

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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January 21, 2015
Start: 10:34 a.m.
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E:

JAMES G. VAN BRAMER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Elizabeth S. Crowley
Julissa Ferreras
Peter A. Koo
Stephen T. Levin
Andy L. King
Costa G. Constantinides
Laurie A. Cumbo
Helen K. Rosenthal
Jumaane D. Williams
Chaim M. Deutsch
Mark Treyger
Mark Levine
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.
I. Daneek Miller
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.

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

Sonia Klein
Holocaust Survivor

Erica Ford
CEO and Founder
LIFE Camp, Inc.

John Bryant
Co-Founder
LIFE Camp, Inc.

Meredith Rose Burak
Chair of Public Partnerships
The Survivor Initiative

Rachel Cohen Gerrol
Founder
The Survivor Initiative

Dina Muskin Goldberg
Simon Wiesenthal Center

Elihu Kover
Selfhelp Community Services

Hindy Poupko
Managing Director
Jewish Community Relations
Council of New York

Rena Resnick
Public Affairs Manager
Met Council on Jewish Poverty

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

Amy Ellenbogen
Director
Crown Heights Community Mediation Center
Center for Court Innovation

Venalia Colverson
Volunteer
LIFE Camp, Inc.

Yolanda Hinton
Mother of Tony Durrell Hinton

Quentin Walcott
Co-Executive Director
CONNECT NYC

Sally MacNichol
Co-Executive Director
CONNECT NYC

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Good morning
3 everyone and welcome to this very important hearing
4 of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and
5 International Intergroup Relations. My name is Jimmy
6 Van Bramer; I'm Chair of this Committee and we are
7 now formally [gavel] in session. I first want to
8 acknowledge the members of our committee and then
9 because of the importance of the resolutions that
10 we're discussing today we have a number of guests and
11 visitors, in terms of Council Members, but from the
12 Committee first we have Elizabeth Crowley from Queens
13 and Peter Koo, also from Queens and we have a number
14 of hearings going on simultaneously; a number of the
15 Committee members are just in the other room in
16 Finance, but will be joining us shortly. We're also
17 thrilled to be joined by the prime sponsors of the
18 two very important resolutions that we're taking up
19 today, Council Member Mark Levine, who is the prime
20 sponsor of the resolution on the liberation of
21 Auschwitz and Council Member Jumaane Williams, who is
22 the prime sponsor on the Peace Week resolution that
23 we're taking up today. We're also thrilled to be
24 joined by Council Member Chaim Deutsch of Brooklyn
25 and Council Member Mark Treyger, also from Brooklyn

1
2 and I know we'll have a number of other council
3 members joining us.

4 So this morning we are taking up the
5 International Intergroup Relations portion of our
6 very lengthy title of this committee and discussing
7 the Preconsidered resolution sponsored by Council
8 Member Levine and Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito,
9 which commemorates the 70th anniversary of the
10 liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camps on
11 January 27th, 2015. And Res 0507, sponsored by
12 Council Member Jumaane Williams, which would declare
13 January 15-22 of each year to be Peace Week in the
14 City of New York. I'll first discuss the
15 Preconsidered resolution and then Int 0507 and then
16 we'll hear from the prime sponsors of both of those
17 resolutions.

18 In just a few days, on January 27th,
19 people all over the world will gather to commemorate
20 International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 70th
21 anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz
22 concentration camp.

23 World leaders, including our President,
24 who gave a great speech last night I might add, will
25 be traveling to the site, where almost 7,000

2 prisoners were liberated from Auschwitz by the allied
3 forces; most of those who were freed were either very
4 ill or dying. Today we remember the many lives that
5 were lost and also honor the lives that were saved.
6 We must never forget the atrocities that occurred and
7 we must honor the living witnesses who are still here
8 to share their stories and represent the millions of
9 voices that were forcefully silenced. This year's
10 anniversary is critical because it may very well be
11 the last time that some survivors join us in
12 commemorating the significant moment in history.

13 I wanna thank those who are here today,
14 including the representatives from various groups who
15 are committed to providing services and assistance to
16 Holocaust survivors, especially here in New York
17 City. We're also thrilled to be joined by Sonia
18 Klein, herself a survivor who will be testifying
19 shortly and we're thrilled to have you here, Mrs.
20 Klein.

21 We're also taking up a very important
22 Resolution, 0507, which declares January 15-22 of
23 each year to be Peace Week in the City of New York.
24 Established by the organization LIFE Camp, Peace Week
25 has been celebrated for the last several years in

1 honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy of
2 nonviolence. There are approximately 1.2 million
3 youth between the ages of 15 and 24 in New York City
4 and between 2009 and 2011 the leading cause of death
5 among this age group was homicide, according to the
6 New York City Department of Health and Mental
7 Hygiene. We must do more to protect our youth from
8 violence and foster our young leaders to be advocates
9 of peaceful conflict resolution. This resolution,
10 sponsored by Council Member Williams and the
11 recognition of Peace Week is very timely, as we just
12 celebrated Dr. King's birthday, but now more than
13 ever we need to emphasize the importance of
14 nonviolence in this city and across the nation and
15 indeed the world. These efforts; a recognition of
16 Peace Week, will help empower New York City's youth
17 to be agents of change and set a positive example for
18 their peers.
19

20 I wanna thank the staff, Aminta Kilawan
21 and Michael Benjamin for their work on these two
22 resolutions; also Tonya Cyrus, Jennie Berger of the
23 Speaker's Office and Cody Reiter, my Legislative
24 Director.
25

2 Now I'd like to call on Council Member
3 Levine, the prime sponsor of the resolution on the
4 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz
5 concentration camp to say a few words before I ask
6 Council Member Williams to speak on his resolution on
7 Peace Week.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you very
9 much, Chair Van Bramer and thank you for expediting
10 this reso; it was important for obvious reasons that
11 we be able to vote on this as a full body at
12 tomorrow's Stated and we appreciate you making an
13 extra effort for that to be possible. I have to say
14 also how fortuitous it is that coincidentally we're
15 also hearing a resolution sponsored by Council Member
16 Williams; I think the two go hand in hand naturally.

17 Monday of next week marks exactly 70
18 years since one of the most important milestones in
19 the history of World War II, of the Holocaust and of
20 the Jewish people, the liberation on January 27th,
21 1945 of the Auschwitz concentration camp. It is the
22 date officially designated by the United Nations as
23 Global Holocaust Remembrance Day. The scale of Nazi
24 atrocities carried out at Auschwitz and the
25 surrounding network of more than 45 subcamps strains

1 belief. From early 1942 until late 1944, 1.3 million
2 human beings were sent to these camps; 1.1 million of
3 them, mostly Jews, were murdered there. The world
4 was slow to learn of the scope of the death and
5 destruction that occurred at Auschwitz, in part
6 because the camp's Soviet liberators chose not to
7 publicize much of what they saw, but the survivors of
8 the camp, including those who went on to become some
9 of the Jewish people's leading lights, like Elie
10 Wiesel and Primo Levi, would eventually tell their
11 story and in poignant, painful and moving fashion. A
12 heroic army of researchers laboring even today
13 continues to teach the world ever more about the
14 scale and nature of the Nazi killing machine at
15 Auschwitz and similar locations throughout Europe.

17 It is the task of every generation to
18 learn and relearn the lessons of Auschwitz. This
19 task sadly becomes more difficult every year as the
20 aging survivors tragically leave us; we owe it to
21 them and to ourselves to keep their stories alive.
22 Today the scores of anti-Semitism is again rearing
23 its ugly head in Europe and beyond, with Jews
24 murdered in Paris and Brussels and Mumbai and
25 Jerusalem. The Holocaust teaches us that we ignore

2 such barbarous acts at our peril and reminds us of
3 the urgency of confronting genocide everywhere it
4 threatens humanity, no matter the race and creed of
5 the victims.

6 New York City is home to an estimated
7 73,000 Holocaust survivors, the most in the world
8 outside Israel. Tragically and inexcusably, as many
9 as half of those survivors live at or below the
10 poverty level. We should use this grim anniversary
11 as a reminder that we as a city must do much more to
12 support those fellow New Yorkers who have given so
13 much to us and now deserve to live in dignity. By
14 passing this important resolution commemorating this
15 solemn anniversary the New York City Council will be
16 sending a powerful message to young people today and
17 to survivors in our midst and we will be reaffirming
18 our commitment to what I believe are the most
19 important words to emerge from that horrible episode
20 in human history; never again.

21 I wanna thank a few people who helped
22 make this possible, in addition to Chair Van Bramer,
23 of course our Council Speaker Mark-Viverito and key
24 members of the Legislative Division that quickly
25 drafted a very strong reso on this topic, including

2 Michael Benjamin, Aminta Kilawan, Matt Jawald [sp?];
3 my staff, including the amazing Amy Flattery [sp?],
4 who worked so hard to make this happen and a special
5 thank you to Jennie Berger from the Speaker's Office.
6 Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
8 much, Council Member Levine for this very important
9 resolution. I want to thank the members of our
10 committee who are also on the Finance Committee who
11 just voted, which is why I ducked out for about 15
12 seconds to vote myself, Council Member Laurie Cumbo
13 of Brooklyn and we have Council Member Helen
14 Rosenthal from Manhattan, both on the committee who
15 are also doing double and triple duty this morning
16 [background comments], as I saw Laurie at the Health
17 Committee even before.

18 Now I wanna ask Council Member Williams
19 to speak on his very important resolution on Peace
20 Week; I too wanted to hear these two resolutions
21 together because of the relationship and the
22 importance of peace all over the world and for every
23 person in the world. But Council Member Williams has
24 been an amazing advocate for peace and fighting
25 violence, including gun violence, but violence in all

2 of its forms and we thank him for his work on that,
3 thank him for this very important resolution; I know
4 we'll be hearing from Eric Ford and so many others as
5 well today, but Council Member Williams, I'd like to
6 ask you to say a few words on your resolution.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr.
8 Chair and I also thank you for hearing these two
9 resolutions together, I think it makes a lot of sense
10 and has a great theme of peace running through it.
11 And thank you for being one of the co-sponsors on it
12 as well.

13 So Resolution 0507 declares January 15th
14 to the 22nd of each year as Peace Week in the City of
15 New York. In light of recent events in our city,
16 including the tragic executions of Officers Liu and
17 Ramos and the tragic deaths of people like Akai
18 Gurley and Eric Garner, there's no time that's better
19 than now to reflect on the challenges that we face,
20 including those faced by young people. Indeed last
21 week as I was writing a statement on the death of 15-
22 year-old Isiah Joseph I received a call and text that
23 two more shootings had occurred in my district at
24 that same time.

2 This year marks the 5th annual New York
3 Peace Week, organized by LIFE Camp, Inc., which was
4 established to address youth violence in New York
5 City neighborhoods. I wanna thank Erica Ford of LIFE
6 Camp; if you mentioned five people in this City who
7 have pushed to where we are now with the work we do
8 on gun violence, Erica Ford would have to be one of
9 those names that you mentioned; she's worked long and
10 hard to end the destructive cycle of violence by
11 spearheading Peace Week; most importantly I would
12 like to thank her for committing her life's work to
13 saving other lives. Also a special thanks to Kay
14 Bain [sic], my former legislative and budget director
15 who was stolen by LIFE Camp for his work in this
16 movement.

17 Each year the young people involved in
18 Peace Week take a pledge which reads: I pledge to
19 make peace part of my life, I pledge to show
20 gratitude to others on a daily basis, I pledge to
21 stop, think, smile and breathe before I do things, I
22 pledge to take personal responsibility, awareness for
23 my actions and how they impact others, I pledge to
24 give back to others in my community, I pledge to
25 continue these things past Peace Week, into every day

2 of my life. Looks like a pledge that we all would
3 benefit from.

4 According to LIFE Camp's website,
5 homicide is the leading cause of death among New York
6 City youth, and I know across the nation it is among
7 the leading causes of death of young black men. One
8 in ten New York City teens report not going to school
9 because they're feeling unsafe at school or on their
10 way to school. Many New York City youth are
11 measuring their lives in two- to five-year cycles,
12 not believing that they will survive beyond the next
13 five years. Proceeds from funds raised during New
14 York City Peace Week will go toward summer programs
15 and activities for NYC youth to provide positive
16 alternatives to youth violence and other forms of
17 negative behavior.

18 I've seen far too many cases where a
19 young person loses their life or is injured in the
20 act of violence. Though this issue has plagued many
21 communities in our city, I'm proud to have spent a
22 lot of my tenure in the Council, fighting to ensure
23 that our young people have productive places to learn
24 and grow and all are able to live their lives in
25 peace; indeed the result that my office works for is

2 that all young people have a safe place to learn and
3 grow.

4 Part of that work has been accomplished
5 with the Council's task force to combat gun violence
6 in which LIFE Camp was a part of. As a co-chair,
7 part of the mission is to ensure that we are doing
8 everything we can to show our young people a better
9 way. I'm very grateful that Mayor de Blasio and the
10 Council under the leadership of Speaker Melissa Mark-
11 Viverito have funded \$15 million to ensure that our
12 areas in our city with the highest levels of gun
13 violence have the resources they need to help end
14 this epidemic by treating it through a multi-pronged
15 approach to enhance and uplift our youth. Showing
16 young people a better way means ensuring that they
17 are able to attend good schools, participate in
18 productive extracurricular activities and grow to
19 their full potential. We cannot leave it to young
20 people alone to take the pledge that I recited
21 earlier; let's all recommit ourselves to finding
22 peace in our lives so that we can be a model for
23 others. As Dr. King once said, that old law about an
24 eye for an eye leaves everyone blind; the time is
25 always right to do the right thing, peace is not

2 merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by
3 which we arrive at that goal.

4 I wanna thank all of the organizations
5 affiliated with Peace Week, including I Love My Life,
6 the National Action Network, Peacekeepers Strong,
7 Youth Step, Man Up Inc. and many more. I wanna thank
8 the Speaker, Melissa Mark-Viverito, thank the Chair,
9 Jimmy Van Bramer, thank my legislative staff, Nick
10 Smith and the Council staff, Amata Kilawa [sp?] for
11 the work they did here today and all those who
12 sponsored on it, including Council Members Cabrera,
13 Eugene, Palma and Rosenthal. Thank you, Mr. Chair
14 and again, thank you for hearing the resolution.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
16 much, Council Member Williams and listening to both
17 your opening statement and Council Member Levine's
18 opening statement makes me ever more proud that we
19 took up these two resolutions together and that we
20 could all witness the testimony together on both of
21 these resolutions.

22 And the first person we wanna hear from
23 is Mrs. Sonia Klein, who is herself a survivor of the
24 Holocaust, we heard her this morning at the press
25 conference that Council Member Levine convened a

2 little bit ago and would like to ask Mrs. Klein to
3 take the podium over there and we'll start this very
4 important hearing with some words from Miss Klein.

5 [background comments] Yes.

6 [background comments, laughter]

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: You can sit or
8 your can stand.

9 SONIA KLEIN: I really don't want the
10 mic.

11 [background comments]

12 SONIA KLEIN: Oh. Okay. Do you mind if
13 I stand?

14 [background comment]

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Whatever you
16 want.

17 SONIA KLEIN: My name is Sonia Klein; I
18 was born in Warsaw, Poland; I had a beautiful early
19 childhood with my wonderful parents and two siblings.
20 My beautiful early childhood ended when the war
21 started in 1939; I was 14 years old and all of you
22 who are good in math can figure out how old I am, but
23 it's okay. I grew up; by 10 years I spend in a
24 Warsaw ghetto, four concentration camps and a death
25 march. I survived with my sister and we are together

2 till this day, thank God. It is not easy for me to
3 stand and recall everything I went through, all the
4 atrocities and everything that came with it, every
5 hour that I lived was like a day. I know I have five
6 minutes and I know that even in 5,000 hours I can't
7 tell you everything I would like to tell you;
8 however, every time I speak about it I don't sleep
9 nights, so why am I doing it? Because I promised
10 myself, when I walked away from all the atrocities,
11 that I will never be silent because all those
12 millions of people that are not here cannot be heard.
13 If not I or we Holocaust survivors; who and if not
14 now; when? It is most important that we keep on
15 remembering. Why? Because maybe, maybe, perhaps by
16 knowing what happened we can prevent it from
17 happening again. It is difficult to imagine and
18 comprehend the atrocities that were committed in the
19 19th century by most intelligent people. I would
20 like to stress, and I can't stress enough how
21 important it is for our future generations to know
22 what happened. Fortunately I was one of very few
23 that survived with a sibling and was able to come to
24 the United States where we started a new life. I was
25 liberated in Germany where I met my husband and we

2 got married after one week, not because we loved one
3 another or not because we were in love; nowadays you
4 are in love or you love one another; I got married
5 because I needed a pair of shoes because my shoes
6 from the death march were all stuck to my skin that
7 had to be cut away with my skin when the shoes were
8 taken off and for a piece of bread; I then fell in
9 love with my husband. I lived in Buffalo, New York
10 for 37 years and as I said, I am most thankful to the
11 United States for giving me a country and a home and
12 a possibility to start a new life. I have a son who
13 was born in Germany who now lives in Boston and is a
14 professor to Northeastern University, but I must tell
15 you about an incident that happened while we were
16 already in the United States. I was having some
17 coffee with friends and we were sitting and talking
18 about our new life and my son was playing with
19 cowboys and Indians on the floor and didn't pay
20 attention to us; this is what I thought. A couple
21 days later; he was 5 years old, a couple days later
22 he comes over and he says, "Mom," I said, "Yes." "I
23 don't want a number." Said, "What are you talking
24 about?" "I don't want a number like you and your
25 friends have." I said, "Honey, what do you mean?"

1 He says, "I know that this number doesn't mean
2 anything good and I don't want a number." He's a
3 very intelligent person and it took him a very long
4 time to come to terms with what we went through. How
5 does a 5-year-old know? I don't know. I once asked
6 a facilitator, "At what age do you tell a child?" So
7 the facilitator said, "Well it depends on the child,
8 but no matter how, a 5-year-old child really did not
9 know," but apparently there was something that made
10 him feel. I can't stress enough how important it is
11 not to forget what happened. Firsthand I can tell
12 you from firsthand experience that hate, racism and
13 anti-Semitism leads to destruction and we must not
14 let this happen again.

16 As I said before, it is most important
17 that we remember those that are not here that cannot
18 speak for themselves that were taken from us; not
19 only killed but murdered; my parents were 40 years
20 old, my sibling was 10 years old; they cannot speak
21 for themselves. We are here to speak for them and I
22 am here to speak to those that listen to me and tell
23 their children and grandchildren. Life is a very
24 precious thing; when you are given life back again it
25 is twice as precious. Please, do not forget what

2 happened and try to prevent it from happening again.

3 Thank you.

4 [applause]

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I think the
6 clapping might have been a violation of our protocol
7 here, but I think in this case it's perfectly
8 acceptable and thank you, Mrs. Klein. I know that
9 some of the Council Members wanna say some words and
10 may have some questions for you, so you're welcome to
11 sit there or sit over there where you came from, but
12 we want you to be comfortable and hear some of the
13 Council Members who may have some words for you, if
14 that's okay with you.

15 I wanna first recognize Council Member
16 Rafael Espinal who's been hiding over there in the
17 corner, so I missed you a couple of times, but I
18 wanna recognize Council Member Espinal from Brooklyn
19 who's also joined us for this very important hearing.
20 And I just wanna say thank you to you, Mrs. Klein,
21 I've heard a lot of stories about falling in love and
22 getting married; I've never heard one quite like
23 yours and it was beautiful and moving and deeply
24 touching in its own very unique way, so thank you for
25 being here and I know we talked about the cold a

2 little earlier on the steps, which you are not as
3 affected by as me, but it feels like Buffalo in this
4 room right now a little bit, to me anyway, but I know
5 that you're fine and we're just grateful for your
6 towering strength and your resilience and everything
7 that you mean to this country, so thank you for your
8 testimony and for everything you bring to this
9 hearing. I know that Council Member Levine would
10 like to say a few words and Council Member Deutsch
11 has also asked to say a few words and if any other
12 Council Members would like to sign up, Aminta here is
13 taking the list. But thank you again, Mrs. Klein.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Mrs. Klein, I'm
15 still recovering from the emotional impact of your
16 words; I can only imagine the strength it took to
17 stand up and deliver that message and to relive some
18 of the horrors. [background comment] By all means.
19 [background comments]

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Can we turn up
21 the volume? Are you able to hear, Mrs. Klein?

22 SONIA KLEIN: Not really.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay.

24 [background comments]

25 SONIA KLEIN: I can try. Come to me.

2 [background comments]

3 SONIA KLEIN: I can't hear you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Can I stand next
5 to you then? How 'bout we do this like this; can you
6 hear me okay? Wonderful. [background comment] Mrs.
7 Klein, I want you to know how affected I was by your
8 words; I know that it was not easy to stand up and
9 share that message with us; I can only imagine the
10 pain that you're reliving, but you gave us a
11 challenge that affected me and I think everyone in
12 this room, that we too have to commit to telling the
13 stories of the 6 million and the many millions who
14 survived but have been lost in the decades since and
15 we owe it to you who have displayed such heroism and
16 given us such an example to make sure that you and
17 all of those in your generation here in New York City
18 can live in dignity and we're frankly not doing
19 enough to ensure that now, but I want you to know
20 that this City Council is deeply committed to that
21 and we're grateful for your heroism in speaking out
22 today. [background comment] Sure. Thank you.

23 SONIA KLEIN: I wanna thank the City
24 Council Members for having me here; it means a lot to
25 me because the more people I can tell what I went

2 through, I can't say the happier I am, but I feel
3 good about it, because I can't spread the word
4 enough. I also wanna thank Selfhelp for being here
5 for us and we appreciate everything they do for us
6 and although most of us are alone, we don't feel
7 alone knowing that Selfhelp is here to help us with
8 dignity and respect and compassion. Thank you,
9 Selfhelp.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
11 much. Mrs. Klein, we have a few more Council Members
12 who would like to [background comment] speak... wait,
13 we have to... we're gonna vote. Council Member
14 Rosenthal, we're gonna vote [background comments].

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: I have a deep
16 voice; I think she will hear me. [background
17 comments] Mrs. Klein, can you hear me? [crosstalk]

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Wait, wait,
19 wait, wait, wait. Helen. Helen, we're gonna vote..
20 [interpose]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Yeah, I think..
22 [background comment] oh...

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah, we're
24 voting right now. So I just want to [background
25 comment]... we're gonna vote; members of the Committee

2 have to go; we're gonna take a very quick vote and
3 then we're gonna continue with some statements. So
4 Billy's gonna call the roll on the two resolutions
5 right now for the members of the Committee. Thank
6 you, Billy.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
8 Committee Clerk, roll call vote, Committee on
9 Cultural Affairs. Chair Van Bramer.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I vote aye.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK: Cumbo.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I vote aye and I
13 wanna thank you for opening the vote early for me to
14 leave; I have a five-alarm fire in my district with a
15 fatality already. I thank you so much for your
16 testimony today; it was really very heartfelt and
17 very inspiring and will help me in other things that
18 I'm doing as I proceed as a Council Member. Thank
19 you.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Crowley.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you to the
22 Chairman for having the hearing; I vote aye on both
23 of these resolutions; I'd also like to add my name to
24 both of these resolutions. I wanna thank Miss Sonia
25 Klein for being here today and for not being silent;

2 for sharing your survivor story; it's so important
3 that our city remember the millions of people that
4 were killed in the Holocaust and by us doing this as
5 a city we're going to remember and we're going to
6 make sure that nobody forgets. And I wanna thank
7 Council Member Jumaane Williams for your resolution;
8 I couldn't think of a better path. You know, as we
9 understand the hate we also understand the love of a
10 person like Martin Luther King and how important it
11 is for communities to give back, so these are two
12 good resolutions today [background comment] and I
13 vote aye. Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Ferreras.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: I vote aye.

16 Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Koo.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I vote aye and I
19 also wanna, like to put my name as a sponsor for both
20 bills [sic].

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Rosenthal.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Aye on both.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 6 in the
24 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,
25 both items have been adopted.

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
3 much to all the members of the Committee; now we have
4 three additional Council Members who would like to
5 speak with Mrs. Klein. Chaim Deutsch, you are up
6 first; I think if you would like to go to Mrs. Klein,
7 that seems appropriate.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Yeah, thank you
9 very much, Chair. First I want -- this is directed
10 to Mrs. Klein -- you're a very cute lady; I wanna
11 know if I can take you home. [laughter, background
12 comment]. Okay, she said yes. I just wanna say I
13 spoke outside of the press conference and as soon as
14 we were done at the press conference I walked over to
15 Mrs. Sonia Klein and I asked her, "Could I take a
16 photo with you?" And she looked at me; she said,
17 "Sure." So I said, "My better side is my left side;
18 do you mind if I stand to your left?" So I asked her
19 permission, I said, "Which side is your better side?"
20 And the truth is is that she told me, Mrs. Klein told
21 me that "Both my sides are the good side," and you
22 know, the things that you went through, the
23 atrocities in Auschwitz and 10 years, 10 years is a
24 long time and it's really a long time to be in
25 Auschwitz in the concentration camps; I know -- my

1 father was an Auschwitz-Birkenau and right before the
2 liberation he was transferred to Mauthausen and
3 that's where he was liberated, and my father was in
4 the concentration camps for three years and three
5 years was considered a long, long time; one day, one
6 hour, one minute; one second was considered a long
7 time, but 10 years, that is something that is unheard
8 of; I have never heard someone that's been there for
9 such a long time that I have met personally. So you
10 know, by the comment I made before, when you told me
11 that both sides are your good side, and this is why
12 we need to appreciate life; when we look at our
13 fellow neighbors, when we look at our fellow
14 acquaintances we have to look at the positive side;
15 not the negative side; we need to appreciate life and
16 we need to pass this on to our children, our
17 grandchildren and future generations that here in
18 America, here in New York City we have freedom; we're
19 able to practice our religion and you know this is
20 something that is very important for all of us to
21 learn, no matter what race; ethnic background you are
22 from, we are all here for one thing, for peace.
23 Thank you very much for being here, Mrs. Klein.

24
25 SONIA KLEIN: Thank you for having me.

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
3 much, Council Member Deutsch. Now we have Council
4 Member Williams, who would like to say a few words,
5 followed by Council Member... [background comment] and
6 then we will continue on with our hearing.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. Are
8 you able to hear me over there? [background
9 comments] It's better over there? It's mostly a
10 comment. [background comment] Thank you. More of a
11 comment -- one, I was listening and the human ability
12 for atrocity is amazing, so when you go back to the
13 genocide of Native Americans; when you go to the
14 African Holocaust and the slavery; when you go to
15 Germany and the Jewish Holocaust; when you think
16 about what happened in France and 2,000 people killed
17 in Nigeria, there is an amazing ability for human
18 atrocity, but within that there's always some lights
19 and beacons and stories that help the human spirit
20 move through that. So one, I wanted to thank Council
21 Member Levine for putting forward this resolution to
22 help celebrate some of that and for your testimony to
23 humanize it and make sure that we remember in those
24 atrocities there are real human beings that are
25 suffering and that the human spirit is stronger than

2 the atrocity, so thank you so much for sharing what
3 you shared today and we can't forget any of those
4 atrocities that have occurred in humankind and try to
5 prevent them all from happening again. Thank you so
6 much.

7 [background comment]

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So now I realize
9 I'm not sure you heard anything I said before, so I
10 just wanna say... [interpose]

11 SONIA KLEIN: I did.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Oh thank you,
13 you did hear that. Thank you so much; I think no
14 other Council Members have questions or comments for
15 this portion, but I know that Council Member
16 Rosenthal and all of us were deeply moved by your
17 experience; we love you, we thank you and we remember
18 with you that it never happens again. So thank you
19 again for being here today and making this the very,
20 very special hearing that we knew it would be, but
21 with your presence and your testimony it is so much
22 better than we could have ever imagined, so thank you
23 so much.

24 SONIA KLEIN: Thank you. And thank you.
25 Anyone has a question I will answer it.

2 [background comment]

3 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Do any Council
4 Members have questions for Mrs. Klein? If there are
5 no questions, then I think you're free to take your
6 seat... [interpose, background comment] yes. Thank you
7 so much.

8 SONIA KLEIN: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I wanna
10 recognize that we have been joined by Council Member
11 Cornegy from Brooklyn and Council Member Miller from
12 Queens and as everybody knows, we are hearing two
13 incredibly important resolutions today; we're gonna
14 alternate and go back and forth on the resolutions.
15 So we've heard from Mrs. Klein and are grateful for
16 that and now to speak on the resolution on Peace
17 Week, I wanted to ask Erica Ford to join us here to
18 kick off that portion of this hearing with testimony
19 on the Peace Week resolution and then we will
20 alternate panels; there are one or two for each of
21 the resolutions as we go forward. So thank you,
22 Erica Ford for everything you have done and as
23 someone from Queens, and I know Council Member Miller
24 feels this very strongly, we're very proud and
25 grateful for all your work. So Council Member

2 Cornegy, who also has a very, very deep and abiding
3 Queens connection, but to be fair, he represents
4 Brooklyn District now, but we are all grateful for
5 your work and again, to Council Member Williams for
6 bringing this to our attention. So with that we're
7 gonna ask Miss Erica Ford to begin her testimony.

8 ERICA FORD: Thank you. I sit here with
9 the co-founder of LIFE Camp, John Bryant and we are
10 very humble and grateful for you all to bring this to
11 the City Council to make it a resolution; we say a
12 sincere thanks to each and every one of you.

13 Peace Week began in 2010 because of the
14 rise of violence among black and Latino youth in New
15 York City and particularly because of the killings of
16 two young ladies in East New York, and when we saw
17 these young ladies shot down in the street, we said
18 that we had to do something to change the tide of
19 what was happening amongst young people and I called
20 on my brother organization, Man Up in Brooklyn and we
21 said that we would do Peace Week because if we could
22 have peace for one week, then we could have it for
23 two weeks and we could have it for a month and then
24 we can have it for a year and then it could be part
25 of our lifestyle and that we did, both in East New

2 York and in South Jamaica, Queens; for that first
3 year there was no violence in both of our target
4 areas, and as we began to grow in each year, so did
5 the lack of violence in those targeted areas and
6 throughout New York City. Through Peace Week and our
7 Peace Week celebrations we were able to talk to then
8 the former Speaker of the Council, Christine Quinn
9 and make a plea for the task force to be formed and
10 it was at a Peace Week event and came out of Peace
11 Week that we formed the task force and then from our
12 work continuing to build and plan the Crisis
13 Management System, which was, as Jumaane just talked
14 about, both adopted and funded by the City Council,
15 so we appreciate your support on our continual
16 journey through our Peace Week; we partnered with
17 people like Russell Simmons, who brought us the
18 Peacekeepers organization, which is hundreds of men
19 joined the Peacekeepers throughout New York City, did
20 a lot of work in Coney Island at the Liberation
21 Diploma Plus High School, where we first brought the
22 idea of Urban Yogis to New York City and now we have
23 five Urban Yogis who came from the New York City
24 Housing Department who were teaching yoga in the
25 middle of the New York City housing developments and

2 from that are now teaching in the New York City
3 public school system, yoga and meditation as an
4 alternative for young people to reduce violence. So
5 with Peace Week we've done it in many different
6 forms, we've brought together many different people
7 from many different walks of life to say this is our
8 city and that peace can be the form of lifestyle that
9 we live. As we look around New York City right now
10 with the tension and the rise in the killings from
11 various different walks of life, we say that it is no
12 better time for Peace Week to become an institution
13 inside of the calendar of New York City and we thank
14 you for that and we look forward to continuing to
15 work together to make, as Deepak charged us, along
16 with the First Lady, New York the most peaceful city
17 in the United States; notwithstanding, Cornegy,
18 Brooklyn being the lead -- okay, we give it to you,
19 right -- but we definitely thank you very much.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And Mr. Bryant,
21 thank you for joining us as well, all the way from
22 St. Albans, New York, which we love; [background
23 comment] would you like to speak as well?

24 [background comments]

2 JOHN BRYANT: I just wanted to say how
3 important Peace Week is and that peace needs to be a
4 lifestyle and how much work we have done and how much
5 work needs to be done with the youth of the City and
6 it's just very important to make this go through so
7 peace will be a lifestyle and have Peace Week. Thank
8 you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
10 much, both of you and Erica, in particular I've known
11 and watched your work for many, many years, so it's
12 an honor and a privilege to pass this resolution and
13 I know you're very proud. Council Member Daneek
14 Miller would like to say a few words.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you, Mr.
16 Chair and thank you for your leadership on this
17 resolution, it is really important and obviously you
18 and Long Island City and Queensbridge area have also
19 benefited much from the work that has been done by
20 LIFE Camp and the other organizations involved in
21 this. And I wanna personally thank Erica for
22 including me in Peace Week and in the process, even
23 long before I sat here in the Council she was
24 reaching out and making sure that all the leadership
25 in all the communities really were a part of this and

2 I also would like to thank you for your persistence
3 and your consistency. I just wanna... a quick
4 antidote; a few months back now that -- or a month
5 back, when the Garner decision, or lack thereof came
6 in and we were kinda riding around the neighborhood
7 and... to make sure that everything was okay and we
8 knew that it would be okay, because of the work that
9 LIFE Camp and the other organizations and the others
10 involved were putting in, that we were really staying
11 ahead of the curve and that we were really being
12 supportive of our young people, particularly those
13 that were at youth [sic], so we rode around the
14 district for... all corners of the district and it was
15 just a normal night and that was because of the work
16 that you have done, that the organization had done
17 and I wanna thank you publicly for that and I wanna
18 say that that was pretty much throughout the City,
19 because with LIFE Camp and Man Up and some of the
20 other organizations throughout the City really being
21 on the ground and doing that is a testament to the
22 commitment of the Council and commitment of people
23 working together. So again, I just wanna say that
24 I'm honored to be a part of this and you know
25 sometimes it's difficult, it's difficult and folks

2 know that when tragedy occurs, when you don't wanna
3 be there, that you, you know, that LIFE Camp, Man Up
4 and organizations are there for out young people, for
5 families who are victims of violence consistently and
6 we appreciate that. I even sometimes appreciate the
7 late night, 12:00, 1:00; 2:00 phone calls that I get,
8 just knowing that I am a part of a change and so for
9 that I am grateful and I look forward to us
10 continuing to work together; obviously I accept the
11 challenge by my brethren and I know that Southeast
12 Queens is going to continue to be the safest district
13 in the City, but we'll have collectively the safest
14 city in American because of the work that you've done
15 and I really appreciate again the leadership that the
16 Council has taken on this issue, because what makes
17 us great and what makes us successful; when you
18 champion issues that aren't yours, when peace is
19 about Holocaust victims and the same time is about
20 young black, brown persons of color that are being
21 victimized as well; because of that we're going to
22 succeed. So I just thank you for what you do.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
24 much. Council Member Cornegy.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: I too would like
3 to just say thank you for your life's work; I think
4 that what you do is a testament to the fact that we
5 don't have to wait for somebody to come save us, that
6 we can actually save ourselves; I think it's that
7 model and that example that I'm so inspired by. We
8 as a Council fund many programs, some that are
9 sponsored by the individuals that it
10 disproportionately affects and some not and every
11 time I see somebody who's given their life; like, I
12 don't know if everybody knows that this literally is
13 your life. I had a Council Member ask me what I
14 thought about Erica Ford and I kinda laughed, 'cause
15 I said I don't know anybody whose commitment to what
16 they do is as longstanding as yours and I really
17 appreciate that, so with pride I gave my endorsement
18 to that particular Council Member for whatever they
19 wanted to do with you and I wasn't even sure what it
20 was about. But I can truly say that knowing you for
21 so long and having grown up with you, I understand
22 your commitment. Like so even when some of us
23 weren't doing this and we were doing something else,
24 you were doing exactly this. So I believe that
25 you're a testament to the fact, like I said, that we

2 don't have to wait for somebody to come save us; that
3 we can actually save ourselves and it's that I
4 appreciate most about your work.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Council Member
6 Rosenthal.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Well those are
8 two very good validators. So while I'm less familiar
9 with the work that you do, I was actually just
10 speaking with Council Member Treyger about the work
11 you're doing and Man Up is doing in Coney Island
12 around the anti-gun violence work and so I'm chair of
13 the Contracts Committee and one of the things that we
14 were just talking about was how some of the groups
15 that are doing this work are not getting paid because
16 the contracts aren't being processed and it's one of
17 the things that I'm working on -- I'm a new Council
18 Member; one of the things that I'm working on this
19 year, so I would love to follow up with your office
20 in trying to make that happen more quickly. The Fund
21 for the City of New York does give loans, no
22 interest, no fee loans, so I'd be happy to work with
23 you on trying to get you the money that you deserve
24 and then secondly, of course I would put in a pitch
25 for coming to my district where we certainly could

2 use yoga, meditation and good solid leadership on
3 this issue; we have two housing projects that are at
4 war with each other for no good reason whatsoever and
5 I just really appreciate the work that you do. Thank
6 you.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

8 Council Member Treyger.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you and I
10 thank you for your work and I certainly thank my
11 colleagues, Council Member Jumaane Williams for
12 pushing forward this excellent concept and excellent
13 resolution and Chair Van Bramer for hearing this,
14 allowing this for a vote today and I like the
15 commitment from my colleague, the Chair of the
16 Contracts Committee, because this is certainly an
17 issue and we -- for many years I think that you have
18 crystallized this point for us; for many years we've
19 had simply a reactionary approach to addressing
20 public safety and we go in cycles and I think that
21 the work of the Cure Violence providers, the people
22 that like to build a sense of community; I think that
23 that is a proactive approach, you know where someone
24 getting, you know handcuffed should be a last resort;
25 how can we reach the most at-risk individuals and get

1 them the help and intervention services which they
2 need, because if we don't fundamentally address the
3 ingredients that leads to incidents, we're not really
4 solving the problem and not really addressing the
5 crisis. I know this has been work that has been
6 really championed by many of my colleagues here, too
7 many to -- I don't wanna leave out any names, but I
8 know Councilmen Williams, Cornegy and so many others
9 have been -- Miller, forgive me; again, I get into
10 trouble when I mention names, but many people here
11 have been championing these issues and I believe in
12 this work, but we have to make sure that groups are
13 getting funded, we have to make sure that paperwork
14 is getting processed and people are on the ground,
15 because as we speak we still have violence in our
16 communities, we've had some shootings in Coney Island
17 just yesterday and we need this work, we need a
18 response, we need proactive activities. I'd also
19 ask, as part of Peace Week, we share some suggested
20 activities of what we can do; we could have -- it
21 could be a concert, it could be -- you know, any type
22 of activities that you could think of, please share,
23 share best practices and ideas, I'd appreciate it,
24 but I thank you and all the organizations for the
25

2 selfless and real brave work that you do day in and
3 day out. Thank you very much.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Council Member
5 Williams to wrap up this panel before we move on to a
6 second panel.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr.
8 Chair. And first I'd like to add my name to the
9 Preconsidered reso that Council Member Levine has and
10 I know that Council Members Cornegy and Miller were
11 supposed to be on this reso, so they may after want
12 to add their name as well.

13 I said most of what I had to say at the
14 beginning, but I just wanna say thank you again for
15 your life's work that you're doing and I heard --
16 there's a Council Member, I forgot where she's from,
17 but I've tried to live by it since, where she said
18 you don't have to move to another city to live in a
19 better one, and I think you have kind of personified
20 that, as well as some of the key you have mentioned
21 and thank you for helping our city be a better one
22 and hopefully we can support you as much as we can
23 moving forward. And I did wanna give a special shout
24 out to Council Member Treyger, who's highlighted the
25 need for the gun violence work in Coney Island in a

2 way that no one has in the past, so I thank you all
3 and thank you to all of my colleagues.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And I just wanna
5 conclude by thanking you as well; you make the City
6 proud, you make Queens especially proud, so much so
7 that Council Member Cornegy's talking about Queens
8 all the time; used to be all about Brooklyn, now it's
9 all about Queens. And also thank you for the
10 brightest orange shirts I've ever seen in my life, so
11 thank you for those as well. But truly, you're both
12 doing amazing work saving lives and making our city
13 the safest in the world, so thank you so much.

14 [applause]

15 And now we're going to return back to the
16 very important resolution on the liberation of
17 Auschwitz and hear from a panel of four -- Meredith
18 Rose Burak from The Survivor Initiative; Rachel
19 Cohen, also of The Survivor Initiative; Dina Muskin
20 Goldberg from the Simon Wiesenthal Center and...
21 [background comments] and Elihu Kover from Selfhelp
22 Community Services. [background comments] We are
23 actually going to have Hindy Poupko from the Jewish
24 Community Relations Council round out this panel.

2 I wanna thank all of you for being here
3 for this very important resolution and we can start
4 with you... how 'bout we start all the way to my right
5 -- we'll start with Meredith -- absolutely; thank you
6 so much.

7 MEREDITH ROSE BURAK: Good morning and
8 thank you very much, Chairperson James Van Bramer and
9 Council Member Mark Levine; members of the Cultural
10 Affairs Committee for the opportunity to testify
11 before you today.

12 My name is Meredith Rose Burak and I have
13 spent much of the last 11 years of my life advocating
14 on behalf of the victims of genocide. In the
15 interest of time I'll skip to why I'm here today.

16 While I work in the private sector, I'm
17 here today as Chair of Public Partnerships for The
18 Survivor Initiative. The Survivor Initiative is a
19 national volunteer-led effort to raise awareness and
20 funds for the tens of thousands of Holocaust
21 survivors living at or below the Federal Poverty
22 Line. I'm honored to be here with you in support of
23 this profoundly important resolution and I'm deeply
24 grateful to you.

2 The Survivor Initiative was founded in
3 the summer of 2012 by a small group of volunteers who
4 were shocked to learn that tens of thousands of
5 Holocaust survivors were living below the National
6 Poverty Line. As chair of Public Partnerships, I am
7 working with leaders, non-Jewish and Jewish, from all
8 levels of government to be the voice for these
9 voiceless citizens who through no fault of their own
10 have experienced unspeakable horror.

11 I am joined today by a Survivor
12 Initiative Co-Founder, Rachel Cohen Gerrol, who will
13 testify also today about our work in Washington, D.C.
14 and with the White House. Also joining us as New
15 York City Co-Chairs Melissa Jane Kronfeld and Allie
16 Pyke.

17 Our goal is to build the public and
18 private partnerships necessary to ensure that these
19 survivors spend their remaining years in the comfort
20 and dignity they deserve. With this resolution put
21 forward by Speaker Mark-Viverito and Council Member
22 Mark Levine, New York City will recognize on January
23 27, 2015 the 70th anniversary of the liberation of
24 Auschwitz-Birkenau. Our language is too limited to
25 describe the brutality unprecedented in human history

2 that happened in that place. The only word best
3 suited to call this parallel universe is Auschwitz.
4 Many who survived the Holocaust rightfully believe
5 that anti-Semitism would have perished with the
6 victims, but it survived and is flourishing at once
7 again an alarming rate.

8 According to the first ever comprehensive
9 survey of anti-Semitism around the world, there is an
10 estimated 1.09 billion people with anti-Jewish
11 sentiment across the globe; that means there are 135
12 anti-Semites per Jewish person. The results of the
13 study did not consider those with a simple hateful
14 attitude towards Israel; the results focused on those
15 with a clear cut hatred of Jews; most of them
16 Holocaust deniers. This resolution is one of the
17 many ways our representatives ensure that never again
18 is not just a slogan but a reality.

19 New York City is the axis on which the
20 world moves; not only do we have to act rhetorically
21 as the shining light of the nations, we must do as
22 much as we can with the resources we have to protect
23 our fundamental belief in human rights, freedom of
24 speech and freedom of one's own political and
25 religious views. As President Barack Obama said in

1 his State of the Union Address last night, "we do
2 these things not only because they're right, but
3 because they make us safer." On January 27th we
4 demonstrate our unwavering belief in human rights by
5 honoring both the dead and the living; 70 years after
6 the liberation of Auschwitz tens of thousands of
7 survivors continue to face every day alone, fearful
8 and hungry. Today there are 30,000 Holocaust
9 survivors living in New York City living at or below
10 the Federal Poverty Line; of the roughly 60-70,000
11 Holocaust survivors living in this city, roughly half
12 of them are living on less than \$11,000 a year. On a
13 daily basis these survivors are forced to decide
14 whether to pay their rent, buy food, fill a
15 prescription or pay for transportation to a doctor's
16 appointment. With an average age of 83, I can only
17 imagine how challenging every day life is for these
18 citizens and their needs are more complicated with
19 age.
20

21 As a city and as a nation we have a
22 responsibility to protect those most vulnerable among
23 us and these survivors, after their incarceration,
24 after their displacement, after experiencing
25 unspeakable horror, surely meet that definition.

1
2 Never again must be an aspiration that the
3 representatives of this country embrace and make
4 their own. We don't have much time to provide the
5 necessary basic services for these aging survivors
6 and we need leaders from both the public and private
7 sectors working together to provide the resources
8 necessary.

9 In closing I would like to make a
10 proposal to those in this room and the City of New
11 York. On January 5th, 2015 I hosted a legislative
12 briefing led by Council Member Mark Levine,
13 Congressman Joe Crowley and Council Member Rafael
14 Espinal, which included 12 City Council Members; at
15 that briefing Council Member David Greenfield gave
16 us, the Survivor Initiative, a challenge; to see how
17 much money we could raise for these survivors in the
18 private sector. I would like to propose that the
19 City of New York match dollar for dollar what we
20 raise by Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day on
21 April 15th for this vulnerable population.

22 Thank you, Council Member Mark Levine,
23 Chairperson James Van Bramer and members of the
24 Committee for allowing me this great opportunity to
25 provide this testimony on behalf of the 30,000

2 Holocaust survivors who so desperately need your
3 help. Thank you for your leadership and the
4 critically important work you do on behalf of all New
5 Yorkers.

6 [background comments]

7 RACHEL COHEN GERROL: My name is Rachel
8 Cohen Gerrol and two-and-a-half years ago I founded
9 the Survivor Initiative. Today we gather to talk
10 about the 70th anniversary of the liberation of
11 Auschwitz and I'm here with two simple words -- thank
12 you. I wish I could say them in every language
13 spoken by the people who wore the Jewish star and who
14 stood in those camps, but I don't know those words,
15 so I'll ask you to join me in 70 seconds of silence
16 for the 70 years, and in those seconds let all of
17 their thank yous in all of their languages come into
18 your minds and in your hearts for what you're doing
19 today.

20 [silent pause]

21 Seventy seconds can feel so long, but 70
22 years makes us feel even longer. It has been so long
23 but it was less than a 100 years ago; it has been so
24 long but there are people today who still are being
25

2 attacked by anti-Semitism; 70 years maybe isn't as
3 long as the 70 seconds might have felt.

4 I've worked with the White House to help
5 appoint the first-ever U.S. Special Envoy for
6 Holocaust services and to push for \$2.5 million at
7 the end of last year to get put into the Federal
8 Budget, but no city like New York has stood up the
9 way you are today and said we will remember and we
10 will protect and we will stand up for the rights of
11 survivors here so they can live their last years with
12 dignity and with respect that they deserve and as I
13 leave New York today to go back to Washington, every
14 one I meet there and on the way I will tell of the
15 leadership of the great people of New York who stood
16 up for these resilient survivors like the beautiful
17 Mrs. Klein who made everyone come to her; she can
18 take over this room in a heartbeat and that's the
19 same spirit of New Yorkers who will stand up for
20 people, come close to them so they can hear our words
21 of support and I thank all of you, each and every one
22 of you, because yesterday you might not have known of
23 this issue or have thought about this cause, but
24 today you are dedicating 70 seconds and your morning

2 and I promise you, everyone you meet will know of the
3 good deeds you did and the time you took. Thank you.

4 DINA MUSKIN GOLDBERG: Hi, I'm Dina
5 Muskin Goldberg and it's a true honor and pleasure to
6 be here today representing the Simon Wiesenthal
7 Center.

8 Not long after the Holocaust ended, Simon
9 Wiesenthal said, "If all of us forgot, the same thing
10 might happen again in 20 or 50 or a 100 years."

11 Seventy years after the liberation of Auschwitz-
12 Birkenau sadly anti-Semitism and the persecution of
13 innocent people of all religious and ethnic
14 backgrounds across the globe is back with a vengeance
15 and at an all-time high. Just a week-and-a-half ago
16 we witnessed the murder of four innocent Jews in a
17 kosher supermarket in Paris and two days prior to
18 that 12 innocent journalists and cartoonists at
19 Charlie Hebdo were killed simply because they
20 represented free speech. In Nigeria alone, Boko
21 Haram continues to commit crimes against humanity by
22 murdering thousands of innocent people including
23 women and children. Have we forgotten what happened
24 70 years ago? When one can ask a college student
25 what Auschwitz or Majdanek were and educated American

2 students cannot respond, the question begs our
3 attention.

4 Today we applaud the New York City
5 Council and in particular our dear friends, Council
6 Member Levine and Chairman Van Bramer for making sure
7 that we all pause in the middle of our hectic lives
8 to take a moment and commemorate the 70th anniversary
9 of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau to make sure
10 that 70 years later we don't forget how unchecked
11 hatred and intolerance led to the extermination of 6
12 million Jews and a total of 11 million innocent
13 people to ensure that by remembering, the great City
14 of New York will not stand witness to such tragedies
15 repeating themselves in the future.

16 Since the end of the war two words have
17 been present on the lips of so many -- never again.
18 Seventy years later I ask that we all take a moment
19 before the next time we utter these words and make a
20 conscious decision that when we way never again we
21 promise to uphold the true meaning of these words.
22 May the memory of those who were murdered rest in
23 peace knowing that we are doing everything in our
24 power to remember and to make this world a better
25 world than the one they left behind. Thank you.

2 ELIHU KOVER: Honored members of City
3 Council, thank you for enabling us to be present here
4 at this opportunity for the pronouncement of this
5 really historic and meaningful resolution
6 commemorating the liberation of the Auschwitz-
7 Birkenau camps.

8 My name's Elihu Kover; I work at Selfhelp
9 Community Services, an organization founded in 1936
10 and that has dedicated itself to providing services
11 to victims of Nazi persecution and survivors of the
12 Holocaust. We still continue to fulfill this pledge
13 more than 75 years later, serving last year over
14 5,200 survivors in New York City; that's 5,200 out of
15 approximately 60,000 that still live in New York, so
16 there are still many survivors who need services; who
17 will age into the need for services.

18 I'd like to take just a couple of minutes
19 at this moment to just tell you a little bit about
20 aging Holocaust survivors and what they need.

21 Holocaust survivors, as we know, are
22 growing older and frailer; the 20-year-old who
23 survived Auschwitz is now 90; she may be coping with
24 the loss of a spouse, have no family that lives close
25 by. In addition to the myriad of problems that are

1 associated with so-called normal aging, many
2 survivors have numerous physical and psychological
3 problems that are directly attributable to what took
4 place during the Holocaust. Prolonged periods of
5 starvation, exposure to severe weather conditions
6 with inadequate clothing, experiencing and witnessing
7 unspeakable atrocities take a severe toll on both
8 body and mind and many of these problems only surface
9 in old age because they buried them, they hid those
10 problems during their working years when they
11 struggled to make a new life for themselves and
12 became productive citizens of this city. Further
13 exacerbating this situation, more than 50 percent of
14 the survivors living in New York City can be
15 classified as very poor or near poor under Federal
16 guidelines.

18 Most people are pretty much amazed to
19 hear that there's still 110,000 survivors in the
20 United States, with 60,000 in New York City, but
21 what's more interesting is that of the 5,200 clients
22 that we served last year, over 700 were new, new
23 clients we had never known before. There's a trend
24 that we see every year for the last five years; as
25 survivors decline, as the number of survivors

2 diminishes, there are still people who are in need of
3 care coming to us for service, so this issue will not
4 go away in the next year or two years or three years,
5 but survivors will be amongst us and in need of care
6 for the next 5 or 10 years or even longer. So many
7 of us in New York City, and I represent a large
8 organization serving survivors; there's a network of
9 organizations throughout the City that serve
10 survivors as well; we receive funding from the Claims
11 Conference, we receive funding from UJA Federation of
12 New York, all of which serve to support the service
13 network for survivors, but despite all of the funding
14 that we receive, it's not enough; the need exceeds
15 the capacity of the organizations currently.

16 So what I wanna leave you with at today's
17 historic occasion is that at the same time that we
18 honor survivors that we remember them, that we
19 commemorate their liberation from the concentration
20 camps; we almost also pledge to support them in the
21 last years of their lives. The overarching theme is
22 to enable survivors to remain at home in their
23 communities with dignity, comfort, security and an
24 improved quality of life; it's what they so rightly
25 deserve. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. I
3 believe Council Member Levine needs to say something...
4 [crosstalk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: I apologize; I
6 have to vote across the street in the next two
7 minutes. I just wanna thank the five of you for
8 setting an example for New Yorkers and living out the
9 ideals we've been talking about all morning of giving
10 voice to those who can no longer speak to the
11 atrocities they witnessed and for holding us
12 accountable as a city and as a nation to serve and
13 honor those who are still with us. Thank you very
14 much; I apologize again for leaving. Thank you.

15 HINDY POUPKO: Thank you. I'll be very...
16 [interpose]

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And Council
18 Member Williams also was called away to the vote
19 across the street. I also just wanna, before you...
20 [crosstalk]

21 HINDY POUPKO: Sure.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ask if -- is it
23 Rena Resnick or -- So I wanted to ask you to come up
24 and join this panel; you would be the last speaker on
25 this resolution, I believe, [background comment] so I

2 don't wanna overlook the Met Council on Jewish
3 Poverty as part of this panel and this process, so
4 sorry about that, Ms. Resnick, but I caught it.

5 HINDY POUPKO: Thank you. My name is
6 Hindy Poupko; I'm the Managing Director of the Jewish
7 Community Relations Council of New York. I'll be
8 very brief because my colleagues were so eloquent
9 this morning; there's no need to repeat what has
10 already been said.

11 I just wanna point out that 70 years
12 means that the Holocaust is transitioning from memory
13 to history and when this transition happens the
14 imperative is that much greater for all of us to do
15 exactly what we're doing here today. A lot of
16 questions are posed about the Holocaust; namely, how
17 could this possibly have happened? But the question
18 that is asked less often is how could these people
19 who have gone through this moved on to lead the lives
20 that they lived, like Sonia who we saw today? And
21 when you think about what the survivors went on to
22 accomplish, it boggles the mind and I think the
23 imperative therefore to take care of them and to make
24 sure that they live their lives in dignity, their
25 last years in dignity is that much greater. And I'll

2 end by saying that I've never been prouder to call
3 myself a New Yorker than I am today and the fact that
4 our city is taking a stand and really will be a
5 national example for what it means to take care of
6 this population; it so heartwarming and I just wanna
7 thank you and Councilman Levine for all your
8 leadership in this effort.

9 RENE RESNICK: Good afternoon. My name
10 is Rena Resnick and I'm the Public Affairs Manager at
11 Met Council on Jewish Poverty. On behalf of the
12 entire staff at Met Council, I thank you Chair Van
13 Bramer and the other Council Members on the Committee
14 on Cultural Affairs for inviting us to join you in
15 commemorating the 70th anniversary of the liberation
16 of Auschwitz-Birkenau. We wholeheartedly support the
17 Preconsidered resolution today.

18 As you know, for more than four decades
19 Met Council has supported and championed families,
20 seniors and adults living in poverty and near
21 poverty. As we gather to commemorate this solemn
22 event we also must remember that those who were
23 liberated from Auschwitz-Birkenau and in deed all
24 those who survived the Holocaust to this day still
25 need our help. As survivors age they require

2 additional care and culturally sensitive attention.

3 For many of our clients the loss of their spouse or
4 the transition into a nursing home can be extremely
5 traumatic and an unwelcomed reminder of the loss and
6 institutionalization during the Holocaust.

7 Across our city Met Council is one of the
8 leading social service providers in the community and
9 so the responsibility and indeed the honor of caring
10 for Holocaust survivors falls to us. I'm proud to
11 share that each and every day the staff at Met
12 Council meets this challenge. In addition, our staff
13 supports and advises a network of caseworkers across
14 the City so that they too can best serve the most
15 vulnerable among us. In the past year we served more
16 than 2,000 survivors and distributed more than
17 \$400,000 in emergency financial assistance to address
18 their basic needs and keep them out of crisis.

19 Through the work of our dedicated Holocaust social
20 workers and our social service case management staff
21 and our local JCC network we address the distinct
22 challenges of Holocaust survivors in a culturally
23 competent atmosphere of respect and dignity. With
24 critical support from the New York City Council we
25 help clients pay for medical, dental and orthopedic

2 needs, keep clients' heat on in the winter by helping
3 pay utility bills and other basic necessities,
4 increase nutrition and decrease isolation through our
5 home-delivered meals program, enable clients to age-
6 in-place safely by providing free home repairs
7 through Project Metro Repair, a program fully funded
8 by the City Council. The need continues to grow as
9 survivors age and more services are needed.

10 According to UJA-Federation of New York, there are
11 more than 73,000 Holocaust survivors in the New York
12 area and more than half of them live at or below the
13 poverty level.

14 In conclusion, Met Council cannot
15 continue providing critical social services to
16 thousands of needy New Yorkers without the vital
17 partnership of the New York City Council; we deeply
18 value your leadership and partnership and look
19 forward to working together to help the needy
20 throughout the New York area. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
22 much. I wanna thank all of you for the work that you
23 do every day. Meredith, welcome back and thank you
24 for all the great work that you're doing in your
25 current capacity and I just wanna say thank you again

2 to everyone; I mentioned this morning at the press
3 conference I feel very privileged to be traveling to
4 Israel in about a month time and in light of
5 everything that's happened so recently in Paris and
6 other places in the world, the mission is as
7 important as ever, if not more so. So I too am very
8 proud of the City of New York and of this City
9 Council for taking this on and as you saw, we've
10 already passed the resolution in the Committee, but
11 tomorrow the full City Council will vote and approve
12 this very important resolution, so thank you and in
13 Mrs. Klein's honor, who did command the room, I think
14 it's fair to say while she was here, and also all
15 those who couldn't be here today; we will do this
16 very important resolution. So thank you all very,
17 very much.

18 And I believe we may have some folks
19 still left in the room to speak on Peace Week; this
20 will be the last panel of the afternoon. Is Amy
21 Ellenbogen still with us, from the Center for Court
22 Innovation, a terrific organization I might add. You
23 can come right up; James Dobbins; is James Dobbins in
24 the room? And is it Venalia [sp?] Colverson [sp?],
25 from LIFE Camp? Sorry about that; we should have

2 called you up earlier with Erica. And are there any
3 other speakers? I thought so. [background comment]
4 We have a couple other speakers? [background
5 comments] Okay. [background comment] Yeah, I think
6 we may need you to fill out one of the witness slips,
7 but come up and have a seat there and -- I mean I
8 know you, but it's a formality, as you know. So all
9 the folks who are gonna speak on this panel, feel
10 free to come up and grab a seat and then we'll do the
11 formality of the slips as well, but feel free to give
12 the Sergeant at Arms your testimony and I wanna thank
13 you all for waiting and being patient. And why don't
14 we start with Amy, who I called first and then those
15 who still need to fill out the forms, you can do so
16 at your leisure, but we'll start with Amy and then
17 you decide amongst yourselves who goes next. And
18 we've been joined by Council Member Andy King from
19 the Bronx, and if you would give us one second, we're
20 gonna allow Council Member King to vote on these two
21 resolutions; Billy Martin is here to call the vote.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member King.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Aye.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK: Vote now currently
25 stands at 7 in the affirmative.

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay. And Amy,
3 you are now free to [crosstalk, background comment]
4 proceed.

5 AMY ELLENBOGEN: Okay. Good morning. My
6 name is Amy Ellenbogen and I am the Director of the
7 Crown Heights Community Mediation Center, a project
8 of the Center for Court Innovation. Thank you for
9 giving me the opportunity to speak today in support
10 of the creation of Peace Week.

11 The Center for Court Innovation is an
12 independent not-for-profit organization that works
13 with the justice system and with New York City
14 neighborhoods to reduce crime, violence and
15 incarceration, assist victims and increase public
16 confidence in justice. We are thrilled to be able to
17 join with those gathered here to honor the life and
18 legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. by demonstrating
19 our support for Peace Week and the values it
20 represents, values we try to uphold through our work.

21 We commend the City Council for creating
22 Anti-Gun Violence Awareness Month but it is not
23 enough to stand against gun violence; we as a city
24 need to stand for peace and create opportunities to
25 promote peace and galvanize the creative community to

2 stand affirmatively for peace. This week at the
3 Mediation Center we hosted community conversations,
4 young people creating art to stand against gun
5 violence, volunteer opportunities for over 50 people
6 to canvas in the neighborhood against gun violence
7 and this is just part of the work that we do on a
8 daily basis at the Mediation Center.

9 The Center is dedicated to eradicating
10 the scourge of gun violence in New York City
11 communities. For example, as part of the City's
12 Anti-Gun Violence Initiative, the Center operates
13 Save our Streets (SOS), a replication of the Cure
14 Violence Anti-Gun Violence model in four communities
15 in the Bronx and Brooklyn. SOS trains violence
16 interrupters to intervene in street conflicts before
17 the cycle of retaliatory violence escalates. An
18 evaluation of SOS in Crown Heights found a
19 statistically significant impact on gun violence
20 trends in Crown Heights when compared with three
21 similar precincts in Brooklyn. At a moment when so
22 much public attention nationwide is focused on the
23 question of how to reduce gun violence and the
24 challenges of legislative solutions, the success of
25

2 SOS Crown Heights suggests community level prevention
3 efforts can be effective response to violent crime.

4 SOS Crown Heights is based out of the
5 Mediation Center, a project that has worked for 15
6 years to transform a neighborhood torn apart by
7 violence into a safe, healthy and vibrant place for
8 all people through the collaborative efforts of
9 neighbors, government and community organizations.
10 The Mediation Center is home to programs like YO
11 S.O.S. (Youth Organizing to Save our Streets), a
12 youth development program that aims to bring the
13 voices of young people to the anti-violence movement
14 as peer educators and community organizers and it
15 home to Make it Happen, which works to give young men
16 who experience violence the tools necessary to
17 overcome traumatic experiences and enable them to
18 succeed in spite of those experiences.

19 The Center is also working hard to test
20 innovative ways to promote peaceful, nonviolent
21 resolutions to neighborhood conflicts through out
22 Peacemaking program at the Red Hook Community Justice
23 Center, which takes a traditional Native American
24 approach to justice that focuses on community healing
25 and restoration. Peacemakers work not just to

2 resolve immediate disputes, but also to heal the
3 relationships among those involved and to restore
4 balance to the community. Experienced Peacemakers
5 from the Navajo Nation help train our volunteers,
6 using restorative and storytelling techniques adapted
7 from Native American culture. The Navajo mentors who
8 have helped us design and implement this program have
9 taught us a great deal about using kinship and
10 connectedness as the basis of peacemaking and they
11 have taught us that sometimes peacemaking is just the
12 beginning of long-term healing.

13 We're proud to be part of a wide network
14 of organizations, public health officials, community
15 stakeholders and other partners who are working hard
16 every day to reduce violence and ensure that New
17 York's young people grow up in safe and healthy
18 neighborhoods. We urge the Council to further its
19 promotion of this vital work by supporting the
20 creation of New York Peace Week.

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I want to
22 recognize Quentin Walcott and Sally MacNichol on the
23 panel and why don't -- Venalia Colverson; do you
24 wanna go next? Just 'cause that's such a great name,
25 Venalia.

2 VENALIA COLVERSON: My name is Venalia
3 Colverson and I've been a volunteer with LIFE Camp,
4 Inc. for the past six years. When you mention the
5 organization LIFE Camp in our community, the first
6 thing that comes to mind is peace. LIFE Camp's
7 accomplishments for our community have helped
8 troubled youth make peace a lifestyle. For me as a
9 parent and seeing what LIFE Camp has done before I
10 volunteered, it brought change to the community, it
11 brought a lot of change and I admitted what they were
12 doing, so that's what brought me on board as a
13 volunteer and I have stuck with LIFE Camp for this
14 long period of time; I have been a part of Peace Week
15 for five years and it does great work. You know,
16 they go into our community, they work very, very hard
17 to help out youth; they go into the schools in our
18 community and without that, some of our youth would
19 be really, really lost without the organization as a
20 whole and even as Peace Week, today our youths -- we
21 were on the phone talking to a school and what the
22 school has done and how they explained to us now the
23 kids all come together and they are so excited, oh
24 Peace Week and you know, the color orange or just
25 able to say what is peace to you. So with that,

2 Peace Week is very important because at a time when
3 you know you have everything going on, the headlines
4 and that, LIFE Camp is out there and they're doing
5 the job and during Peace Week, it brings a lot of us
6 together. So we look forward to hoping that this
7 will be enacted on [sic]. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Who would like
9 to go next?

10 YOLANDA HINTON: Good afternoon. My name
11 is Yolanda Hinton and my son Tony Darrell Hinton was
12 murdered July 11th, 2014 at 4:26 p.m. Peace Week
13 gives parents hope, Peace Week gives us parents that
14 have lost our children to gun violence a sense of
15 comfort, Peace Week lets us know that no one has
16 forgotten about our children and most importantly,
17 Peace Week raises awareness and for me as a grieving
18 mother who has just been able to function properly,
19 to get out of my bed, Peace Week has offered for me,
20 LIFE Camp, Inc. especially, helped me cry amongst
21 other parents that have been through what I've been
22 through; it's times when I'm out and I just cry for
23 no reason, but being amongst other grieving families
24 I felt okay and I didn't feel ashamed, because a lot
25 of people are very desensitized when people lose a

2 loved one and especially to gun violence, because
3 it's happening so frequently and so often that people
4 are just accepting it and looking over and thinking
5 it's normal, but it's not normal, it's not normal. I
6 almost lost my life because I didn't think I would be
7 able to live without my son, my only child was taken
8 from me from gun violence, he was brutally murdered,
9 shot nine times and without Peace Week and LIFE Camp,
10 Incorporation, I don't know where I would be right
11 now, because the support was so overwhelming for me
12 and it gives me a sense of hope and I feel like now I
13 can go on because I am around other mothers, other
14 fathers, other children, other siblings who have lost
15 someone so dear to them and every day I wake up and I
16 have an aching in my heart because I can no longer
17 see, smell or touch my only child. This is very
18 important, it's a necessity that we need to have
19 because it doesn't seem like things are gettin' any
20 better anytime soon and I'm from Bedford-Stuyvesant,
21 Brooklyn and I feel we need something like this in
22 every community in our borough because we need the
23 support, we need the awareness; you know, it's not
24 just comforting grieving mothers, it's preventing
25 this from happening to another person, another child;

2 it's information. Ignorance is bliss and if you
3 don't know, you're not gonna seek the knowledge. We
4 have to inform the United States of America, it's
5 happening from every end of this country, from the
6 East Coast to the West Coast; this is an epidemic, it
7 needs to be stopped, we need help, we need help. I...
8 oh, what is his name -- I'm sorry, I'm caught up in
9 emotion -- Eric Garner was killed six days after my
10 son was murdered, okay; I was in a hospital because I
11 lost... I almost lost my mind because my only child was
12 taken and to see that on the news just put me in a
13 deeper depression. And then Mike Brown and then the
14 countless other children who have been murdered day
15 after day, it's too much, it's too much, this is not
16 normal, we should not have to go through this, we
17 need help, as much help as we can get. Our lives
18 matter, these children matter, they are our future.
19 We need help. And please, whatever you can, you
20 know, whatever help you can give us, you know the
21 support, it's very much welcome and I just don't want
22 my son Tony Hinton to die in vain and all the other
23 children without being recognized, you know not just
24 the ones that's on television. There's so many
25 parents that feel the way I do and with these

2 resources they can help people like me to get out of
3 the house, to socialize again, to feel normal; I
4 don't feel normal; this isn't right, it's not natural
5 for a mother to have to bury her child, our children
6 are supposed to bury us at an old age, it's not
7 natural and what I'm going through I wish on no one.
8 My heart no longer beats the same, I don't sleep at
9 night, I have to take medication in order to sleep;
10 I'm on a antidepressant, I'm on Prozac; I've never
11 taken pills in my life, I've never taken pills, but
12 I'm seeking all the help that I can get, I've been to
13 church, I've been to therapy and thank God a
14 wonderful friend of mine told me about a brunch that
15 was happening on Sunday; she didn't tell me who was
16 there, she didn't tell me why she wanted me to come;
17 it was a wonderful surprise, it was other mothers
18 there, which is a group that no one wants to be a
19 part of, no one wants to be a part of a group because
20 they have lost their child to gun violence. And I
21 seen it on the news replayed over and over and over
22 again; I've seen how this person stood over my son
23 and popped nine bullets into his body on the ground
24 and I don't have to just deal with that; I'm dealing
25 with the detectives whose not helping me; I'm dealing

2 with not working because I can't function. I have to
3 go on, I have to be strong because I have two other
4 children, my nieces who I'm caring for. If I cannot
5 function; other children cannot function, other
6 parents can't function. So this is an epidemic; we
7 need help, I'm asking for help, please.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
9 much for being here and sharing that with us today
10 and I think this Council has demonstrated it is
11 committed to helping, not just through the passing of
12 this very important resolution, but through the work
13 that Council Member Williams and so many others have
14 been championing. So my heartfelt condolences to you
15 and to all the mothers who have lost their children
16 and just to let you know that we are committed, I am
17 committed, we are all committed to doing what we can
18 to support Erica, LIFE Camp, yourself and everyone
19 here today to end violence and make this a more
20 peaceful city. So thank you again. And Quentin, do
21 you wanna.

22 QUENTIN WALCOTT: I would also like to
23 say thank you for sharing that story; I think that is
24 part of what LIFE Camp brings to the City, an
25 opportunity for those who are directly impacted by

1 violence, from the person who's committing the
2 violence, the person who's the victim of violence and
3 those of us who witness or by stand or have to deal
4 with the aftermath of violence and Sally and I are
5 Co-Executive Directors of CONNECT and I just wanna
6 say a few personal things. I've known and worked
7 with Erica for over 20 years in different capacities
8 and in different organizations that kind of hopefully
9 led up to the great things that LIFE Camp is today,
10 and one of the things about Erica, and it's not just
11 Erica, it's a team of people and I've seen the
12 volunteers that are with us today, you know
13 throughout the process over the last five years grow
14 and grow with Erica in this organization; one thing
15 I'd just like to say is that one thing that makes the
16 impact of LIFE Camp is that it's the consistency, you
17 know it's not just responding to when something
18 happens, it's about being there every single day when
19 things aren't happening and it's really what I
20 appreciate about LIFE Camp and that work is really
21 looking at prevention and that's the work that we do
22 with CONNECT as well, trying to prevent violence from
23 happening and one of the things that, you know,
24 representing the voices, which is the youth, you know
25

2 when youth speak it's usually at a time of tragedy
3 and with prevention work and the work that LIFE Camp
4 is doing through Peace Week and other initiatives is
5 really doing this work so that children are speaking
6 so there is no more tragedy. So I just wanna
7 appreciate you know Erica, LIFE Camp and her team
8 over the years and presently for you know being
9 consistent in the streets of New York City, 'cause
10 that's where the work needs to happen. Part of it is
11 through City Council and the support and we're really
12 grateful you know through CONNECT and also other
13 organizations that are doing violence prevention work
14 for City Council support and seeing the importance of
15 that as well and so I just wanna appreciate everyone
16 for, you know, taking on this cause on every single
17 day and on the streets where things are happening and
18 to the mothers and to the brothers and sisters and
19 friends of the community that are really trying to
20 impact and make change.

21 SALLY MACNICHOL: My name is Sally
22 MacNichol; I'm Co-Executive Director with Q and my
23 heart is pounding and hurting for you and for all the
24 young people that are losing their lives; it is an
25 epidemic and I hear that cry for help; we do need

2 help. I'll read a short statement that CONNECT has
3 put together.

4 Thank you. CONNECT enthusiastically
5 supports Res No. 0507, declaring that January 15
6 through 22nd of each year as Peace Week. CONNECT has
7 participated in Peace Week since its inception five
8 years ago; through CONNECT's transformative education
9 roundtables and circles New Yorkers from every
10 borough engage in critical dialogue about the
11 conditions that create violence and strategize
12 together about what we need to do to build lasting
13 peace in our lives in communities. CONNECT is so
14 very proud to call LIFE Camp our partner; LIFE Camp
15 and CONNECT understand that gun and gang violence are
16 very often rooted in family, intimate partner and
17 gender violence; without safe communities and
18 respectful intimate relationships peaceful
19 communities simply won't happen. To build cultures
20 of peace we must challenge injustice and cruelty in
21 all spheres of life. Research shows and those of us
22 who work every day to end violence and build peace
23 know it is just as important to pay attention to what
24 happens in the so-called private sphere of parent,
25 child, gender and sexual relations as it is in the

2 public sphere of politics and business. CONNECT's
3 work supports diverse communities and families in
4 understanding the sources of violence and in
5 cultivating their strengths. A holistic combination
6 of preventing, education and early intervention helps
7 transform the beliefs and behaviors that fuel
8 violence. We believe that with the right tools of
9 empowerment people can take charge in mapping their
10 own path to peace and that's what LIFE Camp is doing.
11 As Eleanor Roosevelt said, it is not enough to talk
12 about peace; one must believe in it and it isn't
13 enough to believe in it; one must work for it. Let's
14 make Peace Week a reality as a sign of our commitment
15 to a lasting culture of peace throughout New York City
16 for our youth and generations to come.

17 [background comment]

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you all
19 very, very much for your testimony, but more than
20 that, your work because all of you are actively
21 engaged in this movement for peace and nonviolence.
22 So we're about to conclude our hearing, but before we
23 do that we have been joined by Council Member Steve
24 Levin who also was at a number of other hearings,
25 which is why Council Member Williams and Council

2 Member Levine had to go a little bit early as well,
3 so we're gonna ask Council Member Levin to vote on
4 these two very important resolutions and with that
5 I'll ask Billy Martin to call the roll.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Levin.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye on all.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
9 much, Council Member Levin and with that we are
10 concluding this hearing on two very important
11 resolutions; we have spent the last two hours
12 together and it's been an incredibly moving
13 experience on both the recognition of the 70th
14 anniversary of Auschwitz and of course this very
15 important Peace Week resolution. So thank you Erica
16 Ford, LIFE Camp and of course, no one person does it
17 alone; all of you are part of the team and we are all
18 a part of this movement, so thank you all very, very
19 much for being here and with that this concludes this
20 hearing of the Cultural Affairs, Libraries [gavel]
21 and International Intergroup Relations committee.
22 Thank you all.

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date January 28, 2015