

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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April 26, 2018
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HELD AT: 250 Broadway-Committee Rm, 14th Fl.

B E F O R E: DEBORAH L. ROSE
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

JUSTIN L BRANNAN
MARGARET S. CHIN
MATHIEU EUGENE
ANDY L. KING

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

Susan Haskell
Deputy Commissioner for Youth Services at the New
York City Department of Youth and Community
Development, DYCD

Randy Scott
Assistant Commissioner for Vulnerable and Special
Needs Youth

Darryl Rattray
Associate Commissioner of Community Centers and
Strategic Partnerships at the New York City
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Jamie Powlovich
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East Coast Director of Simon Wiesenthal Center

Jason Cianciotto
Executive Director of the Tyler Clementi
Foundation

Jeff Irvine
Founder and President of Bridg-it

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2 [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Good, good morning and
4 thank you for coming. My name is Debi Rose and I'm
5 the Chair of the Committee on Youth Services and
6 today we will be hearing two pieces of legislation.
7 Proposed Intro Number 7...376-A, which was introduced
8 by Council Member Torres and Intro Number 713, which
9 was introduced by Council Member Van Bramer and
10 myself. Proposed Intro Number 376-A would establish
11 an anti-bullying hotline and provide additional
12 resources for youth including a mobile device
13 application. And Intro Number 713 would create an
14 ombudsman's position within the New York City
15 Department of Youth and Community Development, DYCD
16 to serve runaway and homeless youth, RHY and I would
17 first like to thank Speaker Corey Johnson for his
18 strong commitment to these issues and advocacy. He
19 has... he has shown great leadership on this issue
20 regarding youth especially within the RHY community
21 as demonstrated by his unwavering support for runaway
22 and homeless youth bills that have recently been
23 inactive. I look forward to working with him in the
24 future on these pressing issues. I would also like to
25 thank all of the young people, advocates, and

1
2 providers who are here to testify on behalf of these
3 bills as well as acknowledge my colleagues who have
4 joined us; Council Member Margaret Chin, thank you.
5 As pertaining to Proposed Intro Number 376-A by
6 Council Member Torres bullying remains a large
7 problem throughout the United States and in our city
8 especially within the youth population. In the
9 Department of Education's annual NYC School Survey,
10 it was reported that more students in the New York
11 City public schools experienced or witnessed bullying
12 at their schools in 2017 as compared to 2016. In 2017
13 81 percent of nearly 435,000 students surveyed from
14 grades six to 12 responded that students harass,
15 bully and intimidate their peers, this represents an
16 alarming ten percent increase in just one year. These
17 figures suggest that bullying may be on the rise in
18 public schools throughout the city. The Department of
19 Education has taken a number of steps to address
20 bullying among nearly 1.1 million students but we all
21 know too well bullying just doesn't stop at the
22 public school's exit, it can follow students all the
23 way home to their communities, it can impact the
24 homeschooled and students in private schools, it can
25 even impact young people who have since graduated or

1
2 aged out of school and the consequences are even more
3 profound with LGBT youth, this is why Proposed Intro
4 Number 376-A is so important. This bill would
5 establish an anti-bullying hotline and other
6 resources including a mobile device application to
7 help young people respond to and seek help against
8 the devastating consequences of bullying. Moreover,
9 these resources would be available to all youth not
10 just those attending a public school. In addition, we
11 are hearing Intro Number 713 by Council Member Van
12 Bramer, this bill would create an ombudsman's
13 position within DYCD to serve the runaway and
14 homeless youth population. Runaway and homeless youth
15 experience high rates of physical, emotional and
16 sexual abuse that are compounded by poverty and
17 unstable housing and they require extra services and
18 assistance to become independent and successful
19 individuals. According to the Mayor's Management
20 Report in fiscal year 2017 DYCD funded programs for
21 runaway and homeless, homeless youth served over
22 25,000 youth and that number may increase as more
23 vulnerable RHY youth seek support and services
24 through DYCD programs. An ombudsman would be
25 responsible for establishing a system to receive

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2 complaints, comments regarding any NYC funded program
3 or facility that serves runaway and homeless youth,
4 monitoring all runaway and homeless youth programs
5 and facilities to ensure compliance with DYCD
6 contractual obligations, investigating and taking
7 appropriate action regarding complaints received and
8 making recommendations to the Commissioner that could
9 improve programs and facilities. The ombudsman would
10 also prepare monthly reports outlining its
11 accomplishments and how it is responding to runaway
12 and homeless youth issues and, and, and complaints.
13 And finally, a yearly report would be submitted to
14 the Mayor and the Speaker of the City Council to
15 inform us regarding the ombudsman's efforts and help
16 us to further our support for DYCD and our shared
17 mandate to assist the runaway and homeless youth
18 population. We want to acknowledge the efforts that
19 New York State Office of Family and Children Services
20 have provided through its own ombudsman's program
21 and, and office. Indeed, many runaway and homeless
22 youth are referred to programs because of their
23 involvement in the court system, they benefit from
24 the state resource, resource however the goals of the
25 state ombudsman are to serve court placed youth, they

1
2 do not touch the many other youth in our system who
3 need an ombudsman person to help them navigate the
4 resources available to raise the issues, complaints
5 that impact their safety and security in our system.
6 Having a dedicated ombudsman in DYCD would not only
7 help youth... help youth the state ombudsman does not
8 reach but also enhance transparency and
9 accountability within DYCD runaway and homeless youth
10 programs. I look forward to hearing the testimony
11 today regarding these exciting bills and I would like
12 to thank the council staff for their work today that
13 prepared today's hearing; Counsel Paul Sinegal,
14 Policy Analyst Kevin Kowalski and Finance Analyst
15 Jessica Ackerman. I would also like to thank my
16 staff; Edwina Martin and Lisa and Isa for their work
17 on this committee and now we'll swear in our first..
18 [cross-talk]

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good morning, in
20 accordance with the rules of the council I will
21 administer the affirmation to the witnesses from the
22 Mayoral Administration. Please raise your right
23 hands, do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole
24 truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony
25

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2 before this committee and to respond honestly to
3 Council Member's questions?

4

[panel affirms]

5

6 COMMITTEE CLERK: Okay, you may lower
7 your hands and please state your names for the
8 record.

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9

RANDY SCOTT: Good morning, my name is
Randy Scott.

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SUSAN HASKELL: I'm Susan Haskell, Deputy
Commissioner of DYCD.

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DARRYL RATTRAY: And Darryl Rattray,
Associate Commissioner at DYCD.

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SUSAN HASKELL: Good morning.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Begin your testimony.

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SUSAN HASKELL: Thank you, good morning
Chair Rose and members of the Committee on Youth
Services. My name is Susan Haskell and I'm the Deputy
Commissioner for Youth Services at the New York City
Department of Youth and Community Development. I'm
joined by Randy Scott, Assistant Commissioner for
Vulnerable and Special Needs Youth and Darryl
Rattray, Associate Commissioner of Community Centers
and Strategic Partnerships. Thank you for the
opportunity to testify. On behalf of Commissioner

1
2 Chong, we want to extend thanks to the city council
3 for your ongoing support of DYCD and commitment to
4 the city's young people. As partners we have worked
5 closely to expand services to reach more youth and
6 communities across the city. Quality program is so
7 critical in supporting the development of New York
8 City's young people. We appreciate the spirit and
9 intent of Intro 30... 376-A and Intro 713, we are
10 pleased to say that DYCD and the administration have
11 initiatives in place that help prevent bullying and
12 address emotional or behavioral issues that may stem
13 from bullying, peer pressure or other issues. DYCD
14 also has practices and procedures for young people to
15 make comments and or complaints regarding the
16 programs and services they receive and that more
17 generally serve to alert DYCD to any problematic
18 issues or needs. DYCD is committed to ensuring that
19 our funded programs are welcoming, positive, and
20 engaging environments for young people, we provide
21 assistance to our funded providers to create safe and
22 supportive settings through training, coaching,
23 dissemination of best practices. At this time, I'd
24 like to offer our comments to both bills, I'll start
25 with 376-A, which seeks to amend the New York City

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2 Charter in relation to establishing an anti-bullying
3 hotline and additional resources for youth. We are
4 pleased to say that the requirements and goals for
5 Intro 376-A are being met by existing commitments and
6 resources. Bullying prevention has been a significant
7 priority for this administration, on just October
8 30th, 2017 former Chancellor Farina announced a
9 package of anti-bullying programs and reforms to be
10 implemented within the Department of Education. The
11 package includes trainings and workshops for
12 students, teachers and school personnel on topics
13 such as mental health, social emotional learning,
14 anti-bias and anti-bullying and furthermore in 2019
15 DOE will launch a bullying complaint portal that will
16 be an easy to use tool for families to report online
17 incidents of student discrimination, harassment,
18 intimidation, and or bullying against their children.
19 The DOE website also contains extensive respect for
20 all resources for students, families and educators.
21 Most young people in New York City and in DYCD funded
22 programs attend DOE schools and would be supported by
23 these new and current resources. DYCD will work
24 closely with DOE to promote these initiatives through
25 email blast, social media that can reach DYCD's

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2 hundreds of providers and tens of thousands of youth
3 participants. DYCD funds youth development program
4 that is designed to promote positive social norms,
5 create physical and psychological safety,
6 opportunities for leadership and belonging and
7 supportive relationships with caring adults and
8 peers. These programmatic elements prevent and combat
9 bullying and help youth develop positively.

10 Recognizing the impact that bullying can have on
11 young people many DYCD funded programs incorporate
12 anti-bullying efforts directly into their program
13 activities. For example, this year's theme of DYCD's
14 annual step it up dance competition is anti-bullying
15 and in addition to competing through dance the teams
16 also compete through creating engaging public
17 services announcement videos that address bullying
18 and highlight strategies to prevent it. To help
19 programs address emotional and behavioral issues,
20 DYCD offers capacity building workshops, mental
21 health first aid trainings, provider convenings on
22 positive youth development and support to offer
23 leadership development to young people. DYCD engages
24 in extensive outreach to ensure young people and
25 their families are aware of the opportunities that we

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2 provide. Through DYCD's youth connect 1-800 number
3 callers can learn about the broad array of DYCD
4 funded programs and identify nearby programs
5 available in their neighborhood. New Yorkers can also
6 learn about the location of programs through Discover
7 DYCD, a web-based service locator tool. In addition
8 to helping New Yorkers find resources Youth Connect
9 resource specialists can receive complaints and
10 concerns from the public regarding DYCD services.
11 While Youth Connect does not provide training or
12 counseling directly, the resource specialists can
13 connect youth to an appropriate resource. For
14 example, the Thrive NYC's initiative, NYC Well chat,
15 text and call in hotline allows young New Yorkers to
16 obtain crisis counseling, support, information and
17 referral to additional resources and mental health
18 providers if they're experiencing stress, anxiety or
19 other mental health concerns that could be attributed
20 to being bullied. NYC Well counselors and peers are
21 trained to recognize bullying and be compassionate
22 and supportive listeners for the young persons in
23 this type of situation. For very serious situations
24 in which a youth is experiencing an acute behavioral
25 or mental health issue related to bullying NYC Well

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2 can refer the individual to the Children's Rapid
3 Response Mobile Crisis Team. These teams provide
4 interventions including crisis de-escalation, psycho-
5 social assessments, prevention planning and
6 collaboration with educators to support families and
7 caregivers. I'd now like to offer comments on Intro
8 713, which seeks to create an ombudsman position
9 within DYCD for runaway and homeless programs.
10 Through DYCD funded programs vulnerable runaway and
11 homeless youth can access high quality programs that
12 offer shelter, meet their basic needs and connect
13 them to other resources such as health and mental
14 health services. We agree it's important for young
15 people to offer feedback on services to ensure that
16 they get the support that they need and alert us when
17 improvements are needed, and we would be happy to
18 continue to discuss this work with the council. Since
19 DYCD's RHY programs are governed by a New York State
20 runaway and homeless youth act its regulations
21 establish the role of runaway and homeless youth
22 services coordinator in each county. This state
23 defined role functions as the ombudsman for DYCD, New
24 York City's RHY services coordinator is Assistant
25 Commissioner Randy Scott. Section 1821.15 of the

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2 regulations outlines the role of the RYH services
3 coordinator to include the following
4 responsibilities; development and implementation of
5 county plans with the county youth bureau to improve
6 services for runaway and homeless youth and their
7 families, identification assessment and monitoring of
8 all available county resources for runaway and
9 homeless youth and their families, ensuring a systems
10 in place for responding to inquiries concerning
11 available shelter space, transportation and services
12 24 hours per day, ensuring that program youth have
13 access to educational services including
14 transportation, considering requests of runaway and
15 homeless youth have appropriate written consent from
16 their parent, guardian or legal custodian, custodian
17 to remain in runaway and homeless youth shelters
18 beyond the 120 day maximum length of stay. DYCD also
19 has several practices and procedures in place to
20 receive and investigate comments and complaints which
21 also fulfills the roles of the proposed ombudsman
22 described in Intro 713. They include the following;
23 as part of our plan to encourage youth to share their
24 experiences at each DYCD funded RHY program site
25 providers are required to place a sign in multiple

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2 languages that notifies and encourages participants
3 to call 3-1-1 with any concerns, issues or
4 complaints, those reports are directed to DYCD and
5 the RHY services coordinator. Additionally, if an
6 incident recurs at a DYCD funded program site DYCD
7 providers are required to submit an incident report
8 to DYCD and if the incident is serious to notify
9 OCFS. RHY regulations mandate reports to the New York
10 State Justice Center for the protection of people
11 with special needs also called the Justice Center, an
12 independent state entity for abuse, neglect or
13 significant incidents in RHY residential programs. As
14 part of overall monitoring DYCD's RHY program
15 managers make several site visits annually to monitor
16 program quality both announced and unannounced. Each
17 site visit results, results in a program quality
18 review report which includes any areas in need of
19 improvement. As a regular part of site monitoring the
20 program manager will speak with young people enrolled
21 in the program to learn about the quality of their
22 experience. Direct complaints or concerns from young
23 people have also come to our attention through
24 provider staff from other programs through youth
25 focus groups, youth advisory boards, emails and phone

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2 calls to the Commissioner's Office or the Mayor's
3 communication portal. DYCD investigates all
4 complaints or concerns that are brought to our
5 attention including interviews with the youth at the
6 relevant site, whether or not those complaints were
7 submitted anonymously, it also includes interviews
8 with provider staff and investigation of site issues.
9 Appropriate solutions follow up or disciplinary
10 actions of program improvements are identified. As
11 we've testified today DYCD and the administration are
12 committed to ensuring that the city's young people
13 can access quality programing in safe welcoming and
14 positive program environments and can offer feedback
15 to improve services. We look forward to the continued
16 partnership with the City Council and to meet the
17 needs of the city's youth and create opportunities
18 for them to grow and thrive. Thank you again for the
19 chance to testify and we are ready to answer
20 questions.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you, thank you
22 for your testimony this morning. And so, it was... it's
23 really good to hear that DYCD is providing services
24 to this population and so my concern is that there...
25 we've seen an increase in, in, in bullying in, in the

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2 last year so... a ten percent increase. So, with these
3 resources that you have in place what would you
4 attribute this increase in bullying to?

5 SUSAN HASKELL: I, I don't have a clear
6 answer for that but I do appreciate that in general
7 there's been more attention paid to the needs of
8 young people who are being bullied, I think through
9 our work to... on mental and through DYCD's commitment
10 to social emotional learning and the efforts of the
11 Department of Education we have... there's been more
12 overall attention paid to that issue and I hope that
13 the rise in reporting is due to young people finding..
14 being more able to report those incidences and
15 feeling more supported that if they do support it
16 that they'll be provided help.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you... do you think
18 that the resources that we have in place are
19 adequate?

20 SUSAN HASKELL: Well I think the... that
21 the goals of this bill are going to be met with
22 existing commitments and I know that the work
23 underway at Department of Education specifically to
24 really ramp up their efforts to be responsive to
25 bullying calls are still underway. So, just last week

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2 they updated the portal on the respect for all
3 website of Department of Education... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

5 SUSAN HASKELL: ...they have connected with
6 3-1-1 for resources in response to phone calls and in
7 2019 their plan is to ramp up the technology on that
8 portal so that they are able to do better tracking,
9 better responsiveness, better immediate connection to
10 the appropriate people at the school.

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And so... but that
12 portal and those resources are primarily for in
13 school youth, are they not?

14 SUSAN HASKELL: They are... they are
15 primarily for in school youth, they... any student in
16 public, charter or private could also look for
17 resources through the UFT that provides anti-bullying
18 services that can be available through 3-1-1 and if a
19 young person for example is... goes to a charter school
20 also a, a public school they would be referred to the
21 office of charter schools for, for support... [cross-
22 talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, do you think that,
24 that a DYCD hotline, an application would be
25 effective in addressing bullying that occurs outside

1
2 of school, outside of public schools such as in
3 private schools or in communities. We know that
4 bullying follows young people, it, it doesn't stop at
5 the door when the school day is over and especially
6 now with cyberbullying being as prevalent as it is.
7 So, do you think that, you know DYCD having an anti-
8 bullying hotline would... that would be accessible to
9 all young people in New York City would be... would be
10 helpful?

11 SUSAN HASKELL: We think that it would be
12 duplicative of the resources that are being planned
13 at DOE, we are concerned that it might possibly even
14 be disruptive in terms of data collection and follow
15 through to, to implement a separate bullying hotline
16 and I think one exciting thing about DYCD's role in
17 responding... [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

19 SUSAN HASKELL: ...to bullying is that our
20 primary goal in the young people that we connect with
21 is positive youth development. So, we... it... all of our
22 programs are framed around the concept... the primary
23 goal, concept of creating positive relationships with
24 caring adults, connecting peers to positive
25 relationship with other young people to promote like

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2 prosocial behavior and to give a young person who
3 might be inclined to be a bully and to get, you know
4 whatever they're getting socially, emotionally from
5 that experience instead through learning new skills
6 and being successful. So, I think we address that
7 issue directly through our programming.

8

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Well there is no
9 dedicated anti-bullying hotline that's available for
10 New York City youth who find themselves in a
11 situation that they need a response to.

12

SUSAN HASKELL: I... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: 3-1-1 is a general
14 line and you get referred to... [cross-talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: ...to the, the Department...
16 to the Department of Education we feel that's going
17 to address virtually all young people who are in this
18 situation and... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: But that's if they're
20 a, a school... they're a school student, that's not
21 someone... just, just the youth who is out of school,
22 someone who's aged out of school so, you know where's
23 the resource for that targeted population?

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SUSAN HASKELL: I think that that is
25 being addressed directly through the new investments

1
2 in Thrive, NYC Well so all young people... this would
3 be sort of more older disconnected youth that you're
4 describing I think and all young people and adults
5 are being encouraged to call 1-888-NYCWELL, you can
6 chat... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Well it doesn't have
8 to be older, you know young people... [cross-talk]

9 SUSAN HASKELL: Who are disconnected...
10 [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...we're talking about
12 the LGBT community and Q community that, you know
13 suffers probably disproportionately... [cross-talk]

14 SUSAN HASKELL: Yeah... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...from bullying also...
16 [cross-talk]

17 SUSAN HASKELL: I, I think that NYC Well
18 is going to capture young people who may not reach
19 out for support directly through 3-1-1 or Department
20 of Education and with that resources they, they
21 actually can get counseling immediately through,
22 through the connection with NYC Well. Through the 3-
23 1-1 or the DYCD... DOE bullying resources they'll be
24 directed to appropriate school personnel and Thrive
25 can offer immediate response.

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DARRYL RATTRAY: Just, just to, to add to... and I think one of the things that we have to do is definitely check in with DOE on their details, I'm not 100 percent sure that its only isolated for... the resource will only be for students... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

DARRYL RATTRAY: ...that perhaps it'll be other resources and referrals happening through that hotline. Now through our programming we'll make the effort to partner with DOE on this, get the word out, make sure our providers are informing the, the neighborhoods about this new resource but we'll definitely check in with DOE and... on the details and whether or not it's only for students, I, I don't believe that to be the case.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I just... you know a, a point that, you know I think is important is that a young person who is in crisis and reaches out to a hotline that would directly serve them right then interactively is different from calling 3-1-1 and getting, you know a list of other phone numbers to call and by the time you actually reach someone or you've gone through several steps, you know they might have decided it's... you know it's just more

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2 effort than, than not, you know so I think there's
3 real value in having a dedicated hotline that would
4 respond, you know interactively to a young person who
5 feels that... who has made the courageous step to reach
6 out for help because we know often times they're so
7 intimidated that they don't and so, you know I, I
8 think any gap in, in that moment where, you know they
9 say, you know I'm going to deal with this and to be
10 referred on is, is a lost opportunity for helping
11 that young person.

12 SUSAN HASKELL: I appreciate that, and we
13 agree, we think... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

15 SUSAN HASKELL: ...NYC Well is a great
16 resource for that immediate support, somebody who can
17 connect you at the... in the most extreme example to a
18 mobile crisis team right then and there.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, what does DYCD do
20 to promote these resources so that a young person in
21 New York City would know where to go and, and how to
22 go and, and if they wanted an immediate, you know
23 interaction that they should go to Thrive or... [cross-
24 talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: Yeah, I'm going to...

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[cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: New York Well... [cross-

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talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: ...ask... I'm going to

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respond briefly about, about the Thrive efforts and

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then to ask Associate Commissioner Rattray to talk

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about what happens at the programmatic level. But

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DYCD has been actively involved in the First Lady's

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Town Halls, we've been going out to communities to

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talk to young people and adults about this resource,

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we've been connecting with providers to promote the..

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you know including chants to repeat the number to

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ensure that people remember. Internally to DYCD we

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are all being trained about the mental health

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resources so that we can carry that forth to our

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providers and our providers can carry it forth to

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young people. I know I personally am getting, you

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know questions from... you know like as we all do from,

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from neighbors and friends and I'm excited that I can

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offer them a resource through Thrive. Do you want to...

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[cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you provide...

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[cross-talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: ...share... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...training to, to all of the, the different providers and contractors that you... [cross-talk]

DARRYL RATTRAY: So, our direction starts with a document called Dignity and Respect for All on creating and maintaining a welcoming environment, all of our providers receive that document. It speaks to creating a safe space within your programs, we see that show up in different ways at every program site. For instance, at West Bryant in Staten Island they create bully free zones, so they are directly working with elementary students within the after-school program, middle and high as well... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

DARRYL RATTRAY: ...about what does bullying mean, what does it mean to bully, what are some of the direct bullying tactics that go on and what are some of the indirect, so young people are now learning that. For instance, for example, because someone's a male they shouldn't be... you shouldn't tell them that you're... you should be strong enough to pick up that box and that there are different forms

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2 of bullying and they're learning this at the
3 elementary age across our programs.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And I, I, I love that
5 we're educating the young people, are we doing any
6 training with, with the adults that are providing
7 these services?

8

RANDY SCOTT: Yes, we are. Currently we...
9 part of the Thrive initiative was that we were going
10 to train not only our staff, but we were working on
11 training our provider agencies and we have started
12 that process to bring mental health first aid to our
13 providers in many different training sessions as well
14 as with Thrive NYC the funding that we received
15 allowed for us to... for the providers to have trained
16 staff on, on board in order to readily and
17 expeditiously assist youth with any mental health
18 issues that should arise and provide them with the
19 services. So, there is training as well as there is
20 on site staff that can assist at the moment.

21

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Does DYCD hold
22 contract Thrive NYC programs?

23

RANDY SCOTT: We... within our contracted
24 programming there is Thrive dollars associated with
25 the bottom line for runaway and homeless youth so in

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2 our drop in centers and our residential programs they
3 receive funding to either bring staff on to provide
4 services in mental health situations or trainings, we
5 also allow for them to do psycho... psych evaluations,
6 work groups, creative art therapy so things that are
7 identified on site as immediate needs for youth who
8 identify with mental health issues so they are able
9 to be creative in using the funding for that purpose.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, I'm going to
11 follow up, but Council Member Chin has some questions
12 and today's a busy day, everybody's at hearings or
13 something... [cross-talk]

14 COMMITTEE MEMBER CHIN: Two hearings...
15 [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...as you can see...
17 [cross-talk]

18 COMMITTEE MEMBER CHIN: ...going on at the
19 same time... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Right, so... [cross-
21 talk]

22 COMMITTEE MEMBER CHIN: ...which I'm on
23 both committees... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Council Member...
25 [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE MEMBER CHIN: Thank you Chair...

[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...Chin... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE MEMBER CHIN: ...thank you. I

just want to follow up on what Chair Rose was talking about in terms of the, the anti-bullying hotline. I know that from your testimony DYCD is, is doing a lot with providers and if some of the youth if they're lucky enough to be in a DYCD program most likely they would, you know have access to resources but have you considered, you know that the term bullying is really getting out there and to have a dedicated way of getting information whether it's through a phone line and now, you know with all these mobile applications that might be another way for people to, to act... young people to access and some of these young people may not be in our public schools, they might have dropped out or they're in private school, parochial school or whatever but just the, the fact of getting some direct assistance right away. I mean when we were talking about, you know the Well program, the Thrive program in some way there's still a taboo that kids don't want to... they don't want to say well I got a mental health issue, no, people... adult... there's

1
2 still a taboo out there on that but the fact that if
3 you can have a direct contact, I mean even with that
4 hotline you can directly connect it to whatever other
5 programs or other information, calling 3-1-1 is like
6 a non-starter, you know people are very frustrated a
7 lot of times when they really need concrete
8 information 3-1-1 is not the most effective so, I
9 mean what we are asking is that with the legislation
10 is like have you, you know considered this as a
11 resource that you can help the kids that call this
12 number and to be able to really help guide them,
13 direct them to the resource that, that you already
14 have.

15 SUSAN HASKELL: We do think that the
16 resources that the city has in place through DOE will
17 cover young people, you mentioned prior, private, we
18 mentioned charter and then there's also getting it to
19 disconnected youth who, you know do mostly tend to be
20 older although there could be younger people in those
21 situations as well. I want to be clear, DYCD does
22 have a hotline, we have Youth Connect which we market
23 for all kinds of young people's needs. The data... the
24 data on Youth Connect bullying calls is very minimal
25 so in the past couple years... [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE MEMBER CHIN: Its very minimal because they don't see that as a, a, a place where they can get some help directly, some... I mean that's the whole thing about publicizing, not everybody even knows that you have a Youth Connect phone line, I mean there was... from the other hearings that we were talking about, you know runaway and homeless youth trying to find a bed and so I think that really to kind of open up and see how we can use different resources to, to reach the vulnerable kids, kids... [cross-talk]

SUSAN HASSELL: Yeah... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE MEMBER CHIN: ...who need help...

[cross-talk]

SUSAN HASSELL: Well in contrast to the Youth Connect data in, in briefly speaking with DOE and I don't have all their data here but in... just since January they had more than 450 calls coming into their hotline, so I do... I am concerned to your point about like marketing and people awareness that the more straightforward we keep our resources the better data we're going to have on what kinds of calls are coming in and being responsive and the, the more we can streamline our marketing. Our goal is to

1
2 support what DOE is doing so that if a young person
3 is connected with DYCD less connected with the
4 schools we will be able to help direct them to the
5 right way either through Thrive or DOE.

6 COMMITTEE MEMBER CHIN: I think we really
7 need to look at the data and also hear from the
8 advocates why, you know that is not sufficient and we
9 still got to find ways of getting, you know
10 information to kids who really needs the help then
11 that's why, you know reason for these legislation and
12 hopefully we can, you know come up with new ideas or
13 whatever, ways of reaching the kids and the, the
14 parents because it's still happening out there and
15 bullying is... if you talk to any kids in school like
16 for them to really get the resources or the kids in
17 the neighborhood we don't want them to think that
18 it's a right of passage that everybody got to get
19 bullied when, when you're young, no, there is help
20 out there, there are resources so we're just trying
21 to find a way of making sure people know how to get
22 the help they need.

23 DARRYL RATTRAY: And Council Member we
24 are... we are absolutely in agreement that this has
25 been a thread of importance over the years through

1
2 our programming. Through our special initiatives that
3 we do whether it's our dance competitions or some of
4 the, the really specific things that programs are
5 doing in neighborhoods this has always been a theme
6 that they take on. So, like for instance in our step
7 it up dance competition that was mentioned in
8 testimony, imagine dance teams that are thinking that
9 they're part of a dance competition but now they find
10 out in the opening that you have to take on a social
11 campaign, this year the campaign is anti-bullying and
12 what we're seeing is providers, dance teams, there's
13 one in East New York, team diversity where they're,
14 they're campaign is anti-immigrant bullying and now
15 this dance team is now empowered to speak to the
16 residents, speak to the other program participants,
17 rally them, go out there get the word out, this is
18 happening across the city in many of our programs in
19 many of the initiatives that we do. Another really
20 interesting one is rock nation in Far Rockaway, that
21 dance team took on the efforts to stop body shaming
22 as a form of anti-bullying approach. In the Bronx,
23 Live, Dance, Love that dance team is looking at
24 cultural bullying and focusing on culturally aware
25 beliefs and practices and again these are young

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2 adults who stepped into this for performance and now
3 have been empowered to take on this larger role in
4 their community and then the... on social media the
5 numbers are out there, they're getting the word out,
6 I mean that's just one example of the platform that
7 we have through providers to youth development and
8 community development. Like if we concentrate on one
9 hotline, the DOE hotline and get the word out and
10 we'll stick with DOE to ensure that it's not just a
11 student like you know if someone calls says are you a
12 student, yes, no if not call someone else, we'll make
13 sure that the proper resources are there, we'll speak
14 with them about the hearing as well as, as you should
15 do as well but we need to concentrate efforts on one
16 hotline that young people know about, one social
17 media platform that young people know about to help
18 combat this issue.

19 COMMITTEE MEMBER CHIN: It's great that
20 DYCD is doing all this programming and that's the
21 challenge that I want to put to DYCD, when every
22 single young people in our city can participate in
23 our DYCD program and they can get all that but right
24 now that's not the case, okay, because DYCD don't
25 have enough funding to fund an afterschool program

1
2 for all our kids in public school. In elementary
3 school we have universal middle school kids but no
4 summer, okay, which we don't agree with but we don't
5 even have universal after school program for every
6 single public school elementary school student, if we
7 have you could be reaching out to all the hearings
8 and all those kids, I mean they would be
9 participating in all these programs but we're not
10 there and we need to be there so everyone of them all
11 have the opportunity to get the resources that they
12 need and that's the challenge that I ask for DYCD,
13 you got to expand, you know don't be satisfied with
14 the budget you have now, you got to make sure every
15 kid has an afterschool program and tell that to the,
16 the Commissioner, alright, we're not there yet. Until
17 the day that we have that we still got work to do.

18 DARRYL RATTRAY: Sure.

19 COMMITTEE MEMBER CHIN: Thank you Chair,
20 I got to go to housing.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Give them hell
22 Margaret, thanks. Thank you, Council Member. On that
23 note you're, you're saying that Youth Connect is, is
24 a, a platform that... or resource for young people to
25 access so are there any plans for you to maybe

1
2 appropriate or expand it so that it actually has a
3 function where it is an interactive bully.. anti-
4 bullying hotline as opposed to just a referral
5 mechanism and so that a young person could call there
6 and could actually have sort of an intervention
7 instead of again going through a, a drop down list of
8 services that are provided and a number of other
9 people that they have to call to access it? Is, is
10 there any conversation around looking at
11 appropriating that site or expanding that site so
12 that it has this particular feature so that, you know
13 it's, it's actually addressing the need of someone
14 who finds themselves in a bullying situation?

15 SUSAN HASKELL: Currently Youth Connect
16 doesn't provide that kind of counseling.. [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I know it doesn't..
18 [cross-talk]

19 SUSAN HASKELL: ..we are putting our
20 attention on the new and significant resources
21 through NYC Well and DOE so that if a young person
22 does come to the attention of Youth Connect they can
23 alert.. they can connect them with those resources.
24 We, we think that that need is being met through
25

1
2 those resources, that we have existing services to
3 meet that need.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Are you aware of any
5 of the other social media platforms or mobile apps
6 that are out there that address anti-bullying, that
7 address bullying?

8 SUSAN HASKELL: Well I mentioned in the
9 testimony.. I think in the testimony that the UFT has
10 resources for.. [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Right, uh-huh... [cross-
12 talk]

13 SUSAN HASKELL: ...school children in
14 public and private, outside of the city I'm aware of
15 the Trevor Project has a resource, there's a runaway
16 and a national runaway hotline... [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah... [cross-talk]

18 SUSAN HASKELL: ...there's... yeah, D...
19 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene so I know
20 there are other, others that are... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Is there any move to
22 sort of coalesce with, you know some of these more
23 interactive direct... you know... [cross-talk]

24 SUSAN HASKELL: Yes, I think that...
25 [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...programs... [cross-

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talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: ...I think that is a, a

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responsibility of Youth Connect and of course 3-1-1

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as well to be aware of available resources and

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connect young people to the right ones, yes, I do

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think that's... that coordination is part of our goal.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, let's say that

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we're just going to really push hard on this, what

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would it... what do you think the anticipated cost

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would be to build an anti-bullying hotline and the,

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the related resources that you would need to do that?

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SUSAN HASKELL: I, I don't know, I know

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that DOE has just committed millions some, something

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in the territory of eight million dollars to their

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efforts and that's a significant investment and it's

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a large reason why we want to keep focus on, on that...

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[cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, do you have access

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to DOE's... the, the data that they have that they get

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from these programs that you're, you're connected to?

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SUSAN HASKELL: We could do better in

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communicating with them on these, we've been in touch

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with them recently. As I mentioned they shared that

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2 they had 450 calls since January, but we could look
3 into opportunities to coordinate better in terms of
4 what we can learn to provide better services through
5 DYCD, by hearing the kinds of complaints and issues
6 that are coming through to them. I think that's a
7 good idea and we will be in closer touch with them
8 following this hearing.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you have oversight
10 of these... the sites and, and the DOE programs...
11 [cross-talk]

12 SUSAN HASKELL: Absolutely... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: No... [cross-talk]

14 SUSAN HASKELL: ...not, no.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: No and so in response
16 to if you knew the numbers then you would try to
17 provide different services or adequate services or...
18 [cross-talk]

19 SUSAN HASKELL: I can... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...additional services...
21 [cross-talk]

22 SUSAN HASKELL: ...some, some examples...
23 yeah, some examples I can think of is, you know if
24 DOE reported that there were many calls coming into
25 this certain neighborhood, many calls coming in

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2 regarding this specific school then I think DYCD
3 could have a role to say like hey what's going on in
4 that neighborhood, let's look at our community
5 centers... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

7 SUSAN HASKELL: ...and see if we can do
8 some outreach... [cross-talk]

9 DARRYL RATTRAY: It's very... [cross-talk]

10 SUSAN HASKELL: ...what kind of... [cross-
11 talk]

12 DARRYL RATTRAY: ...very... [cross-talk]

13 SUSAN HASKELL: ...willing is it... is...
14 [cross-talk]

15 DARRYL RATTRAY: ...very similar to work
16 that we do now with the Mayor's Office to Combat
17 Domestic Violence. In the areas that we know have a
18 high report of domestic violence we now work with
19 them to do workshops with young people and young
20 adults, relationship workshops, dating workshops to
21 start to bring that down hopefully.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you get call again
23 data regarding the, the 3-1-1 calls that are related
24 to bullying?

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SUSAN HASKELL: We get data, as I said we had very few like something in the range of five or six bullying calls through 3-1-1 to Youth Connect... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, there's really like nobody like monitoring how many calls sort of come in, in terms of, of bullying... [cross-talk]

SUSAN HASKELL: Oh, I think that is monitored closely, absolutely, what I'm responding to is that there might be an opportunity especially through the expanded portal in 2019 that's going to have more information for DYCD to play a role to respond to those... that information. They... DOE is again... part of their significant resources has been increasing their team, it's going to be very closely monitored just like 3-1-1 is, I mean we get detailed information from 3-1-1 about calls in areas related to DYCD, yes.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: What mechanism is out there to capture the numbers in terms of bullying for young people who are not affiliated with DOE or a charter school who are just out there?

SUSAN HASKELL: There will data through NYC Well, there's our own data through 3-1-1 Youth

1
2 Connect or, you know simple email communication and
3 then DOE will have robust data regarding their
4 efforts.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, I'm going to ask
6 the question, do you think that the efforts that are
7 in place now are adequate?

8 SUSAN HASKELL: I think that even DOE is
9 planning to expand those efforts so I... their plans
10 include increased resources from what we have
11 currently, so I think the city has already committed
12 to expanding the resources that are available and
13 those efforts are already underway by, by 2019 they,
14 they anticipate having fully implemented the portal
15 and the data information... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And is anyone
17 developing a mobile app to, to deal with the
18 bullying?

19 SUSAN HASKELL: I don't know about... I
20 don't know if that's part of their plan, I'm not...
21 [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: This is the... [cross-
23 talk]

24 SUSAN HASKELL: ...I'm not aware of what...
25 [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...21st century and, and

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I... [cross-talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: Yeah... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...don't know any young

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person that's not connected... [cross-talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: Well you... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...you know... [cross-

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talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: ...can... I mean you can get

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to... you can get to the portal through your phone for

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sure... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: ...it's on the web... [cross-

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talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh. But... [cross-

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talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: I, I would... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...an, an app that...

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[cross-talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: ...have to reach out...

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[cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...would address...

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[cross-talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: ...I'll have to get back to you, we can reach out to DOE and get back to you.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I just want to say, you know you should be commended for the work that you're doing in terms of, of prevention. A long time ago DYCD moved away from prevention to intervention and I'm really glad to see that you're handling, you know this crisis in terms of prevention and education however that's... that is a process and it takes time, you're, you're changing a mindset, you're, you're instilling a, a value system so that takes time so I really need DYCD to see that we need something to deal with the immediacy of bullying as opposed to... not... as in addition to because I, I think the efforts that are being made in terms of prevention and long term and, and... are really exciting and they're through the, the types of activities that young people relate to and... but again to piggy back on Council Member Chin's, you know statement, we're not reaching nearly enough young people to have sort of a universal impact so... [cross-talk]

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DARRYL RATTRAY: Councilwoman I just... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

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2 DARRYL RATTRAY: ...just want to add that..
3 I mean across the city every day our, our providers,
4 our programs intervene in situations that are
5 bullying situations because of their makeup, because
6 of the youth development, community development
7 approach, you know they know the parents, they know
8 siblings, they know the people who are not part of
9 the program but are outside in the neighborhood and
10 they're able to interact with them, engage, mediate
11 that situation. We have examples where East Harlem
12 there was a young man being bullied, the program
13 intervened, it happened to be a gang that... a crew
14 that the young man was dealing with who actually had
15 interactions with the program and they were able to
16 mediate that situation to a better outcome. So, I
17 mean there are things that are happening through
18 providers every day... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

20 DARRYL RATTRAY: ...just through the, the
21 normal operating of the program, of the afterschool
22 program of the community center in terms of
23 prevention and engagement and mediation.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, thank you. You
25 look like you have something you want to say.

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[off-mic dialogue]

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DARRYL RATTRAY: He, he's just going to

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ditto..

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: He's just going to

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ditto.. [cross-talk]

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DARRYL RATTRAY: He's smiling.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: That's how that works,

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okay. Okay, so I, I think you probably will have more

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to say about the next.. the next bill which is 713 I

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believe. In terms of 713 and, and the request to have

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an ombudsman to, to handle the complaints and the

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issues of runaway and homeless youth, you cited that,

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you know you are regulated often by the Office of

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Family and Children Services, state, state mandates

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but is that not only just for the court mandated

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young people who are in these facilities?

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RANDY SCOTT: No, as the runaway and

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homeless youth coordinator I'm responsible for the

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youth in New York City, in terms of providing them

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with the services that they need when they go to any

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of the certified runaway and homeless youth

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facilities as well as when they go to our drop-in

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centers and they work with our street outreach teams.

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So, I basically am available to them for any concerns

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2 or questions, suggestions that they may have at any
3 given time in order to provide them with the best
4 resources that they can, you know aim to get back to
5 independence if that's the path that they so choose.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, how do they get
7 access to you?

8 RANDY SCOTT: There's many forums that
9 they can have access to me; the... one is through focus
10 groups that we hold... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Through what, I'm
12 sorry?

13 RANDY SCOTT: Focus groups...

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Focus groups...

15 RANDY SCOTT: ...that we hold at different
16 times, also through our... can you hear me?

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yes, uh-huh... [cross-
18 talk]

19 RANDY SCOTT: Okay, also through our
20 monthly youth provider meetings that we have at our
21 site, I also am available to go to the sites and
22 speak to young people in that forum. We also have the
23 ability to talk to them from... directly because they
24 have access to my telephone number to call me if they
25 choose to do so, my cell phone as well as my office

1
2 phone so I've communicated as well as met with youth
3 in those forums.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, do you have staff?

5 RANDY SCOTT: Yes, I do.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay and so 24-hour
7 staffing?

8 RANDY SCOTT: I have staff that are 24
9 hours as well as myself is 24 hours.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, if I'm a, a young
11 person who has a, a crisis at three a.m. I call you?

12 RANDY SCOTT: The likelihood is that you
13 would be calling me first, correct, yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

15 RANDY SCOTT: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And... [cross-talk]

17 RANDY SCOTT: And, and my number has been
18 provided in past hearings in terms of allowing youth
19 to have access to my direct line.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And how many youths
21 are we talking about that's in the system?

22 RANDY SCOTT: That's in our system...

23 [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Or it... that you serve?
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RANDY SCOTT: For fiscal year '17 in our crisis shelters we served about anywhere from 2,500 to 3,000 youth which in our crisis services in our tills that numbers a little bit lower to about, I would say 250 to 300 and in drop in centers which is a duplicated number it's around 10,000 to 11,000 youth but again that's a duplicated number.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: I wanted to... can I add something?

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RANDY SCOTT: Sure...

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SUSAN HASKELL: I think one thing that differentiates DYCD from other residential programs like you described where there's custody in foster care or detention is that DYCD doesn't provide direct service to young people so I think their first line of defense really is our funded providers so they'd be less likely to know about DYCD than they would be to know about the drop in center in Harlem or the Jamaica center that's now open 24 hours in Queens or to be connected with a Safe Horizon street outreach team that's going around, I don't... although Randy is available 24/7 and has received late night phone calls more... it's... it would be much more typical for a

1
2 young person to connect with the funded provider and
3 I think although we call the role in New York City
4 the RHY... the, the runaway and homeless youth services
5 coordinator we don't use the word ombudsman, the role
6 that Randy plays in New York City is, is, is sort of
7 an ombudsman for young people who are getting those
8 services directly through providers so they would...
9 they would... they could either contact Randy about a
10 concern that they're having with one of the providers
11 or maybe, you know they're not happy with, with some
12 service they got then he'd kind of... he performs an
13 ombudsman role in that way to the direct service.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: We've been joined by
15 Council Member Eugene and again it's a busy day so...
16 do you have a question before you'll have to go?

17 COMMITTEE MEMBER EUGENE: Not really,
18 thank you very much... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay... [cross-talk]

20 COMMITTEE MEMBER EUGENE: I just want to,
21 to thank the, the panelists for coming for this, this
22 very important public hearing, we know that the, the
23 young people they are close to our hearts and that
24 they deserve so much and so thank you much and thank
25 you Madame Chair, thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay... [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you...

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[cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. So, if I'm a young person in a facility and I have an issue with that facility I'm supposed to talk to them directly about my problem with them?

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RANDY SCOTT: At each of the sites we, you know require our contracted programs to post our 3-1-1 sign, this is the opportunity for the youth also to communicate with us outside of contacting the facility if they should have a particular issue with the facility. One of the... another option that they have in terms of being certified is that each of the programs needs to have a grievance policy on site and that grievance policy is supposed to be read and signed off by the youth at the facility once they are being intake into the facility which gives them the opportunity to understand how they can communicate externally if they should have a concern so a lot of our concerns have been coming through 3-1-1 to our Youth Connect hotline as well as through our commissioner's hotline so that we can address them in an expeditious manner.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, many, many city agencies have ombudsman so that people can anonymously or can directly contact someone who is an advocate on their behalf, what is your reluctance to having an ombudsman for homeless and runaway youth?

SUSAN HASKELL: We are fully in support of the goals of this bill. We, we really feel that the... that this is met through the existing commitments and I think if you, you know in, in my experience, you know people are afraid to complain to DYCD or this or that, I think if you talk to providers or you talk to... that they will feel that Randy as the RHY services coordinator is fully responsive and accountable to every young person's complaint that has come through and I think the fact that they are more directly connected with their service provider let's Randy's role be like the ombudsman for the services that they're getting. So, again... because we don't provide the service directly unlike other city agencies, its, it's really... it's more often then not if they're raising a concern to us that it's a concern about something the provider has... you know they've experienced with the provider and I think... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

SUSAN HASKELL: ...that you'll find that both young people who've had concerns and providers feel, feel really comfortable with the expediency and fairness and clarity that Randy responds so I want to be clear, we agree with this, young people have to have a way to express their concerns, we agree 100 percent and I feel also 100 percent confident that those... that goal is being met through Randy's service.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And so, who do you report these, these complaints and incidents to once they... once it comes to your attention, is it... is there any reporting mechanism and to whom is it?

RANDY SCOTT: In terms of incidents that, that come to my attention first I review them then I review them with my team and then we investigate them to make sure that they're being addressed and resolved in an expeditious manner. If they should happen to be incidents that alarm, you know more action then I communicate that with my supervisor who is the Deputy Commissioner Susan Haskell so that it can then go up the chain of being addressed as well as being, you know informed with... throughout the

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2 agency so that's the process that we have but a lot..
3 most of the incidents that have come in have been
4 addressed and resolved and usually within 24 hours of
5 receipt.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And is this data
7 collected anywhere by anyone?

8

RANDY SCOTT: Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay... [cross-talk]

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RANDY SCOTT: It is collected.

11

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, we could get the
12 numbers of complaints and the type of complaints and
13 when they typically sort of come in, we could.. we
14 could get that?

15

RANDY SCOTT: Yes, yes, yes.

16

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: We could and that's
17 for all of your contracted facilities?

18

SUSAN HASKELL: Everything to do with
19 runaway and homeless youth Randy would be responsible
20 for and we would be tracking the number of incident
21 reports for example I know you do a monthly review of
22 that, the 3-1-1 phone calls, the Youth Connect phone
23 calls and we have record of those we.. that we, we
24 could compile and share.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Is this information shared with the state Office of Family and, and Children Services?

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RANDY SCOTT: The... I'm in communication with the state regularly through, through, through certification however we have a, a regular monthly meeting where we talk about all incidents that... or situations that need addressed.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And so, all incidents that are reported are handled internally by DYCD, by your office?

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RANDY SCOTT: Yes, well incidents for runaway and homeless youth.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh. So, I'm going to ask this question of you also. What would the anticipated cost be if we established an ombudsman's office, you know inclusive of all the resources that you would need to have a functional office that could address the needs 24 hours a day?

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RANDY SCOTT: I'm trying to... I'm wondering if you're trying to ask me if I need a raise.

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SUSAN HASKELL: We, we don't, we... [cross-talk]

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Or... [cross-talk]

3 SUSAN HASKELL: ...haven't tossed that out...

4 [cross-talk]

5 DARRYL RATTRAY: Yeah, we don't... [cross-

6 talk]

7 SUSAN HASKELL: ...we feel really... [cross-

8 talk]

9 DARRYL RATTRAY: Yeah... [cross-talk]

10 SUSAN HASKELL: ...we feel that that role

11 is being met... that that role is being met right now

12 with our... [cross-talk]

13 DARRYL RATTRAY: ...current... [cross-talk]

14 SUSAN HASKELL: Yeah... [cross-talk]

15 DARRYL RATTRAY: ...with... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Or, or a change of

17 title?

18 SUSAN HASKELL: Randy has had... Randy has

19 had four promotions in the last something like 16

20 months, I don't think we can bring him any higher,

21 he's a... he's... [cross-talk]

22 RANDY SCOTT: Actually... [cross-talk]

23 SUSAN HASKELL: ...great at his... [cross-

24 talk]

25 RANDY SCOTT: Yeah... [cross-talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: ...job and he... and, and as a former provider he really cares about young people, well he... they're in good hands with Randy.

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RANDY SCOTT: And actually, I actually came to government from Project Hospitality which is one of the providers in your, your district.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay. Is there any recourse for, for the young people who the Office of Children and Family Services are not able to serve, I, I guess this... these are the court, court mandated young people that OCFS they, they have a direct connection to their ombudsman?

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RANDY SCOTT: As you know OCFS certifies our residential programs only, they currently have no jurisdiction over our drop-in centers and our drop in... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Right... [cross-talk]

RANDY SCOTT: ...centers work with a number of youth in a given year and through the services that we have in runaway and homeless youth the drop-in youth are able to access the same services as any of our residential whether they're under OCFS or not, so we treat them all the same in regard to their

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2 concerns and managing any incidents that may arise so
3 that they can receive the same and equal services.

4

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, I forgot my
5 question, you are so good, you did that on purpose.
6 Okay, if I can't... it was a good one too.

7

SUSAN HASKELL: We're not going... we,
8 we're around, you know how to reach us.

9

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Well I... you know I, I
10 want to thank you for, for your testimony, it's been
11 helpful, I know that the testimony will be reviewed
12 by our council and, and I'm sure you'll be hearing
13 back from us and I'd like it if someone could stay
14 behind to hear what the advocates have to say on this
15 particular... that's right, thank you, you're the
16 designated, yeah, listener right. Okay, so I guess...
17 did we... is there any... okay, so I, I want to thank
18 you, thank you.

19

DARRYL RATTRAY: Thank you.

20

SUSAN HASKELL: Thank you.

21

RANDY SCOTT: Thank you.

22

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Give the Commissioner
23 my regards.

24

SUSAN HASKELL: Will do.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Oh, could you give us
3 the sign that you have, oh, and, and I... and I need to
4 say this before you leave, you have to do a better
5 job of letting people know what resources there are
6 because, you know surveying young people in terms of
7 Youth Connect they don't know what that is, they,
8 they really don't know what that is and so it's not
9 a, a, a valuable resource if they don't know what it
10 is and how to, you know to access it, the same with
11 the, the young people in the runaway and homeless,
12 the tills and the drop in centers, you know a piece
13 of paper on a bulletin board in a stationary location
14 isn't really I, I think the best way of letting
15 someone know that there's a, a resource and a service
16 and that their rights are... you know they have a right
17 to make that call. When they enter in do... into the,
18 the facility are they given like a, a bill of rights,
19 when I go to the hospital they tell me, you know what
20 my rights are, and I have all the phone numbers that,
21 you know I need?

22 RANDY SCOTT: At each site they are given
23 a program manual which provides them with information
24 on how to access services, proceed with any
25 information that they... [cross-talk]

1

2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Complaints... [cross-
3 talk]

4 RANDY SCOTT: Yes, complaints, grievance
5 policy, yes... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh, uh-huh...
7 [cross-talk]

8 RANDY SCOTT: ...I mentioned early so they
9 are given that information once intake is completed
10 by the provider agencies...

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh. So, please
12 take back to the Commissioner that we need to have...
13 to, to look at distribution of how, you know people
14 are made aware of what the resources are especially
15 Youth Connect and with that said that doesn't mean
16 this is the last conversation we'll have about the
17 hotline. Thank you.

18 [off-mic dialogue]

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Oh, and, and our next
20 panel will be Jamie Powlovich, Powlovich from the
21 Coalition for Homeless Youth; Jellia... Gillia Miller...

22 GENA MILLER: Gena.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Gena, oh, Gena, that's
24 an N, I'm sorry Gena from Advocates for Youth New
25 York and Beth Hofmeister from the Legal Aid Society

1
2 and Coalition for the Homeless. When you take your
3 place please we will be sworn in and..

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: No, they don't need to
5 be...

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: You don't have to be,
7 okay, good for you. That means we, we trust you more
8 than administration. Could you identify yourselves
9 before and then you may resume your testimony.

10 JAMIE POWLOVICH: Sure, good morning. My
11 name is Jamie Powlovich and I am the Executive
12 Director of the Coalition for Homeless Youth also
13 known as CHY. CHY has advocated for the needs of
14 runaway and homeless youth across New York State for
15 nearly 40 years. The coalition is comprised of 60
16 providers of services to homeless youth across New
17 York State, 29 of our members are here in New York
18 City. Our members include providers that are directly
19 contracted to provide services to run away and
20 homeless youth as well as agencies that intersect
21 with the larger runaway and homeless youth population
22 within the larger scope of their work. I would like
23 to thank you Chair Rose for holding today's hearing
24 as well as the absent members of the Youth Services
25 Committee for bringing these two bills forth and I

1
2 also would like to thank Speaker Johnson as you did
3 for his ongoing commitment to the needs of young
4 people experiencing homelessness. I will limit my
5 testimony to just in regard to Intro 713. In my
6 testimony that I put forth there is some background
7 information but I'm just going to kind of jump to the
8 bill info. You're welcome. So, at this time the
9 Coalition for Homeless Youth supports the design and
10 implementation of a method for homeless young people
11 to report grievances and obtain information that can
12 support them in navigating systems and alleviating
13 crisis. Although we applaud the council for their
14 willingness to create an ombudsman position with the
15 intent of supporting homeless young people, we feel
16 that given the needs of today's youth and the many
17 ways in which they access information that an
18 ombudsman would not be the best way to achieve the
19 desired outcome of the bill under consideration
20 today. Young people that are experiencing
21 homelessness are often dealing with a plethora of
22 issues and are regularly in crisis. When a young
23 person reaches out for help or guidance they are
24 looking for support and service and results
25 immediately. Although this is not always feasible it

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2 is the outcome that they desire. An ombudsman's job
3 is more to collect information, rely resources to
4 address the issue presented and report the
5 interaction. Their ability to immediately assist to
6 alleviate crisis or deescalate a situation is often
7 limited. Instead of creating an ombudsman position
8 within DYCD we would recommend that DYCD expand their
9 current Youth Connect hotline to operate 24 hours a
10 day so that it can serve as a tool that can address
11 many of the intended outcomes of Intro 713 and can
12 also support youth in real time with their needs.
13 Currently there is no hotline available to homeless
14 youth 24/7 despite there being a need for one. The
15 Coalition for Homeless Youth has seen a significant
16 increase in the amount of calls, emails, and Facebook
17 messages that we receive from young people, parents
18 and service providers looking for support. Based on
19 our, really my, relationships with the runaway and
20 homeless youth community and with DYCD we can support
21 the best way possible but based on our limited
22 capacity it is not something that is within our
23 regular scope of work. Currently the Youth Connect
24 hotline provides resources and referrals for youth
25 related services in New York City but only during

1
2 business hours. By extending its hours and changing
3 its structure to operate more like a crisis hotline
4 it would give youth and the general community a
5 resource to report complaints, obtain general
6 information and get real time support with issues
7 related to homelessness such, such as finding a bed
8 or a safe place to go. In addition, if Youth Connect
9 could expand to have the ability to facilitate
10 communication with youth via social media and text
11 messaging that would be ideal, obviously young people
12 communicate a little bit different than they did many
13 years ago. Lastly, we appreciate the intent of the
14 bill to provide additional oversight of the services
15 being provided by the DYCD runaway and homeless youth
16 contracted providers however we see this proposed
17 oversight as a duplication of the oversight that is
18 already happening. Since the first draft of this bill
19 was introduced over a decade ago DYCD has introduced
20 their... I'm sorry, DYCD has increased their program
21 monitoring to monthly and does field... and does field
22 programs to... specific complaints directly from youth
23 which they kind of testified to how that looks. In
24 conclusion the Coalition is grateful to the city
25 council for its ongoing commitment to run away and

1
2 homeless youth. We look forward to our continued work
3 together to improve the city's runaway and homeless
4 youth services. Thank you for the opportunity to
5 testify today.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you, yes.

7 GENA MILLER: Good morning. My name is
8 Gena Miller, I'm a Staff Attorney, an Equal Justice
9 Works Fellow in the School Justice Project at
10 Advocates for Children of New York. At AFC I support
11 families of students who are involved in bullying
12 incidents in school through direct representation,
13 community, education, and policy advocacy. I have a
14 special focus on LGBTQ students and students with
15 disabilities. We appreciate city council's attention
16 to this significant issue and I'm offering testimony
17 primarily on 376-A because that's, that's really the
18 focus of my organization. We're concerned that this
19 introduction proposing a hotline and mobile
20 application would duplicate the efforts of the New
21 York City Department of Education and unintentionally
22 make it harder for families to report complaints
23 related to bullying. DYCD representatives already
24 went over the pathways that already exist to make... to
25 make complaints about bullying for families or

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2 students who do not make complaints at school or feel
3 they are not being heard within their school and some
4 of those efforts, the DOE has announced that it will
5 expand those options in 2019. We're also concerned
6 because the bill does not include necessary training
7 for personnel who would respond to complaints on the
8 proposed hotline and mobile application. In our
9 experience people who are involved in bullying
10 incidents may be in or near crisis and staff must be
11 properly trained to support these people. We also
12 think that the city should invest in building
13 positive inclusive school climates by meaningfully
14 implementing anti-bullying trainings. State law and
15 the Chancellor's regulation already require that each
16 school have at least one staff member who is an anti-
17 bullying resource for students and staff. In the DOE
18 this person is called the respect for all or an RFA
19 liaison. The RFA liaison is required to get training
20 to identify how to report and stop bullying and then
21 turn key the training to all staff and all students
22 by October 31st of each year. Some RFA liaisons
23 report to our organization that they don't feel
24 confident enough in their own training to train their
25 colleagues and how to prevent, identify, report and

1
2 most importantly to stop bullying. In AFC's
3 experience a number of schools don't turn key this
4 training and even when they do the training isn't
5 enough for staff to prevent and address bullying. For
6 example, it's been our experience that some school
7 staff don't report bullying because they struggle to
8 differentiate bullying from other behavior and many
9 school administrators aren't adequately trained to
10 investigate and address bullying. We recommend that
11 the DOE review delivery of RFA liaison training, that
12 they provide more support to RFA liaisons including
13 compensation or relief from other obligations and
14 that the DOE better monitor the completion and the
15 efficacy of respect for all liaison... or respect for
16 all trainings themselves. The city should also invest
17 in evidence based whole school approaches to
18 improving school climate like collaborative problem
19 solving. We call on City Council to work with the
20 Mayor to negotiate a final budget that invests at
21 least a million dollars per year in whole school
22 collaborative problem-solving trainings. Research
23 shows that these trainings promote positive school
24 climate and inclusive learning environments where
25 bullying is prevented and addressed. It also develops

1
2 the skills of students and staff to develop healthy
3 relationships, constructively resolve conflict and
4 deescalate behavior. The Mayor's leadership team on
5 school climate and discipline already recommended
6 that the DOE implement these trainings in their 2015
7 and 2016 reports. And while we appreciate the DOE's
8 plans to expand... to expand whole district
9 collaborative problem-solving trainings to three
10 additional districts, the city and the DOE hasn't yet
11 invested in a long term strategic plan with funding
12 to build capacity to roll out these trainings to all
13 schools in the Department of Education and the city
14 can start by... can start doing that by investing a
15 million dollars for whole school trainings and
16 collaborative problem solving in the fiscal year 2019
17 budget. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, I'm
18 happy to answer any questions you have.

19 BETH HOFMEISTER: Good morning, my name
20 is Beth Hofmeister and I am a Staff Attorney in the
21 Homeless Rights Project at the Legal Aid Society, I'm
22 testifying on behalf of Legal Aid and also Coalition
23 for the Homeless, our client, they were unable to be
24 present today. As everyone else we wanted to thank
25 the Youth Services Committee and Council Member Rose,

1
2 the Chair for making runaway and homeless youth in
3 particular such an important part of the early months
4 of this kind of new, you know crew of council members
5 who are working on these issues. We... and we really
6 appreciate obviously Council Member... or excuse me,
7 Speaker Johnson and his staff for all the work
8 they've done in addition to Council Members Chin and
9 Van Bramer who've been present in a lot of the
10 hearings and have heard in particular the youth speak
11 directly about their experiences. So, like everyone
12 else I will skip to the bill that I'm here to speak
13 about today which is Intro 713. Certainly, as an
14 attorney I appreciate the importance of having an
15 independent person that youth and other people who
16 are feeling disenfranchised by a system can go to and
17 complain about issues and, and seek a remedy that
18 they might not be able to seek in other ways. We
19 really believe in that value, we believe in the
20 spirit of what, as, as Jamie said the spirit of
21 what's really behind 713, we don't believe that an
22 ombudsman is probably the way to go about doing it
23 specifically. As class counsel for ongoing litigation
24 with the city in regard to runaway and homeless youth
25 we do have a different kind of access to DYCD to

1
2 solve problems and we do that regularly as... actually
3 as they laid out here, but we understand that not
4 every youth is going to come to us. As Jamie
5 testified here some of the youth are going to her and
6 that they're really needs to be a better way to
7 address these issues. I myself call Randy Scott, I
8 have given Randy Scott's number to people before, he
9 is available to youth and people who are having
10 issues as they come up that is true. I'm a big
11 believer in general and I think our position is that
12 you can't have one person in particular be the, the
13 place that every complaint goes and that it would be
14 a good idea to somehow institutionalize or adjust how
15 those complaints are being... are being made. Coalition
16 for the Homeless who I'm also testifying on behalf of
17 today is the shelter monitor for the Department of
18 Homeless Services Shelter System, we would suggest
19 that that is a, a way to have independent oversight
20 over a, a system in general is to have an outside
21 monitor. We just saw Governor Cuomo do that with
22 NYCHA this past week and that that is another way to
23 think about implementing basically the exact same
24 oversight goals that an ombudsman or an ombudsperson
25 as we would suggest they be called would do however

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2 we're not sure that that might also be the best fit
3 for this particular system so one of the things that
4 Jamie testified to was expanding the role of Youth
5 Connect so that it would be a 24 hour hotline that
6 they're... I think very importantly would be an
7 opportunity for youth who are looking for a bed to be
8 able to call this number and that person who would be
9 answering the phone would be able to identify where
10 they could go in that moment because so often the
11 youth are in these moments of crisis when they're
12 calling, either they're very upset about an issue
13 that's just happened, they need a place to sleep and
14 as someone who's dealing with those issues myself
15 during the day and sometimes into the evening to help
16 them out it would be really helpful if there was one
17 place that youth could go for complaints, for getting
18 a bed, for figuring out where the nearest drop in is
19 all the time and that would be a way to do it but it...
20 but it would have to be expanded and changed in order
21 to address that and I think also... we know we don't
22 know how much all these different things would cost
23 but that might be the most cost effective way to
24 address some of the needs that are still outstanding
25 in the system and a system that we believe, we know

1
2 is hopefully going to with a new budget have
3 additional beds for different age ranges and groups
4 of people which is very exciting who want to seek
5 youth shelter and services and we want to make sure
6 that as many beds and as many services as possible
7 are being opened up in that way as opposed to maybe
8 spending money on some other things that, that, that
9 may be those costs could be better used elsewhere.
10 So, we're happy to answer any questions that you have
11 and thank you again for letting us testify today.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you all, thank
13 you for testifying and being that you're on the front
14 line and you're out there I want you to know your
15 testimony is valued. So, it seems to be the consensus
16 that we don't need a, a dedicated hotline for
17 bullying, is that... is that what is being said and
18 that we could expand upon the existing Youth Connect
19 services, right? So, in its current iteration it is
20 not effectively addressing the issues that our young
21 people are, are experiencing?

22 JAMIE POWLOVICH: You're talking about...

23 [cross-talk]

24 [intercom]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, none of... [cross-

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talk]

4

[intercom]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, if any of you

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thought you were going to run away from this hearing

7

you are now captives. I'm sorry, you were going to

8

respond.

9

JAMIE POWLOVICH: So, yeah I think to

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expand Youth Connect in its current form to be... act

11

more as a comprehensive 24 hour crisis driven hotline

12

and I think that also to emphasize the, the crisis

13

piece as well because I think also in its current

14

form Youth Connect is a resource sharing platform

15

which I think you mentioned isn't always useful,

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right, when I'm a young person and I'm looking for

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something the answers I don't want are a list of

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numbers, a list of addresses, I don't even know how

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I'm going to get there and someone may not even pick

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up when I do call those numbers, we need it to act as

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a function that when young people are calling

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accessing a bed or with a grievance about a program

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that the person on the receiving end can really help

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support whatever the young person is calling about

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and I think... you know I didn't testify about the

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2 bullying hotline but I think a lot of the things that
3 are in that bill, right, could also be supported with
4 the expansion of Youth Connect as well and that's
5 just another, another thing that the hotline could
6 assist with, I mean I think when I think of hotlines,
7 you know something similar although that... I know
8 that's a very complex system like the domestic
9 violence hotline, right, when someone is in crisis,
10 when they are in violence as young people often are
11 as well, right, they are calling to get an immediate
12 support to the situation that they're in and that
13 hot, hotline does that, right, like after an
14 assessment on the phone they are immediately
15 connected to the resource that can meet their need
16 although not always perfectly, right, and then there
17 is usually a resolution at the end even if that
18 resolution at times is that there is no beds
19 available at least that, that person knows that
20 getting off the phone call and I think what Beth was
21 saying I myself have contacted Randy Scott many a
22 times as well as a provider and in this current role
23 and he is amazing at picking up and helping support
24 those calls that he's received but I, I also think
25 about the many young people that aren't already

1
2 attached to the DYCD system that don't know Randy
3 Scott, they don't know his cell phone, they don't
4 even know where the drop in centers are and having
5 one centralized number that they can call, text
6 hopefully, Facebook message, right, to kind of get
7 the answers that they need. I think that also when we
8 talk about homeless young people we also are talking
9 about young people that often times struggle with
10 substance use or with mental health issues, these are
11 young people that will call and they don't have a lot
12 of patience a lot of times to deal with 3-1-1, to
13 deal with numerous transfers, not knowing what option
14 to press and so having kind of a centralized place to
15 field the calls where they can get real time advice
16 and support I think would literally be a lifesaver
17 for some young people.

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And, and how do most
19 of you get your referrals or, or your clients,
20 consumers?

21 JAMIE POWLOVICH: Well I don't work
22 directly with young people... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay... [cross-talk]

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JAMIE POWLOVICH: ...but I think that when you just kind of google homeless youth in... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

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JAMIE POWLOVICH: ...New York City my website comes up a lot and so like I testified too we have been getting an increase of emails directly to the coalition, our Facebook messages off our Facebook page from young people themselves, we are statewide so it isn't always New York City focused and they're, they're in crisis, right, like they need help and I... you know I am not perfect either but I've been in this field for over a decade and so I think that I do bring with me the relationships with other runaway and homeless youth providers so a lot of times I am able to kind of like immediately connect them..

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, are most of the interactions you have based on referrals like referrals from the Youth Connect... the Youth Connect line, how do people find you, how, how do people find... [cross-talk]

23

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BETH HOFMEISTER: I mean I think legal aid in general we're so big that in, in... [cross-talk]

25

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

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2 BETH HOFMEISTER: ...that in general... I, I
3 think there's a lot of... I... court... you know court
4 appointed lawyers are an easy way that people get
5 hooked up with us but specifically in the homeless
6 rights project, you know we've been doing the work
7 with the Coalition for the Homeless in particular
8 since the 1970's since the right to shelter was
9 established and have been class counsel on those
10 cases for so long but we have a, a hotline that
11 appears, I mean we, we deal primarily with a lot of
12 adult shelter eligibility issues and we've only
13 probably in the past six years been more involved in
14 the youth shelter issues but most of our clients
15 we're dealing with have legal, legal issues that are
16 arise out their eligibility into going into shelter,
17 into family shelter in... [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

19 BETH HOFMEISTER: ...particular as, as you
20 know is a very difficult process to go through and
21 also clients who are dealing with safety issues and
22 need transfers or have disabilities and can't be...
23 that can't met in their current placement and things
24 like that and then we also partner with Coalition for
25 the Homeless that has a daily intake at 129 Fulton

1
2 Street in Manhattan where they'll take anyone who's
3 in shelter who has any kind of issue and will help
4 kind of connect them with what they need whether
5 that's an ID, whether that's food, whether that's a
6 psychiatric evaluation what have you. So, we work in
7 collaboration with them to make sure we're doing our
8 best to serve the legal and service needs of, of New
9 York... New Yorkers experiencing homelessness, but we
10 do have a hotline that also is on these forums that,
11 that we get calls and help give people information
12 and advice. As you... you know there's thousands..
13 [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you... [cross-talk]

15 BETH HOFMEISTER: ...of people in shelters
16 so we... [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you ever get the
18 complaints that like an ombudsman would, would have
19 fielded... [cross-talk]

20 BETH HOFMEISTER: Sure. Yeah, I mean be...
21 when, when we were doing outreach before we brought
22 our litigation we, we, we sued the city to try to get
23 a right to shelter for runaway and homeless youth..
24 [cross-talk]

25 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

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BETH HOFMEISTER: ...and that litigation is still ongoing, but we met with hundreds of youth on the street, we were connected with some of them through other advocates or providers... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

BETH HOFMEISTER: ...and learned a lot about ways that the system could be improved. Truth be told through legislation obviously the recent five bills that were passed through other changes that DYCD has been making the system is very different than it was even five years when we really started the litigation which is a great thing... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

BETH HOFMEISTER: ...and to other commitments that the administration has made to serve this population, you know as, as I... as I've joked even with Mayor De Blasio as an advocate I always want there to be more than there is because that's part of my job to be... keep pushing but in a strange way I think we did get a lot of and have continued to get a lot of complaints because people know we sued and so they'll call us about systemic issues so I do think that there's a value to have an independent person ideally fielding, you know... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: That... [cross-talk]

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BETH HOFMEISTER: ...fielding that

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information... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah, that's the...

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[cross-talk]

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BETH HOFMEISTER: ...because I think...

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[cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...direction I was

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going. So, do you think that there's enough volume

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that there could be a person who would handle, you

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know those issues and complaints and... [cross-talk]

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BETH HOFMEISTER: I mean the... [cross-

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talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...concerns?

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BETH HOFMEISTER: ...the, the youth shelter

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system is structured very differently than the adult

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and family and DV and HPD and ultimately... [cross-

19

talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

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BETH HOFMEISTER: ...all the other shelter

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systems and part of that is the beauty of what makes

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it work better for the youth that are involved and

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part of that's hard because DYCD as an agency isn't

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a... you know isn't equipped in the same way HRA is or

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2 D.. or DHS is to kind of deal with large scale, you
3 know kind of shelter projects so I, I'm a little torn
4 because I think... I.. you know the Youth Connect option
5 is a great option if that could be expanded and that
6 would likely be a DYCD employee or employees who
7 would be fielding those calls and dealing with those
8 issues and it wouldn't kind of have the same
9 oversight function that an ombudsperson or a monitor
10 would have but I'm also always reluctant to kind of
11 create an extra barrier or, or kind of level of
12 bureaucracy that may not actually be effective so I
13 think... I don't know that I have the answer right now,
14 I think I, I hope that when you say this will be part
15 of an ongoing discussion that it really will be to
16 figure out what's the best way with this particular
17 system to make sure youth are being heard both in the
18 way that Jamie has described... you know in those
19 crisis moments but also systemically that issues that
20 can be addressed at a higher level can, can happen
21 and.. because, because I do thing there are number of
22 options that... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I, I think it's a part
24 of the safety net, you know, I as an individual in,
25 in a particular organization or, or agency or

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2 something have a level of security to... knowing that
3 there's somebody that I can call outside of, you know
4 the agency itself that will, you know have my best
5 interest at heart, you know they're not constrained
6 to the, the facility and the guidelines and the
7 personalities and, and things of that nature and so I
8 think that they're doing a yeoman's job, very
9 impressed with, you know Randy's abilities to, to
10 respond to, you know all of the, the issues that are
11 going on but, but he is still a part of that layer
12 and so... and, and you, you know as a lawyer that, you
13 know often times you need that person who is totally
14 unbiased and, and removed from, you know sort of the
15 agency so, I, I do plan to continue to have, you know
16 this conversation about that and, and I, I appreciate
17 the fact that... I think we all agree that the Youth
18 Connect hotline could be greatly expanded and, and
19 sort of multipurposed and, and address some of the
20 needs which are... there needs to be a dedicated
21 hotline I think for young people who are experiencing
22 bullying. Can I get you guys to agree to that?

23 BETH HOFMEISTER: Well I'm, I'm not
24 authorized to talk about the bullying hotline on
25

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2 behalf of Legal Aid or Coalition for Homeless, but I
3 know you're here... [cross-talk]

4

GENA MILLER: Yeah... [cross-talk]

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BETH HOFMEISTER: ...to talk about the...

6

[cross-talk]

7

GENA MILLER: I mean something that I can
8 say is that where we're seeing a really big issue is
9 that young people are experiencing bullying, they're
10 involved in bullying at the school level and often
11 times there are adults who, who see it or are hearing
12 about it and they don't realize that a young person
13 is trying to tell them hey I'm having a problem right
14 now and I need you to help me and you know sometimes
15 the... I mean so a part of my project is, you know a
16 lot of the young people I represent are students with
17 disabilities and a part of their disability is that
18 they struggle to communicate what they're going
19 through and they really rely on those adults to be
20 their champions and so most New York City youth are
21 in New York City DOE schools and there, there's...
22 they're... New York City schools, I talk with
23 professionals all the time who tell me, I know that
24 there's bullying in my classroom and I don't know how
25 to stop it or I know that there's bullying in my

1
2 school and I don't know what to do or oh my goodness
3 I didn't realize that this was going on and I think
4 that, you know a part of that, a big part of that is
5 that there aren't enough resources for the kind of
6 training that you need to have difficult
7 conversations with young people.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, thank you so
9 much. I, I just need to just say again that not all
10 of our young people are in DOE schools and so the
11 service and, and the outreach needs to be, and the
12 accessibility needs to be all youth in New York City.
13 Thank you all for, for coming and testifying today
14 and our last panel will be Jeff Irvine from Bridg-it;
15 Michael Cohen, Simon Wiesenthal Center and Jason
16 Cianciotto, Tyler Clementi Foundation and I'm sorry
17 if I messed up your name. And while they're... you
18 might not be able to leave...

19 [intercom]

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, don't everyone
21 run out... [cross-talk]

22 [intercom]

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you, don't you
24 feel really safe in this building today? So, for the
25 record while they're getting to the table to testify

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2 we have testimony from BRAVE Anti-bullying for the
3 record and we have a statement from Simon Wiesenthal
4 although you're also testifying for the record. Okay,
5 thank you, you can identify yourself and begin.

6 MICHAEL COHEN: Thank you, good morning..
7 afternoon...

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah...

9 MICHAEL COHEN: I want to start by
10 thanking Chairwoman Rose for.. and all the members of
11 the Committee on Youth Services for holding these
12 hearings and taking a necessary and critical
13 proactive stance on combat.. on combatting the
14 bullying epidemic, epidemic which is affecting far
15 too many of our children and families. My name is
16 Michael Cohen and I'm here.. this.. well this afternoon
17 now representing the Simon Wiesenthal Center as it's
18 East Coast Director. The Simon Wiesenthal Center is a
19 leading global human rights organization confronting
20 anti-Semitism, racism, hate with a membership.. with a
21 membership constituency of over 400,000 households in
22 the United States and over 150,000 households in the
23 New York Metropolitan area. While the Simon
24 Wiesenthal Center has been training both youth and
25 educational professionals on bullying prevention for

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2 decades I am here today primarily to focus on an area
3 of bullying that is having a devastating impact on
4 many, many of our children, online bullying. Until
5 just a few years ago bullying from peers... from, from
6 peers usually ended, ended at the conclusion of the
7 school day not anymore, social media platforms such
8 as Facebook, twitter, Instagram are leveraged by
9 cyberbullies 24/7 often targeting kids using password
10 protected platforms and beyond the reach of adult
11 knowledge. Upon... once upon a time changing schools
12 was an option to escape extreme bullying but not so
13 much anymore, social media can, can reach around the
14 world, around the corner. A relatively new but
15 important source of hate and bullying now comes with
16 domain of online gaming. For 24 years the Simon
17 Wiesenthal Center has produced its annual digital
18 terrorism and hate report providing stakeholders, law
19 enforcement, media, educators and policy makers such
20 as yourselves a snap shot of, of, of how... from the
21 bully next door to an extremist hater from around the
22 world how they leverage online platforms to promote
23 their hateful agendas. Today the post millennial
24 generation Z has now grown up with a smartphone in
25 their hands and an unprecedented ability to organize,

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2 create and distribute such hateful content. We look
3 forward to supporting your efforts and with your
4 committee and social... and, and social media giants
5 with our schools and in order to protect our
6 children, their parents and schools with, with this
7 distributing... with this disturbing phenomenon and
8 empower our youth with the necessary skills and tools
9 to properly identify and combat online bullying. For
10 two years now, the Simon Wiesenthal Center has been
11 conducting workshops in junior high schools and high
12 schools around the country educating our youth to
13 enhance their recognition skills of offensive
14 material and to teach them how to avoid being a
15 target, targeted bystander or victim of bullying. The
16 Simon Wiesenthal Center has also produced the combat
17 hate app which provides the youth with a direct path
18 to report online bullying and hate showing them that
19 they can do something constructive in the fight
20 against hate in all it's forms. Attached to your
21 submitted written... to the submitted... to our submitted
22 written testimony are printed out screenshots of just
23 a few of the worst examples of digital bullying that
24 our researchers and program managers are coming
25 across on a daily basis. I urge you to look at them

1
2 and see some of the hate that our children are
3 exposed to when they sign onto such gaming and social
4 media platforms. I want to once again thank the
5 committee for taking the necessary time to properly
6 address the issue of bullying and for taking an
7 aggressive and leading role in searching for
8 meaningful solutions. The Simon Wiesenthal Center
9 will continue to offer its hand and partnership with
10 these efforts and stands ready, willing and able to
11 assist the council and this great city in doing
12 everything possible to protect our next generation
13 from the ugly, ugliness of this bullying epidemic.
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I'm... had called your
16 name, I, I guess you didn't hear it.

17 JASON CIANCIOTTO: No, I didn't hear..
18 [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah, okay, next.

20 JASON CIANCIOTTO: Good afternoon. I'm
21 Jason with the funny last name, Cianciotto, don't
22 worry it's, it's a... it's hard to pronounce and I'm
23 the Executive Director of the Tyler Clementi
24 Foundation and I want to thank you for the invitation
25

1
2 to testify and for focusing on the issue of bullying.
3 I'm primarily going to be speaking about Intro 376-A...

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Can you talk in the...
5 into the mic... [cross-talk]

6 JASON CIANCIOOTTO: Sure... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you.

8 JASON CIANCIOOTTO: There we go... [cross-
9 talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay.

11 JASON CIANCIOOTTO: I think it's important
12 to remember who Tyler Clementi was given its
13 relationship to this bill. In 2010 Tyler was an 18-
14 year-old freshman at Rutgers University who died by
15 suicide after he was cyberbullied by his college
16 roommate. Tyler's death brought unprecedented
17 attention to what was then a relatively new form of
18 cyberbullying, one perpetrated on social media.
19 Shortly after his death Tyler's parents Joe and Jane
20 established the foundation with a vision to create a
21 world that is rooted in kindness and mutual respect
22 and guided by the golden rule to treat others as we
23 want to be treated ourselves and that vision is
24 manifesting our mission to end online and offline
25 bullying in schools, work places and faith

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2 communities. I'm here to express our enthusiastic
3 support for Intro 376-A, I know that there's been a
4 lot of conversation already about it that I've
5 learned particularly regarding the, the phone line
6 but what I would like to really speak to you is the
7 availability of an app for very much the reasons
8 that, that you shared Chair Rose that not all
9 students attend schools and I also think that just as
10 we've seen an increase in cyberbullying on social
11 media we've also seen a decrease in youths use of
12 websites and more use of apps on their phones or
13 social media to access resources and this is an
14 opportunity for the city to really jump forward into,
15 into that space and meet youth where they're going to
16 get the information that we need. These... this tool is
17 critical because our poll in 2016 of 1,000 teens and
18 their parents in the New York City Metro area which
19 we partner with AT and T to create found that nearly
20 half of teens in the metro area have been
21 cyberbullied and that 80 percent knew of someone who
22 had been cyberbullied, so I think the, the, the
23 incidents has only gone up since then. This resource
24 that Intro 376-A will create will support additional
25 key findings of our poll which is that more than half

1
2 of New York area teens spend at least three hours a
3 day socializing online, that a third prefer to social
4 online... socialize online rather than in person which
5 as a new father is pretty frightening to me actually
6 and that 86 percent are most often at home when they
7 socialize online again speaking to your point
8 Chairperson Rose. I would love to work with the city
9 and the council to help leverage the resources of the
10 foundation to not only support youth via this app who
11 are bullied but even more important to us to prevent
12 bullying from happening in the first place, to
13 address those... print those wounds before they happen
14 and that's really one of the differences between the
15 many wonderful organizations that fight bullying that
16 we partner with and the Tyler Clementi Foundation
17 that the Clementi family created us to focus
18 primarily on bullying prevention. To that end since
19 the end of, of 2017, I'm still relatively new at the
20 foundation, I've trained nearly 340 New York City
21 teachers, school counselors, and administrators to
22 implement Day One, which is the foundation's free,
23 easy and research-based pull in prevention program.
24 Day One is available in English, Arabic, Chinese and
25 Spanish via tool kits customized for grades K through

1
2 three, four to six as well as middle and high
3 schools. We also have kits that we've partnered with
4 for boys and girl's clubs of America, we're going to
5 be releasing in June a kit for Big Brothers, Big
6 Sisters of America so we not only meet kids where
7 they are in school but also in the programs that they
8 participate in outside of school such as my son who's
9 in a YMCA after school program. Day One consists of
10 students... consists someone in authority, a person who
11 would be responsible for addressing and monitoring
12 bullying reading a declaration which simply states
13 that the space is, is free from harassment, violence
14 and bullying and list a, a large number of enumerated
15 characteristics which we think it's really important
16 for communities disproportionately effected by
17 bullying like women, people of color, immigrants,
18 LGBTQ people to hear themselves represented in that
19 declaration and a call and response which is part of
20 the research underlying the program then students
21 read aloud and sign the Day One version of our
22 upstander pledge where they commit to treating each
23 other with respect and kindness on and offline, where
24 they commit to intervening if they see someone being
25 bullied or to ask for help from someone in authority

1
2 if they don't feel that it's safe for themselves to
3 intervene and to reach out to victims of bullying
4 either in person or online to provide support and to
5 encourage those to seek professional help. I think
6 that if this app or other resources that are created
7 includes access to these resources perhaps even a
8 link to Day One that they might have seen or
9 experienced in school or in their after-school
10 programs or in their Big Brother, Big Sister program
11 then New York City could lead the nation in
12 decreasing by prevention, bullying and as you pointed
13 out when we started we've only seen those incidents
14 go up. In closing, you know if Tyler lived in a world
15 of upstanders who either never cyberbullied him to
16 begin with or if just one person reached out to him
17 after he was cyberbullied via an app or online or in
18 person he might still be alive today and that's where
19 I see the power of these conversations that are
20 happening and with the city investing in the
21 technology that youth are using today to access each
22 other and to reach out for help.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you... [cross-
24 talk]

25 JASON CIANCOTTI: Thank you, thank you...

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you.

JEFF IRVINE: Madame Chairman, thank you for allowing me to speak today. My... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you... [cross-talk]

JEFF IRVINE: ...is Jeff Irvine, I'm a New York City taxpayer and I'm also the founder of Bridg-it and Bridg-it is a social safety system designed for any community to address bullying, harassment and abuse. This system is research based, it's data driven, we've built it over the last five years with some of the leading researchers in the country and some of the best data scientists. You talked about needing data, you talk about opt in systems and websites are opt in systems, hotlines are opt in systems. I travel around the country, I just spoke in Austin, Texas before their legislature, in Sacramento before their legislatures and opt in systems they work but only in a very fractional way. If on average every student in this city is bullied ten percent of the city is bullied everyday which the national numbers indicate and there's 1.1 million students then there's 100,000 kids a day who are bullied in some way or shape or form but it doesn't get

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2 communicated and communication is the key, well
3 walking into a principal's office, you walk out what
4 do your friends ask you, who are you snitching on or
5 what are you in trouble for. The social cost of
6 approaching someone on a face to face basis today is
7 huge and our social scientists and my psychologists
8 and all the research bears this out so we have to
9 create clear, safe channels of communication and
10 communication changes culture, we need to change the
11 culture of the school, we need to redesign the
12 cultures of the school so they're safe, to do that
13 culture is set at the margin by the student, students
14 set the culture, not teachers or leaders, leaders
15 lead where they want the culture to go but it's the
16 student buy in that sets the social emotional health
17 of that community, drives healthy relationships,
18 drives safety. If we get safety right everything else
19 follows and that should be our number one job as a
20 taxpayer, as a father, as a counselor these are the
21 things that matter and we have the technology today
22 to do it on our platform and we, we design it for... we
23 just designed a community in New York City just for
24 kids who are in the... who are home... not homeless, who
25 are in the... who are without parents, right and girls

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2 between the ages of nine and 12... between 9th and 12th
3 grade, the riskiest population in the world because
4 when they age out what happens, drug abuse, right,
5 prostitution, suicide, highest rates in the country
6 around the world and there's 400,000 kids who don't
7 have parents in this country. So, we believe that
8 hotlines are necessary, but they already exist at a
9 national level with trained people 24/7, 34/7 and
10 they gather data in the right way, we need to gather
11 the right data. If everyone's running their own
12 hotline and they're all pulling different data, if
13 you're not pulling data that's aligned with research
14 and with compliance and the... and the laws then... and
15 you can't compile that data and use that data to see
16 trends then you can't be prescriptive, you can't get
17 ahead of the problem, you can't be preventative,
18 right and that's what we've designed. It's all about
19 prescriptive analytics and you tell a superintendent
20 that and their eyes roll back in their head, right,
21 what you need to say is I can see that little Johnny
22 or little Jose are going down this path and I can see
23 it early and you need to do this exercise, have this
24 conversation, this teachable moment at this time to
25 get them back on track or to identify wants driving

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2 it and it doesn't matter if it's the bully, the
3 victim or the bystander they all need support,
4 bullying is not... is not something that's genetic,
5 it's learned, it's a lack of support at home, it's a
6 lack of support in school, you know everything we're
7 doing is about reconnecting the kids as fast as
8 possible, empowering them so they can set their own
9 culture. To do that you have to first identify and
10 measure, right, over time and secondarily you have to
11 have the resources there 24/7 and it has to be able
12 scale, you talk about ombudsman, ombudsman's an
13 impossible task today in a... in a city of a million
14 and one students, you know and, and the teachers and
15 the parents all that, you need digital help, you need
16 a digital ombudsman or a service bureau that allows
17 that data to flow in real time and allows those
18 resources to flow immediately almost like Netflix for
19 social emotional learning and safety and we've
20 created it, we've tagged it based on the problems and
21 we're... we, we've been in New York City schools for
22 four years, we've had incredible results, we're
23 rolling out in California, Texas so... and it's not
24 just the schools, we can take this to the
25 communities, we can take it to the agencies, we can

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2 bring all their content, their variable content to
3 life. We give them the power of Facebook but you have
4 to be aware of data, data privacy, you know, you got
5 COPA, HIPAA, FIPA, Patriot Act all these things that
6 as you gather this data via the phone lines or
7 otherwise you have to have privacy officers, you have
8 to have checks and balances, you have to have control
9 over that information because it's health related
10 and, and that's just the way the national laws were
11 wrote. So, I'm here to say we're here to help, we're
12 here to work with everyone, our systems can be
13 privatized, they can be put together but that it does
14 now exist and that we would hope that you would take
15 us up on talking and we'll work with the Wiesenhal
16 Foundation and others around the country to do... to do
17 what's right because it's about that standardization
18 of data and that standardization of, of, of response.
19 The efficacy of the training, of the interaction, of,
20 of the conversation, does it work in this community
21 versus that community, if I'm in... if I'm in Manhattan
22 or... versus Brownsville versus the South Bronx they're
23 different communities with different needs and, and
24 different ways to communicate so it's a very
25

1
2 complicated problem, a, a hotline is, you know great
3 but there's so much more we could be doing today.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. Thank you
5 so much and, and to your point, yes we... a hotline
6 isn't, you know the optimal... it... but it, it's, it's
7 another pathway to addressing the issue and we didn't
8 talk a lot about the cyberbullying, you know end of,
9 of the bullying issue and so I, I do hope to be able
10 to continue to have this conversation because as you
11 seen DYCD isn't really excited about doing, you know
12 any type of expansion so we're going to have, you
13 know continuing discussions just to see, you know
14 what, what we can do and, and my hope is that we can
15 bring all the elements in that we really didn't touch
16 on in any great depth today and in, in terms of the
17 ombudsman it was for the runaway and homeless youth
18 population and they're usually domicile in, you know
19 transitional or temporary or a drop in kind of
20 residential program. So, I, I want to thank you, we
21 have your testimony and I really do... I really would
22 like to get back to this and, and have a more full
23 bodied discussion. So, with that I, I thank you for..
24 [cross-talk]

25 MICHAEL COHEN: Thank you... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...coming here today and

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I just for the record I, I want it noted that Council

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Member Van Bramer's Legislative Director, David

5

Ginsberg is here listening on his behalf so the

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information I'm sure will get back to Council Member

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Van Bramer and with that this meeting is now

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adjourned. Thank you all for coming and you can

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safely take the elevators now.

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[gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date

May 27, 2018