony today  
19 about the lack of savings from the UPK dollars and  
20 just want to better understand how much money in the  
21 City's plan is allocated for children in the Early  
22 Learn program and how that money will be spent.  
23 Second, while we're very pleased that the money for  
24 the childcare centers that had been funded through  
25 discretionary funding is now base lined. We're also

2 concerned that July 1<sup>st</sup> is quickly approaching and we  
3 want to ensure that there's a plan that will allow  
4 young children attending high quality childcare  
5 centers to continue attending those centers as long  
6 as those centers have a plan for meeting the high  
7 quality standards that Early Learn sets. And third,  
8 we continue to be concerned about the Early Learn  
9 rate, that it's insufficient to support the high  
10 quality standards that Early Learn requires as well  
11 as the compensation and health insurance plans to  
12 attract and retain a qualified staff. To meet the  
13 promise of Early Learn's vision for comprehensive,  
14 high quality programs, it must receive adequate  
15 funding, and we want to make sure that the rate is  
16 adequate not only to serve the average preschooler,  
17 but to serve preschoolers with disabilities,  
18 preschoolers who are English language learners,  
19 preschoolers in homeless shelters as one of my  
20 panelists talked about, and preschoolers in foster  
21 care who may need some additional support to take  
22 advantage of these programs and be fully supported in  
23 these programs. We sometimes get calls from parents  
24 whose children are being discharged from Early Learn  
25 programs with a claim that the program can't meet

2 their needs and we hear from the Early Learn programs  
3 that they need more support in order to do that and  
4 can't do that without funding. So as we continue the  
5 conversation about Early Learn rate, we do want to  
6 make sure that it serves these vulnerable populations  
7 so that all children can prepare to enter  
8 kindergarten. Thanks for the opportunity to speak  
9 with you and I'm happy to answer any questions.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much.

11 GREGORY BRENDER: Hi, I'm Gregory Brender  
12 from United Neighborhood Houses. As with Stephanie  
13 and Randy it feels very strange and very wonderful  
14 not to be here talking about 47,000 slots being cut.  
15 Thanks to everyone's work on the steps of City Hall  
16 and in communities, we now have this unique  
17 opportunity where the issues that parents have been  
18 bringing forth that communities have been talking  
19 about to expand early childhood education are at the  
20 front and center of our political discourse with  
21 Mayor de Blasio being a genuine champion of  
22 expanding, and we strongly support his plan and we  
23 also recognize that for the working families that a  
24 lot of our settlement houses serve, Early Learn  
25 presents the best model for serving those families,

2 the people who need the full day of care, not based  
3 on the school day but the work day from 8:00 a.m. to  
4 6:00 p.m. and who need the summer hours that aren't  
5 covered in the UPK classroom. The Early Learn model  
6 is probably the most effective way to ensure that  
7 those families have access to the high quality  
8 services, and now we've really seen the city come and  
9 say every child deserves access to and that's a  
10 center piece of how we're making a better more  
11 progressive city. I want to echo one of the things  
12 that you said about the structural deficit for ACS  
13 should be handled structurally. Now that we do  
14 really have more of a vision for the early childhood  
15 system we can't have it be forced again by cuts  
16 because of this deficit. In many ways this deficit's  
17 come about because of parents recognizing the need  
18 for high quality care. One of the contributing  
19 factors is more parents who utilize vouchers going  
20 into more regulated settings that more closely  
21 reflect some of the program qualities we're trying to  
22 expand. This deficit has come because parents want  
23 and need the kind of care that ACS provides and the  
24 city should be making the investment to ensure that  
25 no cuts come about because of the deficit. So we

2 really look forward to working with the Council and  
3 with OMB and others to ensure that ACS's funding is  
4 stabilized in order to both continue to serve and  
5 expand children. As what Stephanie and Randy said,  
6 we do believe the investment in UPK that we hope the  
7 state will be doing would provide an opportunity for  
8 expansion because not only is there new funds coming  
9 in but the number of hours of a day that is covered  
10 by UPK increases from two and a half to six. So  
11 there's decreased utilization of childcare funds by  
12 four year olds which should allow some funds to be  
13 utilized to age down the system, serve more two and  
14 three year olds. We have incredible demand and  
15 incredible wait list in our programs which more care  
16 for two and three year olds. So, other than that the  
17 concerns we have in our testimony and the, not just  
18 the concerns, but the good parts there mostly also.  
19 They're written down so I won't bug you with them and  
20 Stephanie and Randy have said them as well. Thank  
21 you.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much.

23 Can I just ask--anyone could answer this. With  
24 regard to ACS's structural deficit, why is it that  
25

2 they have this deficit? Why is not a need that's  
3 covered under ACS's base line funding?

4           STEPHANIE GENDELL: So, they've had a  
5 deficit for many, many years, and each year, even  
6 before we got into this issue with the 47,000, before  
7 that there was 17,000 slots and before that they  
8 actually used UPK money to solve part of the problem.  
9 They've had a structural deficit since the creation  
10 of OST, and that's the original beginning of the  
11 deficit, that more families chose to get a voucher  
12 than go into OST than they had originally envisioned.  
13 And so ACS from the get go of the creation of OST was  
14 not properly funded. You know, I have a solution for  
15 them which is that they do a budget modification  
16 based on the number of kids who are receiving  
17 vouchers in the same way they do for other mandated  
18 service like PA and homeless shelters and foster care  
19 that there should be a budget re-estimate based on  
20 the number of mandated families using childcare. I  
21 feel like OMB has created the other types of mandated  
22 budget re-estimates that they should do the same  
23 thing here, and then ACS doesn't have to struggle  
24 with the budget problem.



2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: One thing that came up  
3 in the--when we were speaking with Commissioner  
4 Carrion was this issue of parody within the UPK  
5 system. So they talked about using that funding to  
6 create to make sure that there's parody between the  
7 CBO, like a CBO to CBO parody within the DOE CBO's  
8 and the ACS CBO's. Is that something you had heard  
9 before and is this something that--do you have a  
10 sense of how much that would cost? It's an awful lot  
11 of money I would think to be used to fill that type  
12 of administrative--

13 [cross-talk]

14 GREGORY BRENDER: Oh, we've long called  
15 for parody, not CBO to CBO but between teachers and  
16 DOE schools and CBO's. CBO teachers both, whether  
17 they're in a stand alone DOE contracted UPK setting  
18 or in an ACS contracted Early Learn setting are  
19 getting paid lower rates than the teachers who are in  
20 a public school building and they need to meet the  
21 same qualifications. So it's been a real injustice to  
22 the teachers in our systems. The white paper that the  
23 city had put out ready to launch talked about  
24 comparable salaries. We--that still falls short of  
25 parody, so we would hope the city would work towards

2 not just parody between CBO's but parody of CBO  
3 teachers with their colleagues in the Department of  
4 Education.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Which they  
6 specifically did not say that they were not  
7 contemplating today.

8 STEPHANIE GENDELL: Yeah, seemed like at  
9 the end of the hearing the Commissioner clarified  
10 that she was talking about across CBO's and not with  
11 DOE. And in term--she used that as part of her  
12 explanation on why there wasn't going to be savings  
13 and it seems like if they're paying ACS 10,000  
14 dollars for the six hours of UPK and they're paying  
15 another CBO 10,000, it should be the same. It's the  
16 same. I don't know. They should be paying ACS the  
17 same 10,000 plus that they're paying the other CBOs.

18 GREGORY BENDER: And we would add just a  
19 parody doesn't actually just need to be in terms of  
20 salary but also in terms of benefits. One of the  
21 biggest challenges we face in the Early Learn system  
22 was the implementation of a new healthcare plan and  
23 having a play contribution that folks couldn't  
24 afford.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I want to thank this  
3 panel very much. Thank you for--

4 GREGORY BRENDER: [interposing] Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: kind of being there  
6 over the last four years through the tough times,  
7 through the lean times now, you know, hopefully we're  
8 getting into a position where we can make real  
9 progress, but I want to thank you very much for all  
10 the information that you give me and my office and  
11 for being there and committee staff and it's been  
12 extremely helpful. So, I thank you very much for all  
13 of that.

14 GREGORY BRENDER: Thanks.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Next I'd like to call  
16 up Alice Owen from Colony Houses, Linda Bunch from  
17 Colony Houses, Joel Burg from New York Coalition  
18 Against Hunger, and Triada Stampas from the Food Bank  
19 of New York City. And after this panel I'm going to  
20 take a two minute break, but then I'll be right back.  
21 Whoever wants to go first. Is Triada around? Okay.  
22 Whoever wants to go.

23 ALICE OWENS: Good afternoon Chairperson  
24 Levin, members of the Council. My name is Alice  
25 Owens. I am the President of Colony South Brooklyn

2 Houses, a social service organization in Brooklyn  
3 founded in 1904. I have testified at City Council  
4 hearings before in the wake of Early Learn. Through  
5 the heroic efforts of the Council, Colony is able to  
6 operate six sites using discretionary funding. I'm  
7 here today to ask that a portion of the discretionary  
8 funds that were base lined at the end of last year be  
9 awarded to the Colony programs that currently have  
10 discretionary funding. Clearly without that funding,  
11 our programs will have to close. Parents will be  
12 without reliable childcare, which will affect their  
13 ability to hold jobs and go to school. Vulnerable  
14 children will be without quality programing and  
15 credential carrying staff will be unemployed. The  
16 Centers Colony operates that need discretionary  
17 allocations are located in East New York,  
18 Williamsburg and Sunset Park. All communities set up  
19 a high concentration of need as defined by the  
20 Administration for Children Services. Private daycare  
21 is not an option and informal childcare arrangements  
22 do not have the reliability or provide the learning  
23 experiences that these families require. No one  
24 disputes the positive impact that early childhood  
25 programs have. Children learn to relate to other

2 children to settle disputes in a safe and practical  
3 way, to play and to exercise their fine and gross  
4 motor skills, to respect other people, to practice  
5 tolerance and to learn that conflicts can be settled  
6 without violence. Without Colony centers or provider  
7 mother's homes parents can easily become unemployed.  
8 Whatever economic improvements have occurred, they  
9 are not robust. Jobs are scarce. Our parents, no  
10 matter how hard working are economically fragile.  
11 They are sometimes only a pay check away from being  
12 homeless or unable to put food on the table. Our  
13 experiences as discretionary centers have been  
14 overwhelmingly positive. We meet all Health  
15 Department requirements. Our landlords are very  
16 supportive. We have worked closely with professional  
17 development instituted CUNY to strengthen our  
18 programs and plan for sustainable future. I want to  
19 make clear that our centers are learning experiences.  
20 Every bit as good as Early Learn. They use nationally  
21 recognized curriculums and have universal pre-  
22 kindergarten classes. Staff is appropriately  
23 credentialed. Meals meet the strict nutrition  
24 standards of the child and adult food care program.  
25 Thank you on behalf of the agency, the children,

2 parents and staff for the discretionary funding. We  
3 ask that it be continued in the new budget. Thank you  
4 very much.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
6 Ms. Owens.

7 LINDA BUNCH: Good afternoon Council  
8 Member. My name is Linda Bunch. I am the Director of  
9 the Pine Street Daycare Center sponsored by the  
10 Colony's South Brooklyn Houses. The center is  
11 located at 374 Pine Street in the East New York  
12 section of Brooklyn. The center has been in  
13 operation in the neighborhood since 1974. Through all  
14 these years it has been a solid reliable presence in  
15 the community, which parents have been able to rely  
16 on for quality childcare. Pine Street also has  
17 universal pre-kindergarten classrooms. Since October  
18 of 2012 the center has been funded by discretionary  
19 funds allocated by the Council. We are enormously  
20 grateful for this funding and especially thank our  
21 Council Members Charles Barron and now Inez Barron  
22 for their past and present support. The discretionary  
23 funding has allowed us to operate, service children,  
24 their families and keep the staff of 15 employees.  
25 The people we serve are income eligible and include

2 new immigrants as well as longtime residents. At this  
3 time I am asking the Council to ensure that a portion  
4 of discretionary funding which was base lined at the  
5 end of the last Administration be allocated as before  
6 to Pine Street. I would like to share with the  
7 Council some of the stories that point to Pine  
8 Street's success. Some of our youngsters live in very  
9 stable home situations where parents need our  
10 facility so they can work and go to school. Other  
11 children are not so fortunate. One of the items that  
12 made Pine Street unique is our bus service which  
13 transports youngsters to and from city transitional  
14 housing sites in which they leave to Pine Street each  
15 day. The center becomes a island of stability for one  
16 of the city's most vulnerable populations. Our foster  
17 grandparent program benefits both sides. Our children  
18 develop bonds with a single person who is interested  
19 in them individually. The child can share his or her  
20 activities with a caring adult, perhaps missing their  
21 own grandchildren who give the child undivided one to  
22 one attention. This must not be--this may not be  
23 possible in their own home. One of the most wonderful  
24 things to see at the socialization process that takes  
25 place at Pine Street. Children become more confident.

2 They learn how to feed themselves, to share and  
3 interact with their peers and adults. Children who  
4 may have speech or behavioral problems are evaluated  
5 and receive therapy by specialists on site. We are  
6 fortunate to have a well-maintained facility with  
7 spaces for the onsite therapies to occur, thereby  
8 causing less disruption of the child and greater  
9 convenience for the parents. Once again, I am asking  
10 the Council to allocate these funds to Pine Street.  
11 Without them, the hardworking people in need and the  
12 vulnerable children we serve will be without option  
13 [phonetic] because we know from experience that once  
14 closed, centers are not replaced. Thank you for your  
15 assistance. We are counting on you to help us  
16 continue at Pine Street. Thank you Council.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
18 Ms. Bunch. I appreciate all the work that you do and  
19 your staff. Thank you.

20 LINDA BUNCH: okay, thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mr. Berg?

22 JOEL BERG: Hello, I'm Joel Berg,  
23 Executive Director of the New York City Coalition  
24 Against Hunger. I want to thank the Chair and your  
25 excellent staff for a great leadership on these



2 issues. I've submitted lengthy testimony for the  
3 record, so I'll just make a few points. The first is  
4 sitting here as a citizen I am struck by the fact  
5 that the agenda of this Mayor and the agenda of this  
6 Council has the broad grassroots support of groups  
7 that collectively represent millions and millions and  
8 millions of people, and so if occasionally you read  
9 something nasty in a publication or see something on  
10 TV promulgated by a billionaire corporate media owner  
11 who's upset that a Irish actor didn't like Something  
12 about a Horse. I'd ask you not to really take that  
13 seriously and to keep on keeping on and meeting the  
14 needs of the vulnerable New Yorkers who after all  
15 voted for overwhelming change. And as a result of  
16 that I am thrilled like many other people here to be  
17 the first time in probably 12 years not having to  
18 offer a point by point rebuttal of the city  
19 Administration. Instead being in the odd  
20 circumstances of nodding instead of grimacing. I  
21 would like to clarify one point about the 76,000  
22 person drop in SNAP participation over the last 13  
23 months. I know that the new Commissioner who is an  
24 excellent choice, someone who has a lifetime of  
25 compassion and expertise on these issues. That in

2 itself is a welcome change, someone who starts with  
3 the assumption that poverty and hunger exist and  
4 they're bad things and they're not poor and hungry  
5 people's fault. I know that he's going to take this  
6 drop very seriously but I urge him to continue to  
7 look beyond just the pack answers that fewer people  
8 are applying. We know that the city continues to  
9 fail to properly recertify households. We know that  
10 the city continues to lose documents and force  
11 applicants to resubmit applications. We know they're  
12 failing to process new application in a timely manner  
13 as required by law. There's still sanction removing  
14 people from the roles, able bodied adults unable to  
15 find work. They're still limiting the ability of  
16 community based partners to submit applications,  
17 failing to provide sufficient numbers of translators  
18 and generally sending the message to the public  
19 somehow this help is wrong. We strongly support, they  
20 ask of the food bank and others to increase funding  
21 for the emergency food assistance program to 19.8  
22 million dollars that would only begin to make up for  
23 the lost money over the last decade where the council  
24 restored the funding but wasn't able to get an  
25 increase. We strongly support revamping of HRA's job

2 training program to focus on true living wage jobs,  
3 not reducing the roles. Judging the success of  
4 welfare reform solely by judging how many people left  
5 the roles like judging the success of a hospital by  
6 how many people left it without differentiating  
7 between who left it cured, sick or equally ill and I  
8 know the new Commissioner's going to do that. And  
9 I'll reiterate that we too strongly support universal  
10 pre-k and universal in classroom school breakfast,  
11 both other ways that can significantly reduce child  
12 hunger in New York. And seven seconds left.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Berg.

14 I'll say there's one, there's one other potential  
15 circumstance why someone would leave the hospital is  
16 well, which is more even more dire. You know.

17 JOEL BERG: Yes, and we've seen the  
18 equivalent of that in some of the failings of welfare  
19 reform.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Berg.

21 TRIADA STAMPAS: Good afternoon. My  
22 name's Triada Stampas. I'm Senior Director of  
23 Government Relations at Food Bank for New York City,  
24 and thank you Chairperson Levin and the members of  
25 your committee for having us here to testify today

2 but also for your unfailing advocacy over the past  
3 couple of years in the face of some pretty terrible  
4 decisions that have been made in Washington that  
5 really have hurt New Yorkers ability to afford food  
6 and to keep food on the table for themselves and for  
7 their families. And Food Bank is delighted about  
8 having had initiatives that the Council has funded  
9 year in and year out, finally added to the city's  
10 base lines that we're not going back and forth about  
11 the same amount of money that is so sorely needed, so  
12 that not to be having that conversation is a really  
13 wonderful thing. And happy to learn today about  
14 HRA's additional investment in SNAP outreach because  
15 everybody knows there's real work there to be done.  
16 What I want to focus on today, and I've submitted  
17 voluminous written testimony, is just a goal, I  
18 think, that all of us can have. This Council and this  
19 Administration I think have set this broad vision for  
20 addressing income inequality and part of that is  
21 raising the floor. And I would suggest that one  
22 definition of raising the floor is making sure that  
23 everyone in New York has access to food, and let's  
24 start there. Let's define the floor there. There's a  
25 number of things. The tools are within our grasp.

2 This is doable, regardless of what has come down from  
3 Washington. So that starts, number one, with  
4 connecting people to SNAP. That is our first line of  
5 defense against hunger. Happy to see also that  
6 council funding for SNAP outreach at food pantries  
7 and soup kitchens was added to the base line.

8 Hopefully now the city will take advantage of federal  
9 matching funds for that activity, which has not  
10 happened in the past, and that is a dollar for dollar  
11 opportunity that we have yet to avail of. Bolstering  
12 the last line of defense against hunger. EFAP  
13 funding, base lining, notwithstanding has not changed  
14 in years and the cost of food alone, you know,  
15 setting aside any discussion of need has gone up.

16 Those same dollars are buying less food. So raising  
17 that so that we can start to recover that lost ground  
18 is important. And focusing on financial empowerment,  
19 putting dollars into the pockets of low income people  
20 gets spent quickly and locally. We were disappointed  
21 to see that the City Council's initiative for free  
22 tax assistance was not added to the baseline. That is  
23 program that delivers more than 30 dollars return on  
24 every dollar invested and that is money that goes  
25 directly into the pockets of low income working

2 people as tax credits and refunds. So in every year  
3 that the Council has funded this, this has returned  
4 more than four and half million dollars into low  
5 income communities as part of the overall investment  
6 in that program. And the Chicago Fed recently  
7 released a study that showed that the month that low  
8 income people get their EITC it increases their food  
9 purchases and it increases the quality of food  
10 purchases. So not only does food purchasing overall  
11 go up, but the purchasing of healthy food beyond  
12 anything else is what increases. So again, thank you  
13 for the opportunity to testify today and for your  
14 continued advocacy and what the food bank hopes is  
15 many years of productive engagement in ending hunger  
16 here in New York City.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much.  
18 I appreciate all of your hard work as well as the  
19 food banks tremendous work out in the communities  
20 making sure that food gets to hungry people every  
21 day. It's incredibly important work. So thank you all  
22 very much. I appreciate your time and thank you for  
23 your testimony. I'm just going to take a two minute  
24 break, folks, but we're going to call up the next  
25 panel. John Medina from Community Voices Heard, Ann

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2 Valdez from Community Voices Heard, Alyssa Aguilera,  
3 Vocal NY, Sally Greenspan from Enterprise Community  
4 Partners and Quentin Walcott from Connect Inc., and  
5 if you just give me two minutes. I'll be right back.  
6 Okay. We're also been--we're adding Mark Dunlea from  
7 Hunger Action Network NYS. Hi Mark. Okay. Alright.  
8 Thank you all for joining us and let's get started.

9 JOHN MEDINA: Okay. At this point I'd  
10 like to say good early evening, Chair Levin, Daheeney  
11 [phonetic].

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Nice to see you.

13 JOHN MEDINA: Andrea Vasquez. I would say  
14 other Council Members, but they're gone. My name is  
15 John Medina. I'm a board member of Community Voices  
16 Heard. I'd like to thank the Council--I would like  
17 the Council to eliminate Work Experience Program, WEP  
18 as we call it, completely. This program does not  
19 provide real work experience skills that lead to  
20 permanent employment. Instead, the program keeps  
21 participants in perpetual poverty. Yes, perpetual  
22 poverty. Eliminating WEP and replacing it with  
23 transitional jobs would provide families on public  
24 assistance with a paycheck and a path out of poverty  
25 while restoring self respect. Currently Community

2 Voices Heard has a bill in Albany to eliminate WEP  
3 introduced by Keith Wright in the Assembly and Diane  
4 Savino in the Senate. The bill in Albany has gained  
5 major support by Assembly Members, except for the  
6 Chairperson of Social Services, Michelle Titus, due  
7 to insufficient time to review the bill, as stated by  
8 her. Even though Community Voices Heard has brought  
9 the bill to her attention for over a year in person.  
10 I'm a decorated soldier with three combat tours with  
11 a medical condition and was assigned to perform WEP  
12 because I needed to receive food stamps. It's a  
13 travesty. It's disgraceful. Each week I reported to  
14 the Carver Senior Center to process screen, file  
15 income taxes and answer phones, the same work as the  
16 case worker, but she gets paid and I didn't. I  
17 didn't receive Earned Income Tax Credit, no social  
18 security credit and most of all no paycheck for my  
19 labor. It should not be a crime to need help from  
20 social services, and then be forced to do free labor  
21 just for being poor. The jobs training program  
22 should be expanded to other agencies such as  
23 Metropolitan Transit Authority, the Sanitation  
24 Department, the Department of Aging, Muselle de Bario  
25 [phonetic] and Department of Citywide Administrative



2 Services. These need to be considered during the  
3 budget process. Sanitation is already suggested  
4 funding to hire more WEP supervisors. Disgusting. I  
5 humbly request this City Council Members to sign on  
6 in support of the bill and pass the resolution to  
7 eliminate WEP on the city local level. I thank you  
8 for your time, and congratulations, Levin.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Thank yo  
10 very much.

11 ANN VALDEZ: Good afternoon. My name is  
12 Ann Valdez. I'm also a leader at Community Voices  
13 Heard. I've been around for a while. Congratulations.  
14 And I didn't prepare a speech because I was really  
15 here to back up my home boy over here. But I was  
16 going across this and there was quite a few things  
17 that really bothered me. So I took up some attention  
18 with your staff over there and she kind of explained  
19 a little bit to me. Oh, that's still from him.  
20 Anyway, so we had a little discussion about this, so  
21 we kind of saw eye to eye. Couple of things that I  
22 saw that were printed here on the HRA's testimony.  
23 It's totally untrue. And I'm sure you're aware of  
24 that. Not only is WEP degrading and totally a waste  
25 of time and money, but the fact that they glorify the

2 programs in which they send people, the Back to Work  
3 Program and the We Care Program where they really  
4 don't care. It's ridiculous, okay? They make it  
5 look like, and had your staff also believed that they  
6 actually do some type of training and some type of  
7 help. No, they don't. Nothing gets done. Absolutely  
8 nothing. People get so discouraged and over the  
9 years if you've noticed, I was reading it, there's an  
10 increase in people in the We Care Program. The reason  
11 why there's an increase in the people in the We Care  
12 Program is because when they start off in Back to  
13 Work, these people who do the administrative work can  
14 truly drive a person crazy or make you sick to your  
15 stomach. So that's how they wind up turning from Back  
16 to Work into the We Care Program, legitimately. I've  
17 been in the program for way too long, and I told the  
18 same thing to our last Commissioner, Commissioner  
19 Robert Door [phonetic] when I first met him. I have  
20 two years of college. There's no reason I should be  
21 on public assistance. So the way they glorify this  
22 and make it look like they're training people on  
23 better skills, no they don't. It's all a total waste  
24 of time. And to the issues of employment, most--if I  
25 actually sat here and did an actual count of how many

2 people actually get jobs, it's ridiculous. What they  
3 call a job is the same thing you can go outside and  
4 do for yourself. I don't need to go on Craig's List  
5 to find out how to get a job in a local retail store,  
6 you know, or Burger King or McDonald's. You know,  
7 that's not a job. You can't take care of a family  
8 from there. So you go from one program which is a  
9 cash program to just food stamps and Medicaid, which  
10 still is under HRA. So that's how they dummy the  
11 numbers and make it look as though they're really  
12 helping people but they're not. The next part that I  
13 wanted to bring up which was much more important.

14 I'm also a hurricane Sandy survivor. I live in Coney  
15 Island and I went with my top point person, Jennifer  
16 Hadlock [phonetic], and we went to D.C. to fight for  
17 Sandy recovery money for jobs and things like that  
18 and we insisted and got the top person for TANF to  
19 even call HRA. No one got on the phone, and they  
20 would not listen when they were told that that money,  
21 a majority of that money was supposed to be put for  
22 people who are long term on public assistance to get  
23 the jobs, get the trainings, and that didn't get  
24 done. And unfortunately, with the Mayor we had at the  
25 time, he wasn't pushing it in the right direction

2 either. So I have a lot of faith in you, the new  
3 Administration and our new Mayor. So I just wanted to  
4 let you know a few things. And if I come up with  
5 anything else, I'll pay you a visit.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I know you will. Thank  
7 you.

8 ALYSSA AGUILERA: Hi, good evening. My  
9 name is Alyssa Aguilera. I'm the political director  
10 of Voices of Community Activists and Leaders, or  
11 Vocal New York. Vocal is a grassroots organization  
12 that builds power among low income people impacted by  
13 HIV/AIDS, drug use and mass incarceration. We also  
14 coordinate a network of human service agencies that  
15 provide housing assistance for people living with  
16 HIV/AIDS called the New York City HIV/AIDS Housing  
17 Advocacy Network. On behalf of Vocal New York I would  
18 like to thank General Welfare Committee Chair Stephen  
19 Levin and the members of this committee for the  
20 opportunity to provide testimony today. So, I mostly  
21 want to focus my attention on HASA. And so HASA now  
22 provides housing assistance to more than 32,000  
23 extremely low income people living with HIV/AIDS plus  
24 nearly 13,000 dependents, mostly children who parents  
25 qualify. Practically none of these individuals would

2 be able to attain private market housing if they  
3 relied solely on social security or public assistance  
4 income give prevailing market rent rates in New York  
5 City and extremely low rate of housing vacancies.  
6 There is much to do to repair the damage done by  
7 Bloomberg's Administration, which--and fortunately we  
8 know that that the personnel is policy and we are  
9 thrilled that he appointed Lilliam Barrios-Paoli as  
10 the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services and  
11 Steve Banks as the new Commissioner for HRA. We also  
12 saw some important steps with the 30 percent rent  
13 cap. So it was a big campaign promise and a great  
14 show of leadership for Mayor de Blasio to negotiate  
15 agreement with Governor Cuomo to close a loophole in  
16 HASA's rental assistance program that has resulted in  
17 high rates of recurring homelessness, arrears, and  
18 drove up occupancy rates in HASA funded emergency  
19 housing programs. Until now, HASA clients with  
20 federal disability income or veterans benefits have  
21 been forced to pay upwards of 70 percent or more of  
22 their disability income towards rent even though they  
23 are enrolled in a rental assistance program. This  
24 forced trade off--this forced tradeoffs between  
25 essential needs, including food and medical co-pays

2 in order to pay the rent and force many people back  
3 into the shelter system. So we're happy that the  
4 proposed 30 percent rent cap will ensure affordable  
5 housing for low income people living with AIDS in  
6 New York and we have a couple of things that we want  
7 to highlight for the implementation process. One,  
8 obviously to approve the budget. The second is for  
9 HRA and HASA, it's to establish eligibility for the  
10 affordable housing protection so that it covers all  
11 HASA clients who receive federal disability income  
12 and/or earned income up to at least 200 percent of  
13 the federal poverty line. We want to make sure that  
14 the people who are eligible for this program stay  
15 eligible. We want to implement the affordable housing  
16 protection as quickly as possible and make it  
17 retroactive to April 1<sup>st</sup>, so there is a little talk  
18 about this, but we want to make sure that that  
19 happens. And we want to implement a moratorium on  
20 evictions by approving all one shot rent and  
21 utilities request from HASA clients who currently  
22 experience severe rent burden so that people who are  
23 benefitted in this cap aren't going to get evicted in  
24 the process of it getting implemented. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Thank you.

2 SALLY GREENSPAN: Great. Good afternoon.  
3 Good evening, and thank you to Chairperson Levin for  
4 the opportunity to testify today. My name is Sally  
5 Greenspan, and I am the Program Director for  
6 Vulnerable Populations at Enterprise Community  
7 Partners. Today I'll be focusing my testimony on the  
8 Department of Homeless Services fiscal year 2015  
9 preliminary budget. At Enterprise we understand that  
10 our city's homelessness crisis is caused largely by a  
11 shortage of housing that is affordable to the lowest  
12 income New Yorkers. We work to create and preserve  
13 affordable housing connected to opportunity in New  
14 York. The Department of Homeless Services continues  
15 to face urgent levels of demand for emergency shelter  
16 and related services and must respond to this need  
17 while also developing paths out of homelessness for  
18 its client. The Department's preliminary budget  
19 highlights a number of areas where continued and  
20 enhanced funding will be essential to ending  
21 homelessness. First, the city must invest in  
22 partnership with the state in a new local rent  
23 subsidy that is large and flexible enough to serve  
24 the majority of families experiencing or at high risk  
25 of homelessness. There is no one size fits all

2 solution to homelessness. Unquestionably, some  
3 households with permanent disabilities, fixed incomes  
4 or high service needs will require permanent housing  
5 vouchers or supportive housing. However, the majority  
6 of families in shelter face primarily economic  
7 barriers to housing and national best practices  
8 demonstrate they can be helped with shorter term  
9 rental assistance coupled with services. In order to  
10 fund an effective rent subsidy, the city must secure  
11 the State's financial support. The city, together  
12 with their nongovernmental partners must work  
13 actively in the coming days, both to remove  
14 prohibitive language in the state budget and to  
15 ensure robust funding for an essential rental  
16 assistance program in New York City. Second, New  
17 York City and the Department of Homeless Services  
18 must increase investment in proven homelessness  
19 prevention tools to stop homelessness before it  
20 starts. The city's home base program, a proven best  
21 practice model, provides services and financial  
22 assistance to families deemed at imminent risk of  
23 homelessness to stabilize them in their communities.  
24 Since prevention services like Home Base are proven  
25 to help families and save public funds increasing the



2 prevention budget for the Department of Homeless  
3 Services is a smart investment. Finally, city  
4 agencies, including the Department of Homeless  
5 Services, as well as Housing and Welfare agencies  
6 must work together to increase the supply of  
7 affordable housing for homeless and extremely low  
8 income families. New York City has always been a  
9 leader in the creation of affordable housing, but  
10 supply has not kept up with demand, especially at the  
11 lowest income levels. The Department of Homeless  
12 Services must continue to invest staff and  
13 development resources to working with its city agency  
14 partners to ensure that new housing units are created  
15 and existing units are better used to serve homeless  
16 and at risk households. By creating an interagency  
17 council and working with the city's development  
18 partners, we can find ways to add to the supply of  
19 housing affordable to the lowest income New Yorkers.  
20 We commend the city and the new Administration on the  
21 hard work they do every day to house homeless  
22 families and individuals in emergency shelter and to  
23 devise new ways of ensuring that homelessness is  
24 avoided and ended wherever possible. Enterprise looks  
25 forward to continuing to work with our partners to

2 make sure that permanent affordable housing solutions  
3 are devoted to this important work. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
5 for your testimony.

6 AL BERIBRU: Good evening. How are you?  
7 My name's Al Beribru [phonetic]. I'm actually filling  
8 in for Quentin Walcott who is the Co-Executive  
9 Director of Connect. Unfortunately he couldn't stay  
10 for the remainder of the time. He had to go  
11 facilitate a group. So on behalf of Connect and  
12 Quentin Walcott and myself I would like to thank the  
13 General Welfare Committee Chair and all the members  
14 in attendance today. As many of you are aware,  
15 Connect is a New York City nonprofit dedicated to  
16 preventing interpersonal violence and promoting  
17 gender in justice. By building partnerships with  
18 individuals and communities, Connect strives to help  
19 change the beliefs, behaviors, and institutions that  
20 perpetuate violence. Through legal empowerment,  
21 grassroots mobilization and transformative education,  
22 Connect works to create safe families and peaceful  
23 communities. Through Connect's community empowerment  
24 program we create new partnerships with community,  
25 school and faith based organization across New York

2 City as well as maintaining and enhancing existing  
3 partnerships. Through Connect's training institute,  
4 Connect educated over 600 members in social service  
5 professionals in 2013 about the complex dynamics and  
6 consequences of families and domestic violence.

7 Connect's legal advocacy program served over 1,200  
8 people actively representing 50 DV survivors at  
9 immigration proceedings before US CIS and DHS, as  
10 well as providing various levels of representation to  
11 37 children of those clients. Funding provided by NYC  
12 City Council makes a difference to Connect and the  
13 individuals, families, and communities we serve and  
14 partner with. Despite increased awareness, more  
15 domestic violence shelters, batterers intervention  
16 programs, laws and legislations, domestic violence  
17 continues in epidemic proportions and contributes to  
18 many of New York City's most intractable problems.

19 Among them drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness,  
20 community violence, gang involvement and poor  
21 educational outcomes. Domestic violence puts a  
22 substantial burden on our public health system. It is  
23 a leading cause of injury to US women ages 15 through  
24 44 and dramatically increases a woman's risk of  
25 having asthma, heart attack and a stroke. Several

2 studies show that homicide is a leading cause of  
3 death for pregnant women. Again, several studies show  
4 that homicide is a leading cause of death for  
5 pregnant women. In 2012, New York City police  
6 responded to over 720 incidents of domestic violence  
7 a day. There were 69 family related homicides in New  
8 York and in 72 percent of these cases, there were no  
9 prior police contact. The New York City domestic  
10 violence Hotline receives an average of 290 calls a  
11 day. Tragically, as alarming as these statistics are,  
12 they represent only a fraction of the women and the  
13 children who were struggling with an abusive partner.  
14 There are thousands of cases that go unreported and  
15 undetected. When people do not reach out for help  
16 they are often silenced by people or organizations  
17 that don't know how to respond and are not aware of  
18 our resources and out of lack of education and  
19 understanding making the situation worse. What if  
20 family, friend, neighbors had known what to do? How  
21 to speak and listen to victims, how to approach  
22 abusive partners? What if people knew where to refer  
23 the appropriate help source? With support from the  
24 New York City Council, Connect's 11 staff members and  
25 six volunteers have built partnership with over 200

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2 individuals, community based organization including  
3 immigrant, faith based organizations, schools, and  
4 health workers. We hope very much that you will  
5 continue to help us provide programs and services and  
6 join us in the work to create safer families and  
7 peaceful communities in NYC. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
9 for your testimony. Thank you.

10 MARK DUNLEA: So my name is Mark Dunlea,  
11 and I'm Executive Director of the Hunger Action  
12 Network of New York State and let me be the latest to  
13 add my congratulations to your appointment as Chair  
14 of this Committee.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

16 MARK DUNLEA: Honestly, we're very  
17 excited and past years when you sponsored the  
18 breakfast in the classroom mandate and we hope you  
19 convince our good Mayor to join you in that endeavor  
20 before--

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Me too.

22 MARK DUNLEA: You too. And since we were  
23 not able to have the new great HRA Commissioner join  
24 us yet today and the state budget's about to be done,  
25 that leave you really as the voice on welfare in the

2 state for the next few day--of sin city [phonetic],  
3 and so perhaps you can call your colleague Senator  
4 Diane Savino, because two of our long term  
5 initiatives to try to improve HRA are part of the  
6 Assembly budget resolution. And Senator Savino is  
7 Chair of the joint budget conference community and  
8 human services and that is the access to education  
9 issue for welfare business and other and that is  
10 reform in the sanction process, and you're timely  
11 intervention would solve so many of the problems at  
12 HRA. Some of the problems at HRA do not relate to the  
13 budget, they relate to the Administration, so I'm not  
14 going to go over it with a lot of details on that. I  
15 will note as probably Joel Berg noted that we do have  
16 half a million New Yorkers who are eligible for SNAP  
17 not receiving benefits. I've always been stunned in  
18 the 28 years I've been doing this work. The majority  
19 of the people at food pantries and soup kitchens are  
20 not receiving SNAP benefits, and in New York City  
21 that's closer to 40 percent. That needs to be  
22 resolved. I certainly support the numbers put forth  
23 by Triada Stampas and Joel and others about the 19.8  
24 million dollars for the EFAP program. We lost over  
25 300 million statewide, probably about 130 million

2 dollars in food benefits and in the November 1<sup>st</sup>  
3 budget cuts. We have seen the number of people using  
4 food pantries in New York City double, double since  
5 the great recession has started and funding for these  
6 programs have remained relatively stable. And  
7 finally, we need jobs. And anytime you ask a poor  
8 person what do they want out of HRA, they say we need  
9 jobs, and you can use the welfare dollars for jobs.  
10 Thirteen years ago the City Council passed a very  
11 good transitional jobs bill, which was vetoed. The  
12 veto was overridden. The Mayor refused to implement  
13 it as written. He did a different type of program,  
14 okay. He then cut the benefits in 2003. We need to  
15 restore transitional jobs to an adequate level. You  
16 should take part of the 445 million dollar block  
17 grant, at least 100 million dollars should go to a  
18 transitional jobs, and we've been begging for years  
19 do a cost benefit analysis of transitional jobs  
20 versus WEP, 'cause WEP does not help people become  
21 employable. Thank you very much.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Dunlea.  
23 So I think I'm going up to Albany tomorrow about the  
24 rental subsidy issue. I'll see if I can catch Senator  
25 Savino's ear.

2 MARK DUNLEA: Great.

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Well, I want to thank  
4 this panel very much. Again, thank you for all of  
5 your amazing hard work and for working with this  
6 committee over the last couple of weeks and talking  
7 through a lot of these issues. I look forward to  
8 working with you for a long time in the future. Thank  
9 you.

10 UNKNOWN: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So we have a number of  
12 folks I'm going to be calling up. They may have  
13 left, so if you're still here come on up. Sabrina  
14 Gonzales, Teen RAPP? Lesley Feingold, Center against  
15 Domestic Violence. Lucia Rivieccio, STEPS to End  
16 Family Violence. Randy Martinez, Teen RAPP. John  
17 Tago [phonetic], Teen RAPP. Did I mispronounce that?  
18 Okay. Alliyah Assevido [phonetic] Teen RAPP, Alberi  
19 Abru [phonetic], Teen RAPP. Alright. Everybody's  
20 here. Whoever wants to start, go ahead. You got to  
21 speak into the mic. Light's got to be on. Is the  
22 light on?

23 LESLEY FEINGOLD: Hi.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Hi.  
25



2 LESLEY FEINGOLD: Okay. I'm Lesley  
3 Feingold. I'm the RAPP Supervisor at Center Against  
4 Domestic Violence, and I'm reading testimony from  
5 Judith Kahan who is the CEO of Center Against  
6 Domestic Violence. She couldn't be here tonight.  
7 "Good afternoon. My name is Judith Kahan and I am the  
8 Chief Executive Officer of the Center Against  
9 Domestic Violence. Since 1976, the center has been  
10 working toward a society free from violence by  
11 transforming the lives of victims and raising  
12 awareness in our communities. The center, the  
13 largest of the City's teen Relationship Abuse  
14 Prevention Program, or RAPP providers offers its  
15 program to nearly 30,000 students in 15 high school  
16 and intermediate school campuses in all five boroughs  
17 of New York City. In every school RAPP delivers  
18 workshops about healthy relationships, one on one  
19 counseling and support groups, peer leadership  
20 activities, staff education, parent education and  
21 community workshops. Offering a Master's level social  
22 worker who coordinates RAPP is the only adult a teen  
23 can turn to. For 10 years HRA and the Mayor supported  
24 RAPP. Since 2010 those of us who provide the program  
25 and those who benefit from this ground breaking

2 program have come to you, the City Council, to save  
3 the citywide social work program that serves 58  
4 schools on 30 campuses with almost 50,000 students,  
5 and you have saved the program. We thank you for your  
6 faith in what we do and your dedication to the youth  
7 of New York City. This year, the outgoing Mayor and  
8 the incoming Mayor have included RAPP in the budget  
9 and HRA will make it whole. But the program they are  
10 restoring is the old 2006 RAPP program. It's great to  
11 reach and help as many students as we have, but there  
12 are so many more students in New York City. RAPP is  
13 only a drop in the bucket, changing the school  
14 culture to one of respect in a comparative handful of  
15 schools. RAPP is recognized throughout the country as  
16 a model program to stop teen relationship abuse. This  
17 proven program helps young people stay in school and  
18 develop the tools for self-sufficiency. RAPP  
19 coordinators not only teach students about healthy  
20 relationships and how to avoid or end abusive  
21 relationships, they assist them to graduate, to go  
22 onto college and to believe in themselves. Students  
23 who might otherwise have dropped out of school  
24 because of abuse and violence in their lives can now  
25 graduate and go on to two or four year colleges

2 because of RAPP. Every time I meet RAPP graduates  
3 their stories touch my heart. They have overcome the  
4 odds to become heroes, sharing their experiences so  
5 that others will not have to live through them.  
6 Please support an expansion of this valuable program  
7 and give more teens hope for a better future. Thank  
8 you."

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

10 LUCIA RIVIECCIO: Good evening. Good  
11 evening Council Member Levin and members of the  
12 General Welfare Committee. I am Lucia Rivieccio. I am  
13 the Assistant Executive Director at Edwin Gould  
14 Services for Children and Families which operates  
15 STEPS to end Family Violence. I would first like to  
16 thank the Council for your unwavering support of RAPP  
17 over the past four years. Your help was critical to  
18 the restoration of RAPP each year and of course, to  
19 this year's base lining of RAPP in the Executive  
20 Budget, for which we also thank the Human Resources  
21 Administration. I am thrilled to appear before you  
22 today to discuss moving forward. Rather than  
23 scrambling to keep our programs whole, we can now  
24 speak to the core of the issue, which is of course,  
25 prevention of intimate partner violence in New York

2 City over the long term. STEPS to end Family  
3 Violence has been a RAPP provider since its inception  
4 in 1999, and before that a provider of its precursor,  
5 Adopt a School. We have witnessed over and over again  
6 the transformational nature of RAPP, of the teens who  
7 have found safety and healing from being abused,  
8 stalked or intimidated who are bullied and  
9 marginalized by peers and who come to us from homes  
10 where there is violence. We have spoken with many of  
11 you about the counseling, education and support we  
12 provide that help them heal and grow into healthy  
13 confident and productive adults. In line with HRA's  
14 own mission, this is a program that promotes self-  
15 sufficiency in every sense of the term. Our summer  
16 peer leaders learn the responsibility of a job, the  
17 commitment to a team and how to manage time and  
18 money. As a measure of our success, in a city in  
19 which the high school graduation rate is 64 percent.  
20 Ninety-six percent of our peer leaders graduated high  
21 school last year and close to 90 percent are  
22 attending college. Those few students who chose not  
23 to attend college are gainfully employed. We are so  
24 very proud of our young men and women who are  
25 learning the importance of healthy relating, of

2 responsibility, higher education and perhaps most  
3 important, self-worth. Not only is New York City's  
4 Teen RAPP the largest primary prevention program in  
5 the US, this is a model that works and has been  
6 working for 14 years. In fact, the Columbia  
7 University report released in 2010 states the  
8 importance to urban minority youth of connectedness  
9 and engagement to success and a reduction in  
10 aggression and violence in school. RAPP provides  
11 just that connective tissue for our teens. We believe  
12 that this program should be expanded to reach every  
13 child in New York City schools. An investment in  
14 RAPP is an investment in our city's future and a  
15 significant long term savings in city services down  
16 the road. Will we continue to move from crisis to  
17 crisis, providing long term help to only a few while  
18 we simply wait on the sidelines for what we know will  
19 come tomorrow for the many? Consider the following.  
20 The cost of housing a survivor of violence and her  
21 family in a domestic violence shelter and then a long  
22 term DHS shelter when the family times out of DV  
23 shelter. In New York City, 25 percent of families  
24 living in shelter are there because of DV. The cost  
25 of managing mental health ramifications on the

2 children of growing up as victims of trauma. The  
3 cost of foster care services, of incarceration and  
4 legal services, the cost of the private sector  
5 business when the parent is unable to work,  
6 healthcare costs, and the list goes on. We know that  
7 these costs amount to tens and even hundreds of  
8 millions or more. In fact, RAPP offers long term  
9 solutions down the road to many of the issues  
10 discussed in testimony earlier today. Prevention is  
11 pivotal in any public health issue, and the earlier  
12 we start the better. We believe you can't find a  
13 program with a better cost benefit, with a reach of  
14 47,000 teens across the five boroughs, the  
15 relationship abuse prevention program costs the city  
16 a mere 63 dollars per student per year, an amount  
17 that pales in comparison to the exponential savings  
18 realized down the line in services that our teens  
19 will never need. The council has been there for our  
20 young people over the past four years. Many of you  
21 sitting here today or earlier today were part of a  
22 New York City Council that recognized the tremendous  
23 benefit to having RAPP in our schools and acted to  
24 save our program. Will you now be the Council that  
25 works with us to expand this critical program? To

2 the entire City Council, we thank you once again for  
3 your attention to this important issue and your help  
4 in ensuring that RAPP remains and expands. We hope  
5 that the Council will take an active role in  
6 supporting this program and indeed supporting its  
7 expansion throughout New York City. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

9 RANDY MARTINEZ: Good evening. I am Randy  
10 Martinez, and I am not only here representing Teen  
11 RAPP and STEPS to end Family Violence, but also as a  
12 product of these great programs that have given me  
13 the tools to come here and speak comfortably and  
14 undoubtedly about the future of the program and I'm  
15 here today not only in hopes of your supportive  
16 efforts for the program, but also in hopes of the  
17 programs expansion. As a college freshman, I to this  
18 day still use the lessons and tools I've learned in  
19 my years with the RAPP program, and see myself as a  
20 peer here because 'til this day I'm still spreading  
21 the knowledge I've learned and the experiences I've  
22 gone through with the people of all ages and continue  
23 to raise awareness of DV and all related issues  
24 anywhere I go. Not to mention that I am just one of  
25 many. There are hundreds of others just like me who

2 have gone through this program and can recite these  
3 words sincerely. So common sense indicates that the  
4 growth of this program implementing it even in more  
5 schools across the city will continually spread our  
6 message and give the youth a much needed voice. I  
7 hope you can continue to support our program and  
8 thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much.  
10 Where are you a college freshman?

11 RANDY MARTINEZ: City Tech in Brooklyn.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Excellent. That's in  
13 my district. Thanks a lot. Thank you for your  
14 testimony.

15 AL BURI: Alright. Hi, I'm Al Buri  
16 [phonetic]. It's me again. I forgot to mention I'm  
17 also the part of the advisory board for Connect as  
18 well, that's why I filled in for Q. But I am also a  
19 RAPP Alum. I joined RAPP in 2006 when I was 16. I'm  
20 24 now, turning 25. And it's difficult to summarize  
21 in a few words the impact RAPP has had on my life. To  
22 me, RAPP is more than a teen dating awareness group  
23 or program. It's been my safe place, safe haven where  
24 I can talk about things that matter to me, and at the  
25 same time talk about issues that matter to others.



2 Before I was blessed with the opportunity to learn  
3 about intimate partner violence, domestic violence, I  
4 struggled with self-esteem, felt out casted and in  
5 some ways isolated. In terms--I had a tendency of  
6 turning a blind eye to issues that affected me and my  
7 community. Through RAPP I was made aware of my own  
8 family history and experience with DV and how it  
9 shaped the relationships I had. I learned the skills  
10 necessary to cope and heal from my experiences, but  
11 more importantly I was able to share it, share with  
12 other teens and peers and also teach, which is part  
13 of my growth. RAPP has opened many doors for me and  
14 presented me with opportunities that impacted my  
15 life. I've become a critical thinker, mature, humble,  
16 a public speaker, a better friend, a teacher and much  
17 more as a result of my time involved with RAPP. Of  
18 course, I get some credit for that as well, and not  
19 all RAPP. I did do something, but the impact RAPP has  
20 had on me cannot be understated. Liz Claiborne handed  
21 me an awarded for exemplary work in my community as a  
22 teen activist. I facilitated a group of high school  
23 males students at my Alma Mater around healthy  
24 masculinity and men's role in ending violence against  
25 women. I've been part of countless DV panels and

2 conferences in D.C. and around the city, and I now  
3 work for one of the largest organizations in NYC  
4 which is Children's Aid Society, working with  
5 families impacted by domestic violence. One in four  
6 women are abused by a partner in their lifetime. That  
7 was one of the statistics that always stood out to  
8 me, and it's 2014, and I think it's very tragic that  
9 the numbers are still that high, and I'm pretty sure  
10 this room was filled with at least more than 50  
11 women, so if you do the math, you can realize how  
12 this is a serious epidemic. One of things I'm sure is  
13 that RAPP has brought these kind of conversations to  
14 the table and made, brings awareness to teens and I  
15 believe with the expansion of the RAPP program, New  
16 York City--well, I'm hopeful and I believe that we  
17 can impact a lot more children and as you can see  
18 it's more than just about domestic violence. We also-  
19 -RAPP has also impacted children in many different  
20 facets of their lives, whether it's helping them  
21 through college or getting employment. So thank you  
22 for your time. That's all I have.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
24 for your testimony. Thank you.

2                   SABRINA GONZALES: Good afternoon City  
3 Council. I would like to begin off first by thank  
4 you for having me here today. My name is Sabrina  
5 Gonzales, and I'm an 11<sup>th</sup> grader at Manhattan Theater  
6 Lab [phonetic] High School. I have been in the  
7 relationship abuse prevention program, RAPP, since it  
8 came to my school last year and its been a wonderful  
9 experience. I've taken advantage of counseling  
10 services RAPP offers to understand and deal with a  
11 difficult situation that my family, that has affected  
12 my family. By participating in RAPP, I have learned  
13 great deal about myself in the process. Additionally,  
14 I have become an active RAPP peer leader going on fun  
15 educational trips and doing a lot of community  
16 service. Honestly, I have fallen deeply in love with  
17 the program and there are no words to express the  
18 gratitude I feel in my heart. The RAPP program has  
19 helped those who don't seem to have a voice when they  
20 couldn't find it. And it's amazing how the RAPP  
21 program makes everyone feels so special every day.  
22 Ever since I joined the RAPP program it has been my  
23 life, my heart and my soul. The RAPP room is a place  
24 where we feel one can relate to each other and share  
25 our own experiences. It has brought together my

2 fellow students in my school, the people who I now  
3 call my best friends. The RAPP program has made my  
4 life so much better and before RAPP I never knew that  
5 there's so many things you can do to put a smile on  
6 someone's face or just make them happy. The RAPP  
7 program has made me a better person from serving food  
8 to the needy and bringing meals to the elderly to  
9 sending a happy birthday message to an 11 year old  
10 boy with a disability who struggles to make friends.  
11 I believe RAPP is standing out for all that's right.  
12 The RAPP program overall has been a life changing  
13 experience, and if I could sum it all up, I would  
14 love this program to be in a lot of schools so all  
15 the students can experience the love of RAPP. So  
16 thank you very much for allowing me to come here  
17 today and simply put, I love the RAPP program.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
19 for your testimony. Thank you.

20 ALLIYAH ASSEVIDO: Good evening. My name  
21 is Alliyah Assevido [phonetic] and I am a junior at  
22 Manhattan Theater Lab High School. I've been in a  
23 relationship abuse prevention program, RAPP, since it  
24 came to my high school last year. Since joining RAPP  
25 I have changed so much. Before RAPP I was barely

coming to school and was one year behind academically. Since Manhattan Theater Lab High School is now a phase out school, I didn't think I would graduate with my class and would have to transfer to an alternative school. However, this all changed once I joined RAPP. I started meeting with the RAPP counselor and told him what personal issues I have having both in and out of school. It has helped me become more self-aware and more capable of handling difficult situations. It has also helped me focus on improving school work. The RAPP counselor and I filled out a grade contract so that I could see what areas I would have to improve in and gave me suggestions on how to improve my grades. Slowly over this year I have begun to see myself as a better student. Overall, with the help of the RAPP program, I have been working, accomplishing most of my goals and get through personal things. I have had many laughs and good time as a RAPP peer leader and I've participated in so many different community service activities. I've been trained to help other students going through difficult relationships. I have handed out water and positive wishes to thousands of walkers at the breast cancer walk. I have played with

2 children at a domestic violence shelter and had  
3 wonderful conversations with senior citizens while  
4 serving them a hot lunch. I do believe if it wasn't  
5 for RAPP I wouldn't be up here today. I never thought  
6 I would be in a program that gives so much love and  
7 support. In RAPP, I not only feel supported by other  
8 students but also give the same support back to them.  
9 I have learned the power of having a positive  
10 attitude even when facing something I don't want to  
11 deal with. And although I'm not as physically tall  
12 or strong as other people around me, my voice is  
13 strong and loud. I am a confident young adult and I  
14 know I can be successful. Looking back at the school  
15 year, RAPP has helped me become a leader in many  
16 ways. It has taught me a very strong word, respect,  
17 both how to give it and receive it. It has also  
18 taught me responsibility, compassion, patience, and  
19 above anything else, the real meaning of family. I  
20 am extremely happy to report that I am doing much  
21 better in school and passing all my classes by  
22 attending PM school, Saturday school, and summer  
23 school. I am in the process of making up the credits  
24 I am missing. I am scheduled to enter my senior year  
25

2 in September and graduate on time in June 2015. After  
3 graduation I plan on going to college. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
5 for your testimony.

6 JOHNATHON TAGO: Hello, Council Members.

7 My name is Johnathon Tago and I am a senior at  
8 Manhattan Theater Lab High School. I'm grateful for  
9 the opportunity to sit in front of you and speak  
10 about a wonderful program, Relationship Abuse  
11 Prevention Program, or RAPP. Since joining this anti-  
12 bully, anti-violence peer leadership program at my  
13 high school I have grown a lot. RAPP is more than a  
14 program. It is a family. Through conversation with my  
15 RAPP coordinator I have learned a lot about myself.  
16 RAPP has been a support system for me in dealing with  
17 personal issues with my family. Additionally as a  
18 group, RAPP students have an opportunity to  
19 participate in many community building activities  
20 that have helped build up my confidence and my self-  
21 esteem. I believe that a strength I have is  
22 connecting to others, and through RAPP I have learned  
23 how to effectively be supportive and make a person  
24 realize they're not alone during their difficult  
25 situations. Last summer, I was selected to work in

the RAPP summer peer leadership program where we were trained to help others going through dating violence. Since I am someone who believes in compromise, sometimes a challenging idea for teenagers, I learned many effective ways to help other teens who are having a conflict. I have learned that in order to be a good mediator, one has to help those involved see the perspective of the other person. During the summer a number of speakers came to RAPP. One of these speakers was a spoken word poet. I learned about the value of communication and words, to use them as a tool to express myself effectively. When a woman who is visually impaired spoke, I was shocked by her courage to be so honest and loved her independence. And when a speaker spoke about his experiences being transgendered it made me value and appreciate the notion of respect for others. It reinforced my ideas that everyone deserves respect regardless of our differences. RAPP has given me the opportunities to participate in many in many community service activities and to give back to the community. Giving back to others and helping those in need has been a wonderful experience that has made me feel so good. I have helped cheer people on in the



2 breast cancer walk, helped serve food to the needy in  
3 a soup kitchen, spent time talking with the elderly  
4 and played games with young children who witnessed  
5 domestic violence. I am proud to say that I am  
6 graduating high school one year early and I am  
7 excited to start college in September where I wish to  
8 study psychology and music. My RAPP coordinator and  
9 I applied to many colleges and I am impatiently  
10 waiting to hear from the schools. I believe I am on  
11 my way to becoming the good leader I know I can be  
12 and feel that my experiences in RAPP will help me in  
13 the future. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,  
15 Johnathon. I want to thank this panel. You've really  
16 brought it home for us, everybody in this room. You  
17 can see everybody's smiling because it's really--this  
18 is why--this inspires us and this reminds us why  
19 we're all doing what we're doing. So you have my  
20 commitment that I will be, and that this committee  
21 and this council will be a big supporter of the RAPP  
22 program, you know, forever, and I want to actually  
23 ask if it's possible, I would love to come out and  
24 see, you know, the RAPP program in action and see  
25 what you guys do every day. But I want to thank you

2 very much for--this is really inspiring and again, I  
3 really admire your commitment and your courage and  
4 your poise and for staying here and waiting so long  
5 to testify. I really appreciate it. So thank you all  
6 very, very much. I look forward to seeing you again.  
7 Thank you.

8 JOHNATHON TAGO: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good luck with  
10 everything. Thanks.

11 JOHNATHON TAGO: Testing, one, two.  
12 Sorry.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Alright. We end the  
14 hearing on a very good note. So it is 7:19, so  
15 whoever said 7:20, they're going to end. Thank you  
16 all very, very much. We really appreciate your  
17 testimony. The hearing is adjourned.

18 [gavel]

19 JOHNATHON TAGO: I don't know why, I just  
20 like talking into this thing. It's so cool. I know  
21 right?

22

23

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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 there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is no interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date 04/30/2014