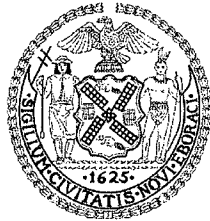


NYCTM
**Administration for
Children's Services**



**The New York City Council,
Committee on Youth Services
November 30, 2015**

"Hearing: Intro. 554-2014 & Intro. 993-2015"

Testimony by

**David Nish, Associate Commissioner for Training and Workforce Innovation
New York City Administration for Children's Services
Division of Policy, Planning and Measurement**

Good morning Chair Eugene and members of the Committee on Youth Services. I am David Nish, Associate Commissioner for Training and Workforce Innovation. With me from ACS is Susan Morley, Senior Advisor for Investigations. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Introductions 554 of 2014 and 993 of 2015 and to talk about the work that ACS and our partner agencies do to serve the young people and families that these bills seek to assist.

Overview of ACS

The Administration for Children's Services protects and promotes the safety and well-being of New York City's children, young people, families, and communities by providing child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and education services.

ACS' child welfare work involves protective, preventive and foster care services. Each year, we investigate over 60,000 reports of maltreatment, and we provide preventive services to over 25,000 families so children can remain safely at home. And, when out-of-home placements are necessary, we oversee approximately 11,000 children in foster care. ACS depends on over 3,000 dedicated frontline staff to make difficult decisions that have profound consequences in the lives of children and families.

In juvenile justice, ACS oversees a continuum of services and programs for youth at every stage of the process. We, and our contracted partners, provide these services to youth in secure and non-secure detention facilities, non-secure placement residences, and community-based alternative programs.

Our Division of Early Care and Education (ECE) administers one of the largest publicly-funded childcare systems in the country, serving approximately 110,000 infants, toddlers, preschool, and school-aged children. ACS provides services that enhance child development and

assist low-income working families, eligible public assistance recipients, and families that are receiving child welfare services.

ACS' Work with Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth

Young people in our child welfare and juvenile justice systems are particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation. ACS is committed to meeting the needs of these young victims, commonly referred to as "C-SEC youth." Since the passage of the New York State Safe Harbour for Exploited Children Act in 2008, ACS has steadily built a child welfare response to such exploitation by training our staff and partner agencies, identifying cases of sexual exploitation, and serving young people through a continuum of services. This continuum, implemented by ACS, the NYC Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD) and our contracted providers, includes street outreach, counseling, specialized preventive programs, residential placement options, transitional housing, career development services, as well as programs to reach lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth.

To further promote this work, in March 2015 ACS hired a dedicated Director of Child Trafficking Prevention & Policy who consults on specific cases, while advancing system-wide policies, procedures, and training to better serve this population. Our Director of Child Trafficking Prevention & Policy reports to ACS' Senior Advisor for Investigations, Susan Morley, who is with me here today. Ms. Morley previously served 21 years at the NYPD where much of her work involved investigating sex crimes and child abuse. After rising through the ranks at the NYPD, Ms. Morley was appointed the first Commanding Officer of the Special Victim's Division.

Identifying suspected cases of sexual exploitation is a priority for ACS and we work on several fronts to do so. The Investigative Consultant Unit, a team of over 100 retired law

enforcement professionals who also report to Ms. Morley, assists Child Protective Services (CPS) staff with fact gathering, and locating and interviewing at-risk children. CPS workers involve Investigative Consultants in any potential C-SEC cases.

In partnership with DYCD, ACS incorporated specialized expertise into our practice by locating two Safe Horizon MSW youth counselors, each experienced in working with sexually exploited youth, at ACS' Nicholas Scoppetta Children's Center and Youth Reception Center. These counselors from Safe Horizon meet with suspected victims of sexual exploitation at the Children's Center and Youth Reception Center, and provide necessary support, and referrals. In addition, GEMS (Girls Educational & Mentoring Services) also provides weekly support groups and outreach at the Children's Center and at two juvenile justice facilities that serve girls.

To meet the needs of at-risk and sexually exploited youth in our foster care and juvenile justice placements, ACS contracts with the Jewish Child Care Association (JCCA) whose Gateways program provides intensive trauma-informed services including assessment, therapy, and counseling. ACS also contracts with Mt. Sinai-St. Luke's Roosevelt's New Beginnings Program, which works with at-risk 12-17 year olds and their families, with the goal of keeping the youth safe at homes. Because LGBTQ youth are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, ACS has funded three youth providers that offer LGBTQ-specific expertise and services: the Ali Forney Center, the Hetrick-Martin Institute, and the Door.

ACS-Coordinated Training

ACS has provided our 3,000 frontline child protective staff with guidance, training and support to identify and assist sexually exploited youth. In June 2012, we released a

comprehensive policy on how to identify, engage and support victims of sexual exploitation and hosted a multi-disciplinary conference for caseworkers. From November 2012 to January 2013, ACS partnered with Safe Horizon to present nine separate three-hour training sessions on our policy. In December 2013, over two hundred ACS and provider agency staff participated in another training to create “program champions,” which helped them to become knowledgeable resources within their respective practice areas.

This year, ACS has brought child trafficking awareness and skills trainings, including presentations and panel participations, to almost 2,000 individuals within the greater New York City area, including ACS staff, foster care, preventive, medical and mental health staff, the New York Police Department and a variety of contract and community agency staff.

ACS has also developed awareness and skills-based trainings, provided to 800 ACS staff and external partners. We developed a full-day training program, featuring the red flags of human trafficking and all of the affiliated dynamics and components, a presentation from the ACS Investigative Consultation Program, an overview of applicable legislation, a presentation on screening, identifying, and providing services to trafficked children, and skills necessary to engage and interview trafficked children.

We require all ACS staff, provider agency staff and foster parents who have direct contact with children and families to be trained on the goals and expectations of ACS’ LGBTQ policy. ACS provides training to staff during initial orientation, and at least once every two years thereafter. This training gives guidance to ACS staff, providers, foster parents, and volunteers on how to provide safe, respectful, and affirming services for LGBTQ youth. Newly hired employees in the Division of Child Protection (DCP) and the Division of Youth and Family

Justice (DYFJ) also participate in an extensive training program, a major component of which is comprehensive C-SEC training, including critical skills in youth engagement.

OCFS Training

In the fall of 2015, the New York State Office of Children and Families Services, in accordance with the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014, began to offer web based training for child welfare workers through the STARS Human Services Learning Center. These state-mandated trainings summarize the law and include a discussion of human trafficking and new procedures for screening and responding to this population. Current preventive, foster care and child protective staff are required by OCFS to take this training by October 2016, and staff hired after that date must take the course within six months of their start date. This training encompasses best practices in identifying and providing services for sexually exploited youth.

Proposed Legislation

Introduction 993 of 2014 proposes to change the date from January 1 to March 1 for the submission of the annual report on the number of youth in contact with DYCD or ACS that are determined to be sexually exploited, and would require the report to be posted on each agency's website. ACS does not perceive any challenges in implementing these modifications and supports the legislation.

Introduction 554 of 2015 seeks to require DYCD, in conjunction with ACS, to conduct biannual trainings for New York City employees and employees of any entity that contracts with the City who are in regular contact with children, on best practices in identifying runaway,

homeless, and sexually exploited youth, as well as connecting this population to services. ACS commends the City Council for recognizing the complex needs of these young people and for its commitment to serving this population. As we have testified today, ACS is also committed to this work – we have made tremendous strides in redesigning the way we serve these young people and in the extensive trainings we provide to our staff and our provider partner’s staff. While we applaud the spirit of Intro 554, there are aspects of the legislation that cause concern.

One area of concern is the breadth of the legislation. Though ACS provides significant trainings for our staff and provider partners, we do not have the capacity to train all city employees *and* employees of contractors whose jobs involve regular contact with children. The term “regular contact with children” is also unclear and should be defined in order to determine the specific universe of employees that would require training under the legislation. The bill requires ACS and DYCD to conduct trainings twice per year for an extremely large cohort of trainees; however the bill contains no requirement that the intended trainees actually attend the trainings. It is also unclear whether the legislation contemplates in-person trainings- which neither ACS nor DYCD have the capacity to undertake- or whether trainings could be accommodated by some alternate means, such as through a web-based system, or a train-the-trainer system which would enable city agencies to develop the ability to train their own employees and contractors.

We are also concerned with the immediate effective date of the legislation. We ask that the effective date be extended to contemplate the time necessary to develop and implement appropriate training plans.

Closing

Thank you for the Committee's attention to these issues affecting runaway, homeless, and sexually exploited youth and for your dedication to serving this population. We appreciate the opportunity to discuss our agency's work in this area and look forward to partnering with the Council to develop legislation that will meet this goal. We are happy to take any question you may have.



**Department of
Youth & Community
Development**

**TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES**

HEARING ON INTRODUCTION 554

**PRESENTED BY
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
DEBORAH HARPER**

NOVEMBER 30, 2015

Good morning Chairman Eugene and members of the Youth Services Committee. I'm Deborah Harper, Assistant Commissioner, Vulnerable and Special Needs Youth, at the Department of Youth and Community Development. I'm joined by Randy Scott, Director of Runaway and Homeless Youth Services. Thank you for the chance to testify today. We appreciate the City Council's interest in making sure the City can address the needs of runaway and homeless youth (RHY) and sexually exploited children. We are committed to helping vulnerable young people obtain housing, counseling, educational and career guidance, health services, and other resources to get their lives on track. Over the past year, we've had some exciting accomplishments in serving runaway and homeless youth. I'd like to highlight a few of them for you:

- The first 24 hour drop-in center with specialized services for LGBTQ youth, opened at the end of last year. Youth who need a place to spend a few hours to rest, get a bite to eat, or speak to a counselor can do so at this drop in center.
- Last spring, DYCD funded 100 more shelter beds for the second year in a row. A total of 200 shelter beds has been added since Mayor de Blasio took office. We've added crisis shelter beds and transitional independent living beds, and with every open bed, more vulnerable young people are being served.
- The first city-funded transitional independent living residence for transgender youth was opened by Ali Forney last month. We are very proud to be funding this residence.
- DYCD added \$1.9 million dollars for mental health services. Runaway and homeless youth in DYCD funded programs will be able to receive mental health services ranging from psychiatric evaluations and therapeutic group sessions to art therapy, on site.

Training on how to best serve runaway and homeless youth and sexually exploited youth is crucial towards helping them. In accordance with state regulations, RHY providers are required to fulfill 40 hours of training for full time directors and 20 hours for part time staff. The required training topics include youth development and youth issues; child abuse prevention and reporting; and runaway and homeless youth

regulations. In addition to the required topics, provider staff also receive training on other topics that may affect runaway and homeless youth such as HIV awareness and education, suicide prevention, case record documentation, and awareness of synthetic marijuana. Providers have obtained training from groups such as the Center for Anti-Violence Education, Anti-Violence Project, Children's Village; and starting in 2016, the Sex Workers Project.

With respect to city employees, DYCD's monthly Inter-Agency Coordinating Council (ICC) Workgroup on LGBTQ youth, is a forum for various city agency representatives to meet and discuss issues impacting LGBTQ youth. These meetings have included presentations on homeless and sexually exploited LGBTQ youth. The workgroup also organizes an annual training on culturally competent LGBTQ youth service delivery that reaches up to 75 staff from city agencies.

Through the Safe Harbor program, DYCD contracts with staff from Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS) to train ACS personnel at the Children's Center and at ACS detention facilities on the needs of commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC). To date, 294 ACS staff have been trained by GEMS at the two ACS detention facilities and the Children's Center. Topics include:

- Identifying and interviewing commercially sexually exploited youth
- Enhanced awareness of commercially sexually exploited youth
- Pathways and precursors to commercially sexually exploited youth
- The impact of commercial sexual exploitation on youth
- Identification, engagement and effective service delivery for commercially sexually exploited youth

As a group with experience serving RHY, and specializing in CSEC, GEMS has also trained provider staff at monthly runaway and homeless youth advisory meetings. Even though DYCD does not provide direct services, DYCD staff in attendance at those meetings received the benefits of those trainings. Recognizing the needs of trafficked youth, we were one of the first city agencies to provide government support for a CSEC program when we funded GEMS' transitional independent living home several years ago. DYCD staff have also attended trainings and conferences on CSEC conducted by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and ACS, as well as trainings conducted for providers at our own runaway and homeless youth conferences and Healing the Hurt conferences. Our limited training resources are directed to those who are most likely to have the opportunity to intervene on behalf of vulnerable youth.

While we agree with the spirit of Introduction 554 to help protect young people through awareness and education, DYCD's focus is to fund direct services for youth. Introduction 554 would be outside of our core function as a contracting agency that administers contracts for the city's runaway and homeless youth, afterschool, community center, youth employment and community development programs. Our oversight and administration of these direct service programs is critical to ensuring quality services for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers each year.

Thank you again for the chance to testify today. We are happy to answer your questions.



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TESTIMONY

November 30, 2015
New York, New York

Presented before

The New York City Council
Committee on Youth Services

The Legal Aid Society
Juvenile Rights Practice
199 Water Street
New York, NY 10038

Prepared and Presented by:

Courtney Camp, Staff Attorney, The Legal Aid Society, Juvenile Rights Practice

Good morning. I am Courtney Camp, a staff attorney with The Legal Aid Society's Juvenile Rights Practice. We submit this testimony on behalf of The Legal Aid Society, and thank Chair Eugene and all of the committee members for inviting our input on the proposed biannual training for certain New York City employees on runaway and homeless youth and sexually exploited children. We applaud the Committee for continuing to tackle this important subject, and look forward to the valuable contributions that we are sure the Council will make in identifying and serving some of our City's most vulnerable children.

The Legal Aid Society, the nation's oldest and largest not-for-profit legal services organization, is more than a law firm for clients who cannot afford to pay for counsel. It is an indispensable component of the legal, social, and economic fabric of New York City – passionately advocating for low-income individuals and families across a variety of civil, criminal and juvenile rights matters, while also fighting for legal reform.

The Legal Aid Society has performed this role in City, State and federal courts since 1876. It does so by capitalizing on the diverse expertise, experience, and capabilities of over 1,100 of the brightest legal minds. These Legal Aid Society lawyers work with some 700 social workers, investigators, paralegals and support and administrative staff. Through a network of borough, neighborhood, and courthouse offices in 26 locations in New York City, the Society provides comprehensive legal services in all five boroughs of New York City for clients who cannot afford to pay for private counsel.

The Society's legal program operates three major practices — Civil, Criminal and Juvenile Rights — and receives volunteer help from law firms, corporate law departments and expert consultants that is coordinated by the Society's Pro Bono program. With its annual caseload of more than 300,000 legal matters, The Legal Aid Society takes on more cases for more clients than any other legal services organization in the United States. And it brings a depth and breadth of perspective that is unmatched in the legal profession.

The Legal Aid Society's unique value is an ability to go beyond any one case to create more equitable outcomes for individuals and broader, more powerful systemic change for society as a whole. In addition to the annual caseload of 300,000 individual cases and legal matters, the Society's law reform representation for clients benefits some two million low-income families and individuals in New York City and the landmark rulings in many of these cases have a State-wide and national impact.

The Legal Aid Society is deeply concerned about the availability of services for New York City's runaway and homeless youth ("RHY") and sexually exploited children. Int. Number 554, which mandates the biannual training of certain New York City employees on the best practices for identifying runaway and homeless youth and sexually exploited children, and how to connect such groups to appropriate resources, is a valuable step in the right direction for these vulnerable youth.

Although sexually exploited children and runaway and homeless youth have their own distinct needs and characteristics, these two groups are closely related. Runaway and homeless

youth lack resources, all too often including access to a shelter bed. Even those who are able to access shelter may not have enough time in a shelter bed to enable them to get housing, job placement or educational assistance. Unlike with adult shelters, New York City limits the time a youth is permitted to remain in a youth shelter to 30 to 60 days. As a result, these youth become increasingly vulnerable to traffickers. At the same time, youth who have been trafficked often feel isolated and stigmatized, and run from homes or foster care placements where they feel judged or rejected. In a study conducted by Covenant House in which 174 runaway and homeless youth between the ages of 18 and 23 were interviewed, 23 percent reported that they had experienced trafficking and survival sex. According to the Urban Institute's "Surviving the Streets of New York":

Homelessness is one of the most common drivers of youth engagement in survival sex (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council 2013; Weber et al. 2004). ... Studies focused on New York City consistently report that homeless youth often trade sex for a place to stay each night because of the absence of available shelter beds (Freeman and Hamilton 2008), and that approximately a quarter of homeless youth in New York City have traded sex at some point (Bigelsen and Vuotto 2013; Clatts et al. 1998; Rotheram-Borus et al. 1992). ...

According to a survey of nearly 1,000 homeless youth in New York City, young men were three times more likely than young women to have traded sex for a place to stay, and LGBTQ youth were seven times more likely than heterosexual youth to have done so (Freeman and Hamilton 2008). Transgender youth in New York City have been found eight times more likely than non-transgender youth to trade sex for a safe place to stay (Freeman and Hamilton 2008). ... p. 5-6, Dank et al. (Feb. 2015)

These numbers, while alarming, are not surprising to youth advocates. They provide a mere glimpse into the harsh realities faced by RHY and sexually exploited children in New York City.

Int. No. 554 mandates biannual training for New York City employees whose jobs involve contact with children addressing how to identify these young people and connect them to

appropriate resources. In order to be effective, the biannual training proposed in Int. 554 must address the specific experiences and particular service needs of RHY and sexually exploited children. In particular, the training must include LGBTQ culturally competent information, given the fact that LGBTQ young people are overrepresented in the RHY population. Resources for all sexually exploited children -- including cisgender boys, transgender youth and other queer youth -- should also be provided. That one out of four runaway and homeless youth in New York City has been a victim of trafficking is an unacceptable statistic. Training City workers to identify and connect these underserved groups to the appropriate resources is imperative; a youth's survival could depend on it. We believe, however, that the effort cannot end there. There need to be increased resources for this vulnerable population, including emergency shelter beds and long-term transitional housing.

We thank the Committee for their attention to the needs of RHY and sexually exploited children and for giving The Legal Aid Society the opportunity to speak about this important topic.

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**Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses
Before the New York City Council
Committee on Youth Services
Honorable Mathieu Eugene, Chair**

Presented by Andrea Bowen, Policy Analyst

November 30, 2015

Good morning, Chair Eugene and members of the Youth Services Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Andrea Bowen, and I am here on behalf of United Neighborhood Houses, New York City's federation of settlement houses and community centers. UNH member agencies work in partnership with government to provide a wide range of services, including early childhood education, after school, youth employment opportunities, adult literacy education, services for older adults, and, importantly for this hearing, services for runaway and homeless youth, and sexually exploited children.

Before the Committee today are two bills, Intros 554 and 993, two pieces of legislation that will have an impact on our city's runaway and homeless youth (RHY) population, as well as those young people who have been sexually exploited. Intro 554 mandates that the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) "provide biannual trainings to employees of various City agencies...on the best practices for identifying runaway and homeless youth and sexually exploited children, and how to connect these young people with the appropriate resources."¹

We support the concept of training for this critical workforce and encourage the city to:

- Designate the staff eligible for training;
- Design a curriculum that meets the diverse needs of this population;
- Consult with providers of services to these populations when planning the content of the training; and
- Appropriate funding for this training.

¹ <http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2073849&GUID=712C58C6-2E66-4767-B2C9-181349E4F349&Options=&Search=>

Intro 993 extends the deadline from January 1st to March 1st for release of the reports that ACS and DYCD produce on “the number of sexually exploited youth each agency has come into contact over the course of the calendar year.”² This bill requires “the report to be posted online and make a technical change to fix an error with the disaggregated age groups.”³

As regards Intro 993, we support the proposed legislation. It makes sense that DYCD and ACS have extra time to prepare their report, and it is vital that the report be available online.

UNH, CBOs that provide services to these populations, and City agencies all have a common interest in ensuring that these populations are provided the maximal amount of resources to survive and thrive.

Thank you for your time and for holding this hearing, and I am happy to answer any questions that you have. You may contact me at abowen@unhny.org , or 212-967-0322, ext. 324.

² <http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2513731&GUID=6B96D24C-6DD7-4C52-BD48-AF20FD4D14EF&Options=&Search=>

³ *ibid.*

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 554: 993 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/30/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andrea Bowen

Address: 70 W 36th St 5th Fl NY NY

I represent: United Neighborhood Houses

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 554

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LILLIAN RIVERA

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I represent: HETRICK-MARTIN INSTITUTE

Address: 2 ASTOR PLACE

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 554 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/30/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Randy Scott, Director of Runaway &

Address: DYCD Homeless Youth Services

I represent: _____

Address: 123 William St., 17th Floor

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

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 554 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/30/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deborah Harper, Assistant Commissioner

Address: DYCD Vulnerable & Special

I represent: Needs Youth

Address: 123 William Street, 17th Floor

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in favor in opposition

Date: 11/30/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Nish

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I represent: _____

Address: 150 William St

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Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sue Morley

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 554 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/30/15

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Name: Courtney Camp

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I represent: The Legal Aid Society, Juvenile

Address: Rights Practice. (Same as ABOVE)

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