

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN

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CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN

October 24, 2018  
Start: 10:11 a.m.  
Recess: 12:51 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: HELEN K. ROSENTHAL  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

DIANA AYALA  
LAURIE A. CUMBO  
BEN KALLOS  
RORY I. LANCMAN  
BRAD S. LANDER  
RAFAEL SALAMANCA, JR.  
MARK HAGAR TREYGER

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

Cecile Noel

Commissioner for the Mayor's Office to End  
Domestic and Gender-Based Violence

Jordan Dressler

Civil Justice Coordinator with the Human Resource  
Administration's Office of Civil Justice

Julie Goldschied

Professor at CUNY Law School

Namasha Schelling

Communications Manager at Day One New York

Melissa Paquette

Director of the Domestic Violence Law Project at  
Safe Horizon

Amanda Hayden

Families Program Coordinator at the Lesbian, Gay,  
Bisexual and Transgender Community Center

Terry Lawson

Director of the Family and Immigration Unit at  
Bronx Legal Services

Mark Hagar

Supervising Attorney in NYLAG's Matrimonial and  
Family Law Department

Celia Irvine

Staff Attorney at the Legal Aid Society

Audacia Ray

Director of Community Organizing and Public  
Advocacy at the New York City Anti-Violence  
Project

Alisha Bailey

Alternative to Incarceration Counselor with the  
Fortune Society

Mary Haviland

Executive Director at the New York City Alliance  
Against Sexual Assault

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

1  
2  
3 Dorchen Leidholdt  
4 Director of the Center for Battered Women's Legal  
5 Services at Sanctuary for Families

6 Mary Luke  
7 President of the Metropolitan New York Chapter of  
8 United Nations Women and Co-Chair of the  
9 Steering Committee of the New York City 4CEDAW  
10 Act

11 Joanna Alvarez  
12 Black Women's Blueprint

13 Sabra Jackson  
14 Domestic Violence Survivor, Board of Directors  
15 Member of the Voices of Women Organizing Project,  
16 WOW

17 Nedene Simon  
18 Domestic Violence Survivor, Member of the Voices  
19 Of Women Organizing Project, WOW

20 Elizabeth Cohen  
21 Domestic Violence Survivor, Member of the Voices  
22 Of Women Organizing Project, WOW

23 Sharlena Powell  
24 Domestic Violence Survivor, Member of the Voices  
25 Of Women Organizing Project, WOW

Amy Barasch  
Executive Director of Her Justice

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2 [gavel]

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3

CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Good morning,

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it's nice to see everyone in purple this morning,

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very impressive crowd out there. I'm Council Member

6

Helen Rosenthal, Chair of the Committee on Women.

7

Before we get started, I do want to acknowledge that

8

October is domestic violence awareness month, this is

9

a time to mourn victims, celebrate and empower

10

survivors and draw attention to the services,

11

resources and support there is for survivors. Earlier

12

this morning my colleagues on the council and I

13

joined the Mayor's Office to end domestic and gender-

14

based violence in celebrating go purple day. We

15

distributed materials about the city's family justice

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centers at subway stops throughout the city raising

17

awareness for the services and resources that this

18

city has available to survivors. I'd like to thank

19

Commissioner Noel and her office for their tremendous

20

efforts every day specifically today though in

21

sponsoring go purple day and also a special shout out

22

goes to Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo who blazed the

23

trail for this important day at the council when she

24

was Chair of the Committee on Women. Last month, what

25

was formerly known as the Office to Combat Domestic

1  
2 Violence became the Office to End Domestic and Gender  
3 Based Violence or End GBV through executive order 36.  
4 This name change is not only aspirational in its aim  
5 to end domestic and gender-based violence, it is  
6 indicative of an expanded mission for the office. In  
7 addition to continuing its work on familial intimate  
8 partner violence, End GBV is now tasked with  
9 coordinating the city's efforts against sexual  
10 assault, human trafficking and stalking. Domestic and  
11 gender-based violence reflects serious and complex  
12 issues that can affect any New Yorkers regardless of  
13 identity; women, men, transgender and nonconforming  
14 individuals and regardless of race, religion and  
15 socioeconomic status. Inherent in these acts of  
16 violence, our power dynamics which disproportionately  
17 harm the most vulnerable and marginalized among us,  
18 no one needs reminding that the current federal  
19 administration is stoking these flames. Last week's  
20 news from Trump's twitter account threatening to  
21 undermine protections for trans and GNC people simple  
22 as his twitter rages against women and immigrants.  
23 Compared to men women are 4.5 times, four and a half  
24 times as likely to be victim of a domestic violence  
25 homicide. Compared to white women, black women are

1  
2 more likely to be the victim of domestic violence  
3 homicide. We don't currently have data on DV  
4 fatalities that include a break down by gender  
5 identify and sexual orientation and that's something  
6 I look forward to discussing at today's hearings. The  
7 current crime trends across the city require us to  
8 ask ourselves whether we are appropriately allocating  
9 resources to fight domestic violence. As violent  
10 crime has steadily decreased, the reports of felony  
11 and misdemeanor domestic violence have increased over  
12 the past ten years. The first line of a New York  
13 Times story that ran at the end of 2016 reads, "as  
14 murders in New York City have declined significantly  
15 over the past 25 years, one category has remained  
16 stubbornly high, domestic violence homicides". Today  
17 they represent about 17 percent of all homicides and  
18 so End GBV's expanded role is more important than  
19 ever. Today we will learn how End GBV views it's  
20 mission and we will also consider four pieces of  
21 legislation that would enhance reporting, assess the  
22 results of End GBV's current efforts through the  
23 family justice center by a client satisfaction  
24 survey, create potential opportunities to train  
25 cosmetologists to recognize signs of domestic

1  
2 violence and provide survivors with access to legal  
3 representation so they are no longer financially  
4 obligated to remain married to their abusers.  
5 Together these bills will ensure that the city is  
6 delivering resources and services to domestic and  
7 gender-based violence survivors in the most  
8 appropriate, strategic and effective ways. We are  
9 grateful to have Commissioner Noel and the many  
10 advocacy organizations that are here to testify  
11 today, these are the experts on the complexity of  
12 domestic violence who are steeped in the work of  
13 piecing together the intersectionality, let me say  
14 that one more time, these are the experts on the  
15 complexity of domestic violence who are steeped in  
16 the work of piecing together the intersectionality of  
17 gender, race, socioeconomic, sexual orientation and  
18 the power dynamics in efforts to end gender and  
19 domestic based violence. I'd like to thank the city  
20 council staff here; Brenda McKinney, our General  
21 Counsel Chloe Rivera, our Legislative Policy Analyst  
22 Daniel Kroop, our Financial Analyst and my new  
23 Director of Legislation Ned Terrace who really helped  
24 pull together this opening statement and the  
25 background work our office has done in understanding

1  
2 this complex issue. I want to acknowledge the members  
3 of the committee who are here today; Council Member  
4 Lander from Brooklyn and I'd like to ask Council  
5 Member Lancman who is the sponsor of one of these  
6 important pieces of legislation to give an opening  
7 statement.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you. Good  
9 morning, I'm Councilman Rory Lancman, Chair of the  
10 Committee on the Justice System and I want to thank  
11 Council Member Helen Rosenthal for leading this  
12 important hearing. During domestic violence awareness  
13 month, we reflect on the progress that has been made  
14 and most importantly on the work that we must  
15 continue to do to support domestic and gender-based  
16 violence survivors, increase public consciousness and  
17 eradicate domestic and gender-based violence in our  
18 city. Unfortunately, domestic and gender-based  
19 violence crime rates have remained resistant to the  
20 steady reduction of the overall crime rate in this  
21 city as Chairwoman Rosenthal mentioned. In 2017, the  
22 NYPD responded to over 108,000 intimate partner  
23 related domestic incidents, a 16 percent increase  
24 from the previous year. The challenges that survivors  
25 face from physical and emotional trauma to lost jobs



1  
2 and homelessness are public issues that require  
3 policies and social services to help improve their  
4 lives. The family justice centers facilitated by the  
5 Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender Based  
6 Violence provide legal services, counseling and  
7 support services for survivors. In 2017, these family  
8 justice centers located in each of the five boroughs  
9 served 62,645 individuals, individuals but what do  
10 the survivors think of the services that we provide  
11 them? My bill, Intro 542, would create a mechanism  
12 for clients to fill out satisfaction surveys after  
13 they receive domestic violence services from the  
14 family justice centers. [coughs] excuse me... the  
15 satisfaction surveys will not be mandatory and will  
16 remain anonymous. Survivors will be able to indicate  
17 which services are the most useful, which should be  
18 altered, and which changes the centers can make to  
19 better assist them. This will allow the family  
20 justice centers and survivors to work collaboratively  
21 to improve services and set priorities. Again, I'd  
22 like to thank Chair Rosenthal for putting this  
23 hearing together and I look forward to listening to  
24 the testimony today. Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much  
3 Council Member Lancman, I'd like to welcome Council  
4 Member Treyger to this hearing and ask him to give an  
5 opening statement about his bill, Intro 1085, thank  
6 you.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Good morning.  
8 First, I want to thank Chair Rosenthal for holding  
9 today's important oversight hearing as well as for  
10 taking the lead on New York City go purple day. As  
11 mentioned, October is domestic violence awareness  
12 month and I'm proud we as a city are raising  
13 awareness about domestic violence and providing  
14 services for survivors as we work to make sure all  
15 survivors know that they're not alone. Today we're  
16 hearing my bill, Introduction 1085, a Local Law to  
17 amend the administrative code of the city of New York  
18 in relation to providing legal services to victims of  
19 domestic violence in divorce proceedings. Your safety  
20 and your freedom shouldn't be determined by your  
21 income, no one should have to stay in an abusive  
22 marriage simply because they can't afford a divorce  
23 lawyer. My bill would require the Office of the Civil  
24 Justice Coordinator to establish programs to provide  
25 victims of domestic violence with full, legal

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1  
2 representation in divorce proceedings in civil  
3 supreme court. Full legal representation includes the  
4 payments of all filing fees. The bill would cover all  
5 victims and survivors of domestic violence regardless  
6 of gender and regardless of whether there has been  
7 any type of conviction or criminal complaint. We know  
8 many victims of domestic violence are not always able  
9 to come forward to make a criminal complaint and we  
10 want to make sure they are protected too. As we know  
11 domestic violence impacts all of our communities  
12 across the city. In May, the New York Times wrote an  
13 article called Their Husbands Abuse Them, Shouldn't  
14 Divorce be Easy. This article gave a harrowing  
15 insight into the struggle so many women face when  
16 they seek a divorce. With this bill a mother can  
17 focus on her and her children's safety without having  
18 to worry about the cost of a divorce. Our city must  
19 take an important stand and do everything we can to  
20 support our domestic violence victims and survivors  
21 and I want to share a very brief excerpt from that  
22 article where a mother and her two children were  
23 physically abused by her husband and she moved her  
24 family into a shelter and she had first tried to turn  
25 to private attorneys who estimated that the cost of

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2 representation would cost over 3,000 dollars or more,  
3 she couldn't afford it. New York guarantees lawyers  
4 for poor people who can't afford them in a range of  
5 family court cases including child custody and  
6 domestic violence proceedings but divorce cases even  
7 in the context of domestic violence always occur in  
8 supreme court and litigants do not have a right to  
9 counsel for the full case. New York took a bold step  
10 in providing free counseling for low income New  
11 Yorkers facing eviction, which I think was the right  
12 thing to do and we have a moral, moral obligation to  
13 make sure that there is no cost too high for  
14 someone's freedom in New York and again I want to  
15 thank Chair Rosenthal for holding this very important  
16 hearing. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you much...  
18 so much Council Member Treyger and I want to  
19 recognize Council Member Ayala who represents both  
20 Northern Manhattan and Southern Bronx for joining us  
21 today. And I'd like to turn it over now to my  
22 Committee Counsel.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: I'm going to read the  
24 oath. Please raise your right hands. Do you affirm to  
25 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the

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2 truth in your testimony before this Committee and to  
3 respond honestly to Council Member questions?

4 Alright, thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I just want to be  
6 clear that it was purposeful that I did not read that  
7 statement although other Chairs do, I have complete  
8 faith in your office and in you Commissioner and I, I  
9 can't tell you how... I can tell you that the city is  
10 lucky to have you.

11 CECILE NOEL: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay.

13 CECILE NOEL: Okay. Good morning  
14 Chairperson Rosenthal, Council Member Lancman,  
15 Council Member Treyger and other members of the... of  
16 the Council. I am Cecile Noel, Commissioner for the  
17 Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender Based  
18 Violence. Thank you for the opportunity... [clears  
19 throat] excuse me... to speak with you about the  
20 Office's reports, client satisfaction surveys at the  
21 family justice centers, domestic violence related  
22 training for professionals and matrimonial legal  
23 assistance for survivors of domestic violence. I am  
24 pleased to be joined by my colleague, Jordan  
25 Dressler, the City... Civil Justice Coordinator at

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2 HRA's Office of Civil Justice or OCJ who is here to  
3 answer any questions the council may have regarding  
4 Intro 1085. On September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Mayor Bill De  
5 Blasio signed Executive Order 36, which expanded the  
6 authorities and responsibilities of the Mayor's  
7 Office to combat domestic violence and change the  
8 name of OCDV to the Mayor's Office to End Domestic  
9 and Gender Based Violence or End GBV. The Office to  
10 End Domestic and Gender Based Violence will continue  
11 to develop and coordinate citywide response to  
12 intimate partner and family violence and now has the  
13 expanded authority to address gender-based violence  
14 including sexual assault, stalking and trafficking,  
15 as well as the continuum and intersection of these  
16 issues. We will also continue to create bridges  
17 across criminal justice and social services to  
18 coordinate New York City's approaches and system  
19 responses to ensure that all survivors have  
20 streamlined access to inclusive and critical... to, to  
21 the inclusive and critical resources and services. I  
22 am proud to be part of this administration's strong  
23 commitment and unprecedented investment to enhance  
24 the city's response to domestic and gender-based  
25 violence. During this administration we have, among

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1  
2 other things, opened two new Family Justice Centers,  
3 expanded domestic violence shelter capacity and  
4 launched new initiatives focused on public housing,  
5 domestic violence, stalking, healthy relationship  
6 education for youth in foster care and other  
7 vulnerable youth, increased access to mental health  
8 services for survivors and launched a new policy and  
9 training institute within End GBV to end domestic  
10 violence... to, to expand domestic violence education  
11 for city agencies and community based organizations.  
12 In addition, the city has recently invested 11  
13 million dollars in domestic violence programming and  
14 initiatives through the Mayor's Domestic Violence  
15 Task Force and three million through the Interrupting  
16 Violence at Home Initiative to develop innovative  
17 programming to working with abusive partners. With  
18 the implementation of the Office to End Domestic and  
19 Gender Based Violence, we are continuing to respond  
20 as a city to the voices of survivors and advocates  
21 and recognizing the need for a system wide  
22 coordinated response to these issues. The new Office  
23 will seek to implement best practices and policies,  
24 develop and strengthen services and intervention  
25 initiatives, enhance coordination across agencies and

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1  
2 disciplines and employ methods for data and  
3 information sharing. The Office will continue to  
4 operate the Domestic Violence Fatality Review  
5 Committee and will also now operate the Advisory  
6 Committee to review individual case level data on  
7 domestic violence and gender-based fatalities. The  
8 Office will also continue to operate the New York  
9 City Family Justice Centers, which are walk in multi  
10 service centers in each borough for survivors to  
11 access free, confidential services and support. Key  
12 city agencies, community partners, civil legal  
13 service providers and District Attorney's Offices are  
14 located on site at the FJC to make it easier for  
15 survivors to get help. FJCs welcome people of all  
16 incomes, ages, sexual orientations, gender  
17 identities, regardless of the language they speak or  
18 their immigration status. Last year, the FJCs had  
19 over 62,000 client visits across the boroughs. The  
20 expansion of our mission is a multi-stage process  
21 that begins with feedback and information gathering  
22 from advocates, community stakeholders and survivors  
23 that will inform our advocacy efforts and  
24 recommendations for policies, programming, data and  
25 best practices citywide. In addition, End GBV will



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2 continue to advocate for and explore additional  
3 programming for survivors in New York City. We have a  
4 strong relationship with providers, advocates and  
5 community stakeholders across the city and believe it  
6 is imperative to provide them with access to  
7 information, research, data, as well as information  
8 about programming operated and overseen by End GBV.  
9 In the last few years, we have expanded our research  
10 and evaluation work and in the last two years we have  
11 released the following reports, which are all  
12 publicly available and accessible via our website and  
13 on NYC Open Data: 2017 Fact Sheet, the 2017 Annual  
14 Report, 2017 and '18 Fatality Review Committee  
15 Reports, 2017 Intimate Partner Violence Community  
16 Board Snapshots, the 2017 Family, Family Related  
17 Violence Community Board Snapshots, 2017 Goals and  
18 Recommendations for the New York City Domestic  
19 Violence Task Force. Some of the metrics captured in  
20 these reports and fact sheets include: the number of  
21 clients assisted at each of the five Family Justice  
22 Centers along with the total number of visits; the  
23 number of individuals trained by End GBV staff, the  
24 number of healthy relationship training academy  
25 workshops conducted and the number of youth

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1  
2 participants in those workshops; the number of  
3 outreach events conducted by End GBV; the total  
4 annual calls made to the city's domestic violence  
5 hotline. We also released ten research briefs and  
6 reports in 2017 and '18 on a variety of topics  
7 related to intimate partner violence to assist New  
8 Yorkers in understanding the issues and encourage  
9 further conversations including: OCDV in Focus;  
10 survey findings from the New York City healthy  
11 relationship training academy, participation in the  
12 academy leads to significant improvement in knowledge  
13 and attitudes around healthy relationships, this is a  
14 summary of the results of pre and post workshop  
15 surveys conducted by the New York City healthy  
16 relationship training academy; news coverage of  
17 intimate partner homicides in, in New York City, a  
18 systematic review of all... a review of all the news  
19 articles reporting on intimate partner violence  
20 homicides from 2013 through '16; brief data... brief  
21 data, intimate partner homicide/suicide in New York  
22 City from 2010 through 2017, a descriptive analysis  
23 of New York City's homicides in which the abusive  
24 partner, partner murdered there, their current or  
25 former intimate partner and then died by suicide;

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2 OCDV in focus, a closer look at foreign born clients  
3 visiting the New York City Family Justice Centers,  
4 this is an overview of the foreign born client  
5 population of the Family Justice Centers showing that  
6 the majority of Family Justice Center clients are  
7 foreign born and that the client base reflects the  
8 diversity of New York City's population. We aim to  
9 continue releasing periodic reports and briefs about  
10 pertinent topics to inform New Yorkers about these  
11 issues as well as ensure access to data and  
12 programming updates through our Office's annual  
13 reports and fact sheets. While the city proposes...  
14 while the city opposes the current version of Intro  
15 351, we look forward to discussing a version of the  
16 bill that is aligned with our available data and  
17 metrics responsive to what advocates and providers  
18 are seeking without placing an unintended burden on,  
19 on contracted providers and, and that provides an  
20 overview of End GBV operations and programs. [clears  
21 throat] excuse me. In addition to expanding our  
22 outputs in regard to research and reports, in the  
23 last few years, we've also started to evaluate  
24 programming operated by End GBV, as well as  
25 programming that we are partnering on with other

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2 agencies. In November 2016, End GBV collaborated with  
3 the Mayor's Office of Economic Opportunity, NYC  
4 Opportunity, to contract with ABT Associates to  
5 conduct an evaluation of the Brooklyn, Queens, Bronx  
6 and Manhattan FJCs specifically focusing on the  
7 effective interagency collaborations, provision,  
8 provision of efficient and effective service  
9 delivery, and client satisfaction. Staten Island was  
10 not included in this evaluation because it was still  
11 in its first year of operation. This evaluation was  
12 completed in 2017 and was the first ever evaluation  
13 of the New York City FJCs. The evaluation found the  
14 following: administrative and, and partner staff at  
15 the four FJCs believe the FJC model is successful;  
16 the majority of administrative and partner staff  
17 believe the FJCs are collaborative; the FJCs promote  
18 an increased knowledge of other partner staff and  
19 create relationships between staff and most  
20 importantly clients are very happy with the services  
21 they receive at the FJC and believe that their needs  
22 are being met. In November 2017, End GBV held  
23 meetings at each of the FJCs with onsite provider  
24 staff and also met with the leadership and  
25 supervisors of our, our partner community-based

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1  
2 organizations and presented the evaluation findings.  
3 During these meetings we sought feedback from  
4 partners regarding how best to address the evaluation  
5 findings and discuss some of the changes that, that  
6 we were already being... that, that were already being  
7 implemented. Although the evaluation's findings were  
8 overwhelmingly positive, there are targeted areas  
9 where End GBV will be looking to enhance  
10 collaboration and service delivery at the FJCs. One  
11 of the key outcomes of the evaluation was the  
12 creation of a survivor advisory group for End GBV,  
13 which will allow those who have experienced domestic  
14 and gender-based violence a venue to have input in  
15 the policies, procedures and services. The voices  
16 survivor group was established earlier this year and  
17 will help us to identify potential service issues as  
18 well as determine the need for additional services.  
19 In addition, the centers have been and will continue  
20 to implement new initiatives to ensure that the FJCs  
21 are providing efficient and effective services to  
22 survivors in a collaborative and supportive  
23 environment. The help support that work, we will be  
24 holding follow up meetings with FJC's provider staff,  
25 implementing FJC client satisfaction survey, surveys

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1  
2 and getting systematic feedback from our voices  
3 group. The city supports the goals of Intro 542 and  
4 it is closely aligned with the work we are doing to  
5 enhance mechanisms for client feedback that can help  
6 to guide improvements to overall service delivery and  
7 environment... and, and the environment at the... at the  
8 FJCs such as, we look forward to... and, and as such,  
9 we look forward to discussing this further. One of  
10 the services offered at the Family Justice Centers  
11 and in community-based organizations throughout the  
12 city is civil legal assistance, including matrimonial  
13 legal assistance. With regard to Intro 1085, we agree  
14 with the principle embodied in this legislation and  
15 that the lack of financial means should not stand in  
16 the way of a domestic violence survivors having  
17 access to high quality legal services. To that end,  
18 we would welcome an opportunity to work with our  
19 partners at the Human Resources Administration's  
20 Office of Civil Justice as well as with providers,  
21 advocates and fellow city agencies, the courts and  
22 the council to explore the best ways in which to  
23 increase access to these services. In order to ensure  
24 that such a program is successful, much more  
25 information is needed to better understand the needs

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1  
2 and costs associated with providing proposed  
3 services... the proposed services in this legislation  
4 as well as a realistic timeframe. We look forward to  
5 continuing this discussion with the city council and  
6 other stakeholders to determine the most effective  
7 and efficient ways to provide greater access to these  
8 important services to survivors of domestic violence.  
9 In the spring of 2016, End GBV launched a new policy  
10 and training institute. The institute includes a  
11 policy team, a training team and the New York City  
12 Healthy Relationship Training Academy and leads End  
13 GBV's training and prevention work. It is... it, it was  
14 created to enhance the city... the... it was created to  
15 enhance the city agency and community-based  
16 organization's response to these issues of domestic  
17 and gender-based violence, identify key areas for  
18 policy change and development and engage in primary  
19 prevention work, work with young people throughout  
20 New York City. In 2017, the Training Team conducted  
21 287 trainings to more than 6,759 participants  
22 including city agencies, community-based  
23 organizations, providers and community stakeholders,  
24 providing... [cross-talk]

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Commissioner...

3 [cross-talk]

4 CECILE NOEL: ...free... [cross-talk]

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: ...I'm going to ask  
6 you to pause for one minute, I want to thank the  
7 Sergeant for closing the doors to the outside hallway  
8 where there were people who were talking during,  
9 during your testimony and it was a little bit hard  
10 to... [cross-talk]

11 CECILE NOEL: Okay, sorry... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: ...hear so I want  
13 to thank him for that and I want to remind the  
14 Council Members here how important it is to, to hear  
15 what you're saying, thank you very much.

16 CECILE NOEL: Thank you. In 2017, the  
17 Training Team conducted 287 trainings to more than  
18 6,757 participants including city agencies,  
19 community-based organizations, providers and  
20 community stakeholders, providing free educational  
21 and professional development opportunities for  
22 frontline staff and community partners to enhance  
23 their engagement with survivors of domestic and  
24 gender-based violence. In addition, the Training Team  
25 provided technical assistance to those organizations



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1  
2 to support their current policies, protocols to  
3 address domestic and gender-based violence. In 2017,  
4 the Academy conducted 743 free healthy relationship  
5 workshops and trainings with over 13,000 youth,  
6 parents and professional staff participants in the  
7 schools... and in schools and community settings. In  
8 2017, nine new offerings were added to the training  
9 team and academy curriculum catalog, including:  
10 intimate partner sexual violence, trauma informed  
11 practices, impact of intimate partner violence on  
12 children and navigating healthy sexual relationships.  
13 The institute also hosts large conferences and  
14 convenings, which provide additional professional  
15 development opportunities on these issues that are  
16 free and open to provider staff in a myriad of  
17 industry sectors across New York City, including  
18 health care, education and media. The Training Team  
19 recently launched a partnership with voices, voices  
20 of women organizing or VOW to bring survivor... to  
21 bring the survivors' perspective into this work. The  
22 feedback from VOW will inform the training team's  
23 work as it continues to adapt and enhance and expand  
24 its trainings. With, with our expanded mission and  
25 new subject areas, End GBV will continue to build out

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1  
2 our training topic areas and will explore new  
3 mechanisms to access our training and professional  
4 development programming, most importantly through,  
5 through potential web-based training opportunities.  
6 We are currently working with the Thrive leadership  
7 team and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
8 to develop a 45-minute online module on recognizing  
9 and responding to intimate partner violence or IPV  
10 for, for the city's online Thrive Learning Center.  
11 Once it is launched, this free introductory module  
12 will be available to all New Yorkers. We strongly  
13 support the aim of Intro 371-A to explore mechanisms  
14 and resource... to, to explore the mechanisms and  
15 resources needed to expand the reach of our training  
16 and education efforts through web based tools that  
17 should be broad and wide reaching and are... and are  
18 interested in continuing to explore how we can use  
19 technology to reach large, larger audiences and  
20 create greater accessibility across disciplines to  
21 train... to the trainings that we offer. The trainings  
22 are critical to not only providing professional  
23 development... professional development to staff  
24 working with survivors and offender populations, but  
25 also to enhance the awareness about these issues and

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2 build capacity in communities to identify domestic  
3 and gender-based violence and share resources with  
4 survivors. However, we are concerned about placing an  
5 enhanced responsibility on cosmetologists, who may  
6 not have the expertise in serving survivors of abuse,  
7 by requiring that they receive targeted training to  
8 identify and respond to domestic violence. We look  
9 forward to discussing with the council how we can  
10 collaborate to enhance our training efforts and  
11 engage with residents across the city. Thank you for  
12 the opportunity to speak on this... on these issues and  
13 I welcome any questions you might... and any questions  
14 that the committee might have.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much  
16 Commissioner, I want to welcome other committee  
17 members; Bill... Ben Kallos from Manhattan and I'm  
18 going to turn it over to the sponsors of... to the  
19 pieces of legislation to get us started, Council  
20 Member Lancman.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Good morning.

22 CECILE NOEL: Good morning.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: It's good to see  
24 you again, I think the last time I saw you was at the  
25 Family Justice Center in... [cross-talk]

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2 CECILE NOEL: That's right... [cross-talk]

3 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: ...in Queens a  
4 few... [cross-talk]

5 CECILE NOEL: That is correct... [cross-  
6 talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: ...weeks ago.

8 CECILE NOEL: Yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: We're very proud  
10 of the Family Justice Centers, very grateful for the  
11 work that they do and very supportive of the  
12 administration's efforts to make them as strong and,  
13 and successful as possible. I naturally want to focus  
14 on, on my bill which would provide for client  
15 satisfaction surveys. I see in your testimony that  
16 your office has done some surveying of clients...  
17 [cross-talk]

18 CECILE NOEL: Yes... [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: ...and  
20 specifically it says in November 2016 you  
21 collaborated with others Mayor Offices with I guess  
22 a, a consulting company... [cross-talk]

23 CECILE NOEL: Yes... [cross-talk]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: ...ABT... [cross-  
25 talk]

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2 CECILE NOEL: That's right, uh-huh...

3 [cross-talk]]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: ...Associates to  
5 conduct an evaluation of the Brooklyn, Queens, Bronx  
6 and Manhattan FJCs specifically focusing on effective  
7 interagency collaboration, provision of efficient and  
8 effective service delivery and client satisfaction so  
9 could you tell us how ABT Associates gauged client  
10 satisfaction, what tools they used and, and then we  
11 can talk about what their findings might have been?

12 CECILE NOEL: Okay, so what, what they  
13 essentially did was they engaged in a multipronged  
14 process that was one surveying our providers, looking  
15 at our services, looking at our intake forms,  
16 actually holding focus groups with providers, with  
17 staff and as... as well as survivors and, and really  
18 collaborated that... or, or really compiled that into a  
19 response that really gave us information on one, one  
20 what were we doing and was it effective and how could  
21 we really improve those services so it was a  
22 combination of all of the above which also included  
23 focused groups with clients as well.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: So, so the  
25 mechanism for evaluating or for determining whether

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2 clients were satisfied with the services they  
3 received was focus... [cross-talk]

4 CECILE NOEL: Survey... [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: ...groups... [cross-  
6 talk]

7 CECILE NOEL: Survey and focus groups.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: The survey... the  
9 survey was a... was a questionnaire?

10 CECILE NOEL: Yes... [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: It was a paper  
12 questionnaire?

13 CECILE NOEL: Yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Do you... do you  
15 know how many... how many... how many clients were  
16 surveyed through that... [cross-talk]

17 CECILE NOEL: I'm... [cross-talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: ...questionnaire?

19 CECILE NOEL: I can actually get back to  
20 you on that, I don't have that information, but we  
21 can certainly get back to you with the number on  
22 that.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Good and could  
24 you share with us the, the... a copy of this survey so  
25 we just see what questions were asked?

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2 CECILE NOEL: Yes.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Great and in  
4 addition to the surveys there were focus groups of  
5 clients?

6 CECILE NOEL: Yes...

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Do you... do you  
8 know how many focus groups were conducted?

9 CECILE NOEL: We can get back to you...  
10 [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Okay... [cross-  
12 talk]

13 CECILE NOEL: Okay... [cross-talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: That's fine,  
15 good. And then I see elsewhere in your testimony that  
16 we will be holding follow up meetings with FJC,  
17 Family Justice Center provider staff implementing  
18 Family Justice Center client satisfaction surveys and  
19 getting systematic feedback from the voices groups so  
20 what kind of client satisfaction surveys and other  
21 mechanisms are you planning to, to, to gauge client  
22 satisfaction separate and apart from, from what my  
23 bill would do?

24 CECILE NOEL: What we were looking at  
25 were basically some of the areas that were pointed

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2 out from our independent evaluation of our services,  
3 so we were clearly looking at how can we make our  
4 intake process a little bit easier, how could we  
5 streamline our question... [cross-talk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Sorry, but...

7 [cross-talk]

8 CECILE NOEL: Right...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Before we get  
10 into the, the meat of it I just want to understand  
11 the mechanism, is, is it... is it your plan to, to  
12 continue with these surveys or, or, or different  
13 surveys, these, these written, written surveys or  
14 you're going to continue with focus, focus groups,  
15 what's, what's the mechanism that, that you have in  
16 your mind for gauging client satisfaction?

17 CECILE NOEL: The mechanism that I think  
18 that I have and that we've talked about with the team  
19 is really looking at a, a survey that would be an  
20 actual paper survey but, but I think that we also  
21 learn a lot from our focus group which is why we have  
22 the voices which is why we're looking for more client  
23 input so I envision that in addition to that that the  
24 voices group will help that and that we might also



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2 feel a need to bring in clients and engage in focus  
3 groups as we move forward... [cross-talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: So... okay, so, so  
5 let's talk about the substance of what these client  
6 surveys and focus groups found, what were clients  
7 happy with, what were they unhappy with, what, what  
8 areas were suggested for, for improvement or change?

9 CECILE NOEL: One of the things that I,  
10 I, I think that we are looking at very closely are,  
11 are the numbers of questions that we ask at intake  
12 and how can we streamline that process a little bit  
13 easier. I think clients told us that they found that  
14 to be kind of cumbersome at the beginning, you know  
15 we go through a lot of questions and to be able to  
16 streamline that because often those questions are  
17 sometimes asked again when they get to maybe a civil...  
18 get to an attorney or get to a case manager also. So,  
19 we're trying to look at how we can capture the  
20 information maybe once and be... and, and maybe be able  
21 to transfer that a little more seamlessly than, than  
22 we do right now. We're also looking at how staff can  
23 better coordinate around the delivery because client  
24 information is really important but we also need to  
25 ensure that staff have all the information that they

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2 need to be able to work with survivors as well and so  
3 any survey process that we intake will be yes, about  
4 the... our, our clients coming in and, and the services  
5 that they need but how well staff working in, in that  
6 center also feel that, that they're meeting the needs  
7 of survivors and, and communication is going well.  
8 So, its, its on both sides, which I think is very  
9 important.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Were there other  
11 areas that clients indicated, I don't want to say  
12 dissatisfaction necessarily but that would suggest  
13 areas of improvement or things to look at?

14 CECILE NOEL: Well one of the things  
15 that, that we've seen which we're doing now in Queens  
16 is that our clients often have multiple areas that  
17 they... that they experience violence and so we call it  
18 poly-victimization that it's not just intimate  
19 partner violence they could have sexual assault and  
20 they might have trafficking, they could have other  
21 areas and how can we better get that assessment up  
22 front, how can we better know that information  
23 initially so that we can pull that into the service  
24 plan in a more comprehensive way and, and trauma  
25 informed work that we do with, with clients.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Do you know if..  
3 how the consulting firm went about offering the, the  
4 surveys to folks, was it over the course of a week,  
5 everyone was offered a survey or, or through some  
6 other... [cross-talk]

7 CECILE NOEL: It was over... [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: ...mechanism or  
9 selection process?

10 CECILE NOEL: We can get back to you with  
11 the whole process of how this survey was done, this  
12 is almost a year now so I want to be able to be sure  
13 that we're giving you all of the answers that you  
14 need but it was over... it was over multiple months,  
15 this was not a week, it was over time and so I'd like  
16 to get back to you with the answer to those  
17 questions.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: And then in  
19 terms of my specific bill in your testimony you  
20 mentioned that you're, you're open to it obviously..  
21 [cross-talk]

22 CECILE NOEL: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: ...you are open to  
24 the idea of, of doing the surveys and I guess you'd  
25 like to talk about it further, is there anything that

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1

2 you could tell us today that, that strikes you about  
3 my bill that, that might be an issue in your... in  
4 your... in your mind?

5 CECILE NOEL: I think we'd like to just  
6 discuss that with you further, we'd like... we  
7 definitely support the intent and feel that it's an  
8 important part of our work and so we, we support that  
9 but we'd like to get back to you with the specifics  
10 on what we think could be adjusted in the bill if you  
11 don't mind.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Good, good.  
13 Okay, well let's do that, I look forward to it, I'm,  
14 I'm glad to hear that you are... or this is already in  
15 your mind and, and you've done some of this, this  
16 outreach to, to clients as, as well. At the end of  
17 the day as... you don't need me to, to tell you we're  
18 doing all of this to, to meet their needs and we want  
19 to make sure that we're, we're doing it as, as well  
20 as possible so I look forward to sitting down with  
21 you.

22 CECILE NOEL: Okay... [cross-talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you very  
24 much, thank you Madame Chair.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much  
3 Council Member, Council Member Treyger as a bill  
4 sponsor I'm turning it over to you next, I also want  
5 to welcome Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo who really  
6 spearheaded in my minds eye the City Council's  
7 efforts around go purple day, set the... set the bar  
8 very high so thank you for that and just a reminder  
9 to everyone here that we have a hard stop at one  
10 o'clock for this hearing. Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you Chair  
12 Rosenthal. Thank you, Commissioner, for your  
13 testimony and just for the sake of clarity, what is  
14 the exact position of the... of the administration on  
15 Introduction 1085?

16 CECILE NOEL: I think I said in my  
17 testimony that we certainly support the intent on...  
18 and, and that we would like to be able to look at  
19 this issue a little further both with the Human  
20 Resources Administration and our partner... and the  
21 Office of Civil Justice, partners and providers to  
22 better understand really the scope and need for these  
23 services.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Commissioner has  
25 your office received requests for assistance to

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1  
2 afford divorce lawyers for divorce proceedings that  
3 are related to domestic violence whether they came  
4 directly to your office or to providers that we work  
5 with?

6 CECILE NOEL: I can tell you about what  
7 we see in the Family Justice Centers which I want to  
8 caution you is just a, a portion of the, the world of  
9 survivors and, and services. So, in the Family  
10 Justice Centers when we look at 2018, we had a little  
11 over 1,100 requests for matrimonial or lawyers who  
12 were dealing with matrimonial issues.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: So, in 2018?

14 CECILE NOEL: Yes, that is correct.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: 1,100... [cross-  
16 talk]

17 CECILE NOEL: Approximately... [cross-talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: ...requests.

19 CECILE NOEL: Approximately. Clients,  
20 clients that were assisted with matrimonial issues.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And you have  
22 data from last year as well...

23 CECILE NOEL: I don't have that with me,  
24 but we can certainly pull that data.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN

2 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right. Now what  
3 does the administration currently suggest survivors  
4 do?

5 CECILE NOEL: For... [cross-talk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: When they are  
7 seeking freedom from abusive marriages?

8 CECILE NOEL: So, for those specifics on,  
9 on this particular bill I would like Jordan Dressler  
10 to come to the table and maybe talk with us about  
11 that since it falls really under the Human Resources  
12 Administration's Office of Civil Justice.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Please, go ahead.

14 JORDAN DRESSLER: Thank you, I'm Jordan  
15 Dressler, I'm the Civil Justice Coordinator with the  
16 Human Resources Administration's... [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Sorry... [cross-  
18 talk]

19 JORDAN DRESSLER: ...Office... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Jordan... [cross-  
21 talk]

22 JORDAN DRESSLER: ...of Civil Justice.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Can you hang one  
24 minute, I'm going to turn it over to my legal  
25 counsel.

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2 JORDAN DRESSLER: Got to do that, yes  
3 please.

4 CC: Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
5 whole truth and nothing but the truth in your  
6 testimony before this Committee and to respond  
7 honestly to the Council Member questions?

8 JORDAN DRESSLER: Yes.

9 CC: Thank you.

10 JORDAN DRESSLER: Thank you for the  
11 opportunity. My name is Jordan Dressler, I'm the  
12 Civil Justice Coordinator. In answer to your question  
13 Council Member, there are a number of ways that  
14 survivors can receive access to services obviously  
15 the Family Justice Centers throughout the city are  
16 one of the main touchpoints for the city to provide a  
17 range of services including civil legal services as  
18 well as the domestic violence hotline, which is also  
19 a way to get access to services. Every day providers  
20 that the city works with are providing these  
21 important services, the scale of which and the  
22 remaining needs of which is something that we're very  
23 interested in looking into. Again, just to reiterate  
24 we do share the concern and really embrace the  
25 principle that there should be increased access for



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1  
2 survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence  
3 to important matrimonial legal services. The contours  
4 of that and what precisely that ought to look like is  
5 something that's going to require quite a bit more  
6 study, we need to look at questions of existing needs  
7 and existing available services, what the capacity of  
8 the legal services field amongst our nonprofit legal  
9 provider community looks like in terms of growth and  
10 capacity for growth, distribution across boroughs,  
11 distribution across courts. We are well aware that  
12 the controversies that happen between spouses and  
13 the, the areas in which survivors can be victimized  
14 play out in supreme court but also play out in family  
15 court and so understanding the interplay between  
16 those two venues is critical to ensuring that if we  
17 are to increase access that that access is  
18 meaningful, that growth is thoughtful and  
19 intentional, it's a process that we want to engage  
20 in, it's a conversation that we're happy to be having  
21 both with the council and with the provider and  
22 advocate community.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right and, and I  
24 appreciate that but you, you are aware that divorce  
25

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1  
2 proceedings occur in supreme court not in family  
3 court?

4 JORDAN DRESSLER: Yes... [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Is that correct...  
6 is that correct?

7 JORDAN DRESSLER: Yes, it is.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay and  
9 currently with, with all the services that are being  
10 provided and, and we do appreciate them that it is  
11 limited, it does not extend to free legal  
12 representation in supreme court for divorce cases  
13 that are related to, to domestic violence, is that  
14 correct?

15 JORDAN DRESSLER: The state law does not  
16 extend to matrimonial work in the supreme court.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right, the state  
18 law but nothing prohibits the city from not taking a  
19 step here forward, is that correct?

20 JORDAN DRESSLER: Nothing legally.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Nothing legally.  
22 So, just to answer my question just practically and  
23 basically to summarize what does the city currently  
24 tell survivors, what do we tell them now today? If  
25

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1  
2 someone walks into the office and says I can't afford  
3 a lawyer what do, we tell them today?

4 JARDAN: I think in most cases we're  
5 referring to one of the networks of service providers  
6 which includes legal services that the city through  
7 various agencies contracts with and I think what  
8 remains to be better understood is where the gaps  
9 remain after that process happens as well as how  
10 effective is the outreach and the, you know the sort  
11 of information around those services.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I mean I think  
13 that there is... and I welcome the opportunity to work  
14 together on this but I think there is a plethora of  
15 information I think out there already, there are  
16 domestic violence shelters, there are folks who have  
17 stepped forward to come to the office and... because  
18 let me just kind of elaborate what I mean by folks...  
19 by survivors seeking their freedom, there are a  
20 number of things that they are seeking their freedom  
21 from, obviously from an abusive relationship, abusive  
22 marriage, the trauma that travels with that but also  
23 if they are working, gain employment, have a pension  
24 there are still legal ties to that partner, there are  
25 even... there are significant costs associated with

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2 even finding and locating the abusive partner, trying  
3 to bring them to court, their filing fees are cost  
4 prohibitive, there are also health care ramifications  
5 because technically the spouse is still a health care  
6 proxy... can be a health care proxy, someone has hurt  
7 you physically could still make decisions on your  
8 behalf about your health, that's outrageous. So... and  
9 just for their sake of peace of mind for their  
10 children, for their family so I, I welcome the  
11 opportunity to work together, I think that there are  
12 a number of stakeholders and providers that will be  
13 more than willing to work with us on this and again I  
14 repeat for the city of New York there is no cost too  
15 great to ensure the safety and freedom of these brave  
16 and courageous survivors and I welcome the  
17 opportunity to work together and I thank you Chair  
18 for your... for your time.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Sorry, are you  
20 finished Council Member, thank you so much. I want to  
21 welcome... nope... Council Member Salamanca and ask him  
22 in a minute if he's ready to give an opening  
23 statement but I just want to ask very quickly when  
24 you review the fatality... when you're doing the  
25 fatality reviews what jumps out at you as important

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1  
2 connectors and I'm not getting at what the city's  
3 doing right or wrong, that's not the intent of my  
4 question, it's more... like is there a correlation  
5 between the number of times that somebody come... calls  
6 the police to get help, is that a correlation to... at  
7 the end of the day, you know homicide or what are the  
8 fact... what are the common denominators?

9 CECILE NOEL: Well what we've found over  
10 the years is that a good number of the fatalities  
11 actually had contact with the city agencies... [cross-  
12 talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yep... [cross-talk]

14 CECILE NOEL: ...and that's important and  
15 that's led to us looking at procedures within city  
16 agencies around survivors, their domestic violence  
17 policies as well as what training can we provide to  
18 improve that overall fast response to survivors when  
19 they present so that was... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Can you give one  
21 specific example?

22 CECILE NOEL: Of, of training, of...  
23 [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Well here's what...  
25 in my mind's eye I'm thinking about like where are

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1  
2 the greatest agency connectors, is it NYPD or F.. or  
3 the FJCs?

4 CECILE NOEL: Actually I can give you an  
5 example of one of the training, we've been doing an  
6 extensive amount of training with ACS because we know  
7 that often, we've seen that not only is there a child  
8 protection case there's also a DV issue so we've been  
9 working closely to improve the staff's understanding  
10 of domestic violence, their response within the  
11 context of a child protection case but also  
12 understanding those nuances as well and DHS, we have  
13 really looked at both having staff within that system  
14 better understand the dynamics, how to respond, what  
15 to do, how to connect this survivor to the.. be it an  
16 FJC, to other services to looking at how they can  
17 engage in safety planning when incidents happen  
18 within that system.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah, that's  
20 exactly what I was getting at so thank you very much  
21 for that and, and I trust that in those meetings  
22 that's exactly the type of thing that's going on.

23 CECILE NOEL: Yes.  
24  
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Do you... and do  
3 you report on aggregate information of that in...  
4 [cross-talk]

5 CECILE NOEL: Yes, we do... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: ...your report?

7 CECILE NOEL: Yes... [cross-talk]

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: You do... [cross-  
9 talk]

10 CECILE NOEL: Yes, we do... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, thank you  
12 very much. Council Member Salamanca do you want to  
13 give a short opening statement... [cross-talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Yeah, I'll  
15 just... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: ...and a few  
17 questions... [cross-talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: ...first I want  
19 to thank you Madame Chair and Commissioner it's great  
20 seeing you again, I'm sorry for my tardiness. I know  
21 that we're deep in the conversation and I just want  
22 to open up by saying, you know how important today's  
23 hearing is especially with it being New York City go  
24 purple day and domestic violence awareness month. I'm  
25 a big supporter of helping organizations especially

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1  
2 domestic violence organizations actually get funding  
3 and ensuring that they're providing services within  
4 the appropriate locations where we have young adults  
5 who in my opinion that's where domestic violence may  
6 start whether it's happening at home and they're  
7 seeing this and they may think that it's acceptable  
8 or they're in their first relationship and they  
9 encounter some type of domestic violence from their  
10 partner and continue on with that relationship  
11 thinking that it's acceptable and when you look at my  
12 allocation for Dove funding I normally focus on  
13 providing funding to the organizations that can  
14 provide this type of training to our young adults, to  
15 our adolescents. So, today we're hearing a bill in  
16 which I introduced Intro 371-A which would require  
17 the Mayor's Office to end domestic violence and  
18 gender-based violence to offer training to  
19 cosmetologists including hairstylists, barbers,  
20 manicurists, waxers and so on and so forth and, and  
21 having conversations with my colleague, you know I...  
22 we... I got this idea and I'm so passionate about it,  
23 you know I really don't have much hair on the top of  
24 my head, you know but I do go try to get a trimming  
25 of my beard at least twice a week or once a week and,



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1  
2 and you know going to the same barber shop for over...  
3 you know close to 20 years now, you know in barber  
4 shops you hear things, you know and yes, you know we,  
5 we talk about sports, we talk about... most of the time  
6 we talk about our families, our children and at  
7 times, you know that barber is, is, is having that  
8 one on one relationship with you, he is... you have an  
9 intimate time with that barber and at times you're,  
10 you're sharing an intimate experience with your  
11 barber and I... and I feel that this, this bill is for  
12 me in my opinion I guess for, for guys it, it really  
13 hits home where you may have a client... you being a  
14 barber you may have a client who is experiencing some  
15 difficulties and he may experience that it may lead  
16 to domestic violence and you know that's the  
17 opportunity for that barber to give him information  
18 as to where he can seek help because we all know, you  
19 know the road that you go through when you do... you  
20 interact with domestic violence, you know you can get  
21 arrested, you can... there can be an order of  
22 protection from your family now you're away from your  
23 family and it can really destroy your entire life.  
24 So, in my opinion I... do I have your support for this...  
25 for this bill?

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1  
2 CECILE NOEL: I'm... you... we definitely  
3 support the aim of 371-A however I would also like to  
4 say that we have taken great pains over the last two  
5 years to create a training academy to really target  
6 and look at how we can broaden our reach in terms of  
7 understanding the overall city's understanding,  
8 people's understanding of the issue of intimate  
9 partner violence and that training should be  
10 available to anyone and so we support that, what we  
11 don't see or believe is that it needs to be targeted,  
12 there's no targeted training for cosmetologists it's  
13 the general training that we offer to understand IPV.  
14 I think it's also important to understand that we do  
15 extensive outreach to salons and barbershops through,  
16 through our overall outreach arm and we've been doing  
17 that for the last two years and what we bring to  
18 those outreach events are really resources so they  
19 understand how if someone discloses where to refer  
20 them, that's what they need, they need to understand  
21 one, how, how to... how to listen and how... and what  
22 resources are there and how to refer people and  
23 that's what we do in this training. So, that's also  
24 really important and we also have an online portal  
25 which is NYC Hope where anyone can go and access

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2 services, domestic services across the city, they can  
3 see what's available. We truly support you and the  
4 belief that training is important and we want to do  
5 more of it and we want to do online, online is  
6 wonderful and we want to do more of that but what we  
7 don't see is some targeted training to cosmetologists  
8 that would be any different than the training that I  
9 would give you or any other Council Members about  
10 understanding and then being able to refer.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Well you know  
12 when I... when we're talking about targeted training I  
13 agree, it's the same training that we would receive  
14 but it's targeting... it's that specialty, you know one  
15 of my biggest concerns in ensuring that this bill is  
16 enforced is that an earlier version of my bill there  
17 was a fine for those who failed to get trained but  
18 I've removed it so that it wouldn't be a burden on  
19 the cosmetologist with a monetary penalty. Now my  
20 question is could a solution be reporting the numbers  
21 of trained cosmetologists by borough, how do... how do  
22 we get your office should this bill pass to comply in  
23 ensuring that cosmetologists, barbershops, individual  
24 barbers with licenses that they get from the city of  
25 New York so... because I know that we have that data,

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1  
2 they have a license it's tracked, how do we get that  
3 information to you so that your office can go to  
4 these individual shops and train these individuals?

5 CECILE NOEL: What I would love to do is  
6 to sit down with you and your office to really look  
7 at the bill, look at how we can work together to  
8 reach some consensus on what we think would be  
9 important meeting your mission and also with our  
10 available resources. Clearly, we both believe that  
11 training is important and we do... we do so how, how do  
12 we then structure something that, that's within our  
13 ability as an office to be able to do and also reach  
14 the population that you're talking about. So, that's  
15 what we'd like to do, we'd like to sit down with you  
16 and really talk about the bill.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay, alright,  
18 I will... I will come back to the next round, thank  
19 you.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much  
21 Council Member. We have five panels waiting to, to  
22 give testimony today, many advocacy groups and  
23 lawyers and I just want to respect their time as well  
24 and for that reason I'm going to ask the council  
25 members who are not sponsors of bills to, to please

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2 try to stay within a three minute time limit if the  
3 Sergeant At Arms could, could help with that and I  
4 have Council Members Lander, Ayala and Kallos asking  
5 questions.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you very  
7 much Chair and happy birthday, thank you for giving  
8 your birthday to focusing on this really critical  
9 issue and to the Majority Leader for helping lead the  
10 Council on it as well and to all the work  
11 Commissioner that you and your team do, it's critical  
12 and, and I'm glad we're having the hearing. I'm going  
13 to just ask a couple of questions about Council  
14 Member Treyger's bill 1085 and I think it's really  
15 great to see in the spirit that we worked hard to  
16 provide universal access to council for low income  
17 tenants in housing court, to immigrants facing  
18 deportation or other charges in immigration court  
19 that this bill is really in that tradition and I'm  
20 honored that our council is thinking about how we  
21 expand access, you know Mr. Dressler I know you've  
22 done good work in the past to design really  
23 thoughtful studies in a good time bound way that help  
24 us get to the goal. Sometimes when we hear we're  
25 interested in studying that what we hear is that'll

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1  
2 take forever and it'll be... so in this case in both  
3 those instances you guys really worked with us to  
4 quickly move together to expand access so, you know  
5 do you have some work underway that can help make  
6 that happen quickly and I guess I'll just ask all my...  
7 all my questions. I want to understand how we're  
8 thinking about who the providers would be, I know  
9 there's already some providers in the Family Justice  
10 Centers and of course what we want in these cases is  
11 to make sure that really strong, nonprofit providers  
12 with good track records who understand the issues are  
13 the ones that provide the legal representation, we  
14 just don't wind up like throwing money out to private  
15 providers who would be glad to represent people but  
16 wouldn't necessarily provide the representation in  
17 the ways that we want and, and how do we make sure  
18 that access is thoughtful so people who might not be  
19 inclined to seek it or know they're eligible can get  
20 it but also we don't expose people to having at the  
21 very front door to... you know to have to talk about  
22 issues that should be kept in, you know thoughtful  
23 and confidential ways so, really want to get to this  
24 goal and make sure we can do it together  
25 thoughtfully.

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2 JORDAN DRESSLER: Yes, thank you Council  
3 Member, those are very incisive questions and I'll  
4 take the last two as a pair. With regards to, to who  
5 would do this work, I think we do share the, the  
6 intention of exploring the opportunities with our  
7 community of nonprofit legal providers, you know as  
8 the Civil Justice Coordinator I get to work with  
9 terrific organizations and such a robust  
10 infrastructure of legal service providers in the city  
11 across a variety of fields many times the same  
12 organizations serving New Yorkers in a variety of  
13 venues in a variety of subject matters that is  
14 critical and it's critical to the success that I  
15 think we've all shared so far in a variety of areas,  
16 it's something that we would have every intention of  
17 continuing and not throwing a bunch of money out the  
18 door to, you know who knows who. That also leads to a  
19 provider community that's going to approach this in a  
20 trauma informed way so to the extent there is  
21 increased access its increased thoughtful and  
22 sensitive access so that front door is open to...

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: You know I'm... I  
24 apologize, we now have six panels of, of individuals  
25 who are interested so I assume the questions will be

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN

2 answered to the satisfaction of the Council Members.  
3 Council Member Ayala.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Thank you Madame  
5 Chair and happy birthday and thank you Commissioner.  
6 I think my... it's not... I don't have a, a question but  
7 more of a... of a statement and I think, you know today  
8 I'm sitting here and I'm like trembling myself  
9 because this is a very emotional committee hearing  
10 and an emotional day for many of us who are survivors  
11 of domestic violence but I'm going... I am a, a co-  
12 sponsor of Intro 1085 and I would... what I will say to  
13 the city is that it's 2018 and you need to make this  
14 a priority. I was married when I was 18 years old and  
15 it took me almost 20 years to get out of that  
16 marriage, it was a very abusive marriage and prior to  
17 2010 in New York State you couldn't get divorced  
18 because you had to prove that you were a victim of  
19 domestic violence by showing three clear examples of  
20 ways in which you were abused by then I had already  
21 separated from my abuser and enough time had passed  
22 that I no longer had enough of a valid reason for  
23 wanting that divorce based on that abuse because we  
24 had been separated for enough time. I then had to  
25 prove... my other option was to prove abandonment but



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1  
2 then I also had... then that warranted that I also  
3 prove that I tried everything in... you know in my  
4 power to get this man to take me back. It was  
5 humiliating, it was exhausting and it took Governor  
6 Patterson in 2010 to finally change the law that  
7 would allow me the right to seek a divorce based on  
8 no fault and then it took me another three years to  
9 save the money that I needed to pay the measly 400  
10 dollar fee to get that divorce done and over with. I  
11 don't understand, it's not a lot of money, I think it  
12 was a combined 730 dollars and I still have the  
13 receipts to prove in my closet that allowed me the  
14 freedom to get out of this horrible, horrible  
15 relationship that was with me for far longer than I  
16 wanted it to be and so I don't understand how in 2018  
17 we're still having a conversation about where we  
18 could make, you know these funds available and how  
19 this could happen and... I mean we pay billions into  
20 programs that, you know we all believe in and causes  
21 that are important to all of us and this is... this is  
22 a... this is an issue that saves lives. I can tell you  
23 the day that I walked out of there when I signed that  
24 divorce paper and my ex-husband was walking out one  
25 door and I was walking out the other we were both

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1  
2 crying and we were both crying for different reasons,  
3 I was crying because I was free, he was crying  
4 because he lost his control over me and its important  
5 so we need to do better. We need to do better and  
6 thank you, thank you Council Member because it wasn't  
7 until I heard you today that it really brought it  
8 back and its been many, many, many years for me and  
9 it still... every time then triggered by events like  
10 this and it shouldn't be, it shouldn't be it's 2018,  
11 we need to do better. So, thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Council Member  
13 Ayala we need people on the council who have lived  
14 experiences, we need people like you on the City  
15 Council, people who have lived experiences who can  
16 bring with that deep passion and knowingness in your  
17 bones how important these issues are and I'm just so  
18 grateful to you. Council Member Kallos that is a  
19 tough act to follow but did you have some questions?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I wanted to just  
21 thank Diana for sharing her personal story and I hope  
22 it will inspire other people in a similar situation  
23 to fight to get out of a bad situation and bring that  
24 fight to City Hall where they can continue that fight  
25 as Co-Chair of the Progressive Caucus and it is a

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1  
2 privilege and honor to serve with you. I wanted to  
3 ask the Commissioner, Commissioner Noel specifically  
4 around training, education and resources and outcomes  
5 specifically it seems as a, a victim of harassment  
6 the outcomes still sometimes feel like things might  
7 actually be getting worse than previously with a  
8 criminal justice system that seems unable, inadequate  
9 and unwilling to protect victims of harassment and  
10 key pieces just being in certain cases your best  
11 outcome is an order of protection which may be six  
12 months or two years but in all cases you spend your  
13 time being confronted by somebody who has caused you  
14 harm in the past and is continuing to cause you harm  
15 and the emotional time having to take time off of  
16 work risking employment because of court date after  
17 court date with a court system that will give the  
18 abusers many adjournments as they want and ultimately  
19 support in dealing with district attorneys who are  
20 just as likely to write a violation to the victim as  
21 to the perpetrator and I just... curious how your  
22 office can support victims throughout every step of  
23 the process so that they are able to go in eyes open  
24 knowing exactly what is... how, how difficult every  
25 step is and then whether or not you're prepared to

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1  
2 actually support people through it and help people  
3 keep their jobs when an abuser's decided that they're  
4 going to show up at their place of employment until  
5 they get that person terminated?

6 CECILE NOEL: Thank you. Thank you for  
7 that question, I'd like to begin... if I could just  
8 take a moment, Council Member Ayala, thank you so  
9 much for sharing that story, you, you give voice to  
10 so many survivors and so many of the struggles that  
11 we know that survivors face every day and  
12 collectively we are part of an administration that  
13 really does get that and really understands it and we  
14 will work together to reach a point where we could  
15 really in 2018 find some new meaning in that so again  
16 I thank you so much for sharing that story. Council  
17 Member Kallos, Kallos I'd, I'd like to talk a little  
18 bit about a few things that, that the administration  
19 has done. So, I'd like to begin with Paid Safe, which  
20 was passed in 2017 and Paid Safe is really an, an  
21 expansion of the Paid Sick Leave Act which allows  
22 survivors of intimate partner violence, of stalking,  
23 trafficking and, and sexual assault to be able to use  
24 their accrued sick time for some of the issues that  
25 you just mentioned to be able to take time off from

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1  
2 work, to go to a legal appointment, to go see an  
3 advocate, to maybe negotiate changing schools for,  
4 for... because they need to move so we are thinking  
5 about those kinds of efforts. Around the issue of  
6 stalking we, we have a, a very robust program that  
7 we're working with the police department on that's  
8 called the Coordinated Approach to Prevent Stalking  
9 and what we do there is we work in, in partnership  
10 with the police department district attorneys office  
11 to really do extensive training on how we can improve  
12 their reporting on stalking if we can include  
13 stalking as part of the charges it elevates it and so  
14 we're doing that as well and we've rolled that out in  
15 multiple boroughs, we've... we began in Staten Island  
16 we then went to Queens and now we're in the Bronx so  
17 that what we're doing there is really in conjunction  
18 with NYPD and the district attorneys office to better  
19 respond to survivors when they are experiencing that.  
20 We are also... we're also doing a major piece on  
21 economic development... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And the DAs...  
23 [cross-talk]

24 CECILE NOEL: ...to be able to... [cross-  
25 talk]

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...are actually  
3 prosecuting... [cross-talk]

4 CECILE NOEL: Yes... [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...and doing more...  
6 [cross-talk]

7 CECILE NOEL: ...and yes, they are... [cross-  
8 talk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...than a, a... ACD  
10 and temporary order of protection... [cross-talk]

11 CECILE NOEL: Yes... [cross-talk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...for more than  
13 two years and people are actually seeing being forced  
14 into a rehabilitation program because that's not  
15 happening in Manhattan at all?

16 CECILE NOEL: What we're doing in those  
17 boroughs is really looking at how together we can put  
18 together response that, that really focuses on what  
19 the needs of the survivors are at that point as well  
20 as bringing better responses from the systems that  
21 you just named in, in terms of a resolution.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And, and... [cross-  
23 talk]

24

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I'm going to ask  
3 Council Member Cumbo has a question and then as I say  
4 we have... [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Helen this is...  
6 this is actually... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: ...some leading  
8 experts... [cross-talk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...happening to  
10 constituents, it's happening to me I just want to  
11 hear beyond the order of protection are we actually  
12 taking steps to get the people into the, the, the  
13 perpetrators to stop and if they need rehabilitation  
14 getting whatever... getting the court to actually order  
15 these people to get the help they need to leave  
16 people alone so that they can move on with their  
17 lives. As my colleague was saying this, this isn't  
18 about anything other than power and we need to  
19 educate them so that they can change that  
20 relationship.

21 CECILE NOEL: So through our program we,  
22 we are getting enhanced arrests, we're also getting...  
23 we're also improving the programs that offenders are  
24 being referred to within the criminal justice system,  
25 we are also exploring ways of having community

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2 responses that are not criminal justice based so that  
3 we can get some change in behavior so that they can  
4 leave the survivor alone so we are exploring that  
5 whole continuum of services that are rooted in  
6 criminal justice responses and, and also rooted in  
7 community responses.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I'd like your  
9 help.

10 CECILE NOEL: Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you Council  
12 Member Kallos, Council Member Cumbo.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you Chair  
14 Rosenthal and I too want to applaud or to thank  
15 Council Member Ayala for her bravery and her courage  
16 of speaking her truth. I know that so often our  
17 personal issues we feel as Council Members sometimes  
18 we have to mask all of the things that we're dealing  
19 with personally because we want to appear to be  
20 stronger than humanly possible but I really thank you  
21 because you sharing that shows that you're really  
22 just that much stronger for being able to have the  
23 courage to share that and as Council Member Kallos  
24 said hopefully more people will see and find their  
25 courage and their voice through you sharing your



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1  
2 experience. I wanted to ask, I had a Town Hall  
3 meeting last night and this question comes up quite  
4 often Commissioner Noel and I'm so happy to have you  
5 hear around housing and housing being such a critical  
6 aspect in terms of people being able, able to have as  
7 Council Member Ayala illustrated that freedom and so  
8 can you talk about any movement or discussion or... how  
9 is housing lotteries interfacing with individuals who  
10 are experiencing domestic violence, have we figured  
11 out ways to have a preference in our housing  
12 lotteries as well as with NYCHA and how does that  
13 actually work because we know that housing is pretty  
14 much the most critical aspect for people being able  
15 to leave an abuser because as many people say, you  
16 know when they hear about domestic violence their  
17 first question is why don't they just leave and in a  
18 city like New York that's probably the most  
19 complicated question about why someone just can't  
20 leave?

21 CECILE NOEL: Well I'd like to begin as  
22 everyone knows housing is just a very scarce resource  
23 in New York City and it is a challenge, it clearly is  
24 a challenge not only for domestic violence survivors,  
25 but I'd say for everyone in this city to find safe

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1  
2 and affordable housing. It's further complicated in  
3 the case of domestic violence survivors. I'd first  
4 like to say that, that we have been working with HPD  
5 around the whole issue of being able to sever  
6 leases, being able to screen appropriately for  
7 domestic violence survivors when they issue... when  
8 they are in subsidized housing and the issue presents  
9 itself so we've been doing extensive training with  
10 HPD, working with them on the improvement of those  
11 forms, working with them on how they assess and what  
12 they can do within that context to be able to have  
13 hearings around, around both severing this lease for  
14 the survivors and then determining where the  
15 apartment goes. Clearly NYCHA has had a process in  
16 place for a long time around domestic violence  
17 survivors and being able to access housing, access  
18 NYCHA housing using the domestic violence preference  
19 and that's still in place and it has... it has been  
20 informed and updated consistent with VAWA regulations  
21 and procedures and then we also have as part of the  
22 domestic violence task force a whole subcommittee  
23 that's really looking at the issue of housing across  
24 the city for domestic violence survivors and how we  
25 can improve either the, the entry points to reflect,

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1  
2 right, the needs of survivors, how we can streamline  
3 some of those processes which sometimes they're very  
4 lengthy and, and so that's what the subcommittee is  
5 doing at this point and we hope to move those  
6 recommendations forward.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Have we still... as  
8 it pertains to the lotteries is there still a push or  
9 a move to make those that are the victims of domestic  
10 violence a preference?

11 CECILE NOEL: Under, under NYCHA there,  
12 there is a process that establishes you as a survivor  
13 and, and then gives you access through that route  
14 over and above other, other avenues... [cross-talk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Right... [cross-  
16 talk]

17 CECILE NOEL: ...of access into that and  
18 that still exists.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: But not in terms  
20 of the affordable housing lotteries throughout the  
21 city?

22 CECILE NOEL: I would have to check on  
23 that and get back to you on that.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay, thank you.  
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much  
3 Commissioner, to all of you for the work that you do  
4 every day, we really appreciate your public service  
5 so thank you for your time, look forward to following  
6 up with you on the oversight work and on all of these  
7 pieces of legislation.

8 CECILE NOEL: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Alright, thank  
10 you for testifying. I'm going to call up the next  
11 panel which is a group of experts and community  
12 organizations; Melissa Paquette from Safe Horizon;  
13 Julie Gold... sorry, I can't read her handwriting,  
14 Goldschied who I'm told is the expert to listen to  
15 from CUNY Law School; Namasha Schelling from Day One  
16 and Amanda Hayden from the LGBT Community Center. And  
17 I think... I think someone needs to leave, if, if the  
18 person who needs, needs to leave goes first that's  
19 fine by me and don't be offended, hang on I'm going  
20 to do some quick mental math... we have an hour and a  
21 half which is 90 minutes if I... you know unfortunately  
22 we're going to start at a two minute clock and just...  
23 we have your testimony just let us know the most  
24 salient points that you think the public needs to  
25 hear, trust me all of us will be reading your

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1  
2 testimony. Okay, so if you could introduce yourself,  
3 I think we're starting with Miss Schelling... or no,  
4 starting with you.

5 JULIE GOLDSCHIED: Great. Hi, my name is  
6 Julie Goldscheid... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

8 JULIE GOLDSCHIED: ...I'm on the faculty at  
9 CUNY Law School, I... which as you probably know is the  
10 only public law school in New York City, one of the  
11 most diverse law schools in the country. For over 30  
12 years I've advocated on behalf of survivors of gender  
13 violence including intimate partner and sexual  
14 violence. Before I joined the faculty at CUNY, I was  
15 General Counsel at Safe Horizon, which I believe is  
16 here today and I was a Staff... a Senior Staff Attorney  
17 and acting Legal Director at the organization  
18 formerly known as NOW Legal Defense Fund, its now  
19 called Legal Momentum. I won't say anything more  
20 about what I did there, but I welcome the opportunity  
21 to speak with the Council and I commend the Council's  
22 efforts to address this really important issue and I  
23 particularly appreciate Council Member Ayala's...  
24 Council Member Ayala's testimony this morning, your  
25 bravery is a reminder to all of us of the importance

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1  
2 of this work. So, I'll say really quickly a few words  
3 about Intro 351, Intro 542 and Intro 1085 and I think  
4 my... the theme of my testimony is really about  
5 coordination and conversation with the advocates and  
6 the providers on the ground to figure out how best to  
7 reach the laudable goals of each of those pieces of  
8 legislation and I think some of the questions that  
9 were raised this morning go to what perhaps might be  
10 solutions to meet those goals and I'll highlight  
11 maybe a few quick points. On Intro 351, I think the  
12 idea of not duplicating efforts and identifying goals  
13 and shared goals on how to meet those goals without  
14 imposing additional burdens. I have specific  
15 questions about some of the requirements that are in  
16 my testimony and I'd be happy to answer any follow up  
17 questions about why I raised them but in the interest  
18 of time I won't focus on those now. For Intro 542,  
19 similarly I think some important questions were  
20 raised earlier. My questions are about client input,  
21 language access and what mechanisms are incorporated  
22 for regularizing feedback. We all... we all have  
23 participated in many surveys, that's great, I have  
24 confidence that that feedback is taken seriously here  
25 but I think if there's a bill like this the best

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1  
2 interest are served by developing mechanisms to  
3 incorporate that as a regular practice going forward.  
4 With respect to Intro 1085, civil legal assistance is  
5 really important, I think you know that civil legal  
6 assistance has been found to be one of the most  
7 important factors contributing to reducing  
8 recidivism, the incidents of abuse. I had some  
9 citations in my testimony if you don't already have  
10 those sources. I think the question of counsel for  
11 divorce proceedings is a really important one and a  
12 really complex one. So, the providers who are here  
13 can testify in greater detail about, about the nature  
14 of divorce representation which is complex. I have  
15 questions about the needs that have... whether any  
16 needs assessment has been done, what data has driven  
17 the, the proposal and I would just encourage  
18 collaboration with the service providers so that any  
19 efforts are directed towards the folks who had the  
20 greatest need and so that this coordination of, of  
21 provision of services with trained legal services  
22 providers and I guess the, the only other things I  
23 will emphasize before I close is just the importance  
24 of funding that would extend over the length of a  
25 divorce proceeding which can be lengthy and that

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2 whatever funding is provided funds training and  
3 supervision because representation and divorce  
4 proceedings is a very specialized area of expertise  
5 and whoever providers are need to both be trained but  
6 also have infrastructure sufficient to ensure that  
7 quality legal services are provided which I know is  
8 the aim of the Council. Thank you.

9 NAMASHA SCHELLING: Hello, my name is  
10 Namasha Schelling, I am the Communications Manager at  
11 Day One. I'm going to try to be as brief as possible.  
12 Day One is the only New York Organization committing  
13 its full resources to address dating violence among  
14 youth 24 years of age and younger through a  
15 combination of services that include prevention,  
16 social services, legal advocacy and leadership  
17 development. We work to create a world without dating  
18 violence. We appreciate the opportunity to share our  
19 experiences and perspective on the legislation  
20 pending before the Council. With this in mind we  
21 offer the following testimony focused on the unique  
22 experiences of young survivors. Regarding Intro 371  
23 relating to the trainings to help cosmetologists  
24 recognize signs of domestic violence in their  
25 clients. At Day One, we welcome opportunities to



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1  
2 partner and share knowledge with professionals from  
3 different sectors to learn about the signs of  
4 domestic violence. We also believe that everyone can  
5 play a role in ending dating violence from friends,  
6 colleagues and trusted professionals including  
7 cosmetologists. In fact, Day One has partnered over  
8 the years with the Cornell Workers Institute to train  
9 cosmetology students. Through our years of experience  
10 in trainings we, we've learned that training  
11 professionals must be accompanied by follow... by  
12 follow up reinforcement of practices and spaces to  
13 explore challenging questions. We believe that a  
14 victim... sorry, we believe that a victim connecting  
15 with a trained cosmetologist can create an important  
16 access, access point for that victim. It also is no  
17 substitute for connecting with a professional with  
18 deeper knowledge about the issue of domestic  
19 violence. We're concerned about one, the lack of  
20 potential confidentiality; two, safety concerns that  
21 may arise for victims and cosmetologists themselves  
22 and three, tailoring trainings and follow up  
23 resources so that they are responsive to what these  
24 professionals are seeing in their field. Regarding  
25 Intro 532, in relation to requiring the office to

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2 combat domestic and gender-based violence to provide  
3 clients with service satisfaction surveys. We believe  
4 satisfaction surveys can be important tools to assess  
5 client's needs and to provide feedback on the  
6 services provided. We believe they could be used to  
7 identify emerging issues, track progress and have the  
8 opportunity to remedy or correct issues through each  
9 reporting period. simultaneously we would want to  
10 ensure that a survey of F, FJCs would not replace  
11 more accurate surveys of youth that could be done by  
12 the Department of Health, Education or the Department  
13 of Youth and Community Development. At Day One we  
14 recognize that many young people may not reach out...  
15 sorry, may not reach out to a Family Justice Center  
16 for a variety of reasons such as fear that reporting  
17 can lead to the unintended involvement of law  
18 enforcement through ICE or police for themselves or  
19 their loved ones or possibly burdensome scrutiny from  
20 the ACS. With this in mind, we believe that  
21 satisfaction surveys can be critical tools but should  
22 not be used to assess the experiences of survivors in  
23 New York City as a whole.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you, can I  
25 ask you to wrap it up, we really have your testimony.

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2 NAMASHA SCHELLING: Okay...

3 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: It's... it'll go  
4 right in the file, I'm going to read it, the General  
5 Council's going to read it, policy... it's going to  
6 shape the next version of our legislation... [cross-  
7 talk]]

8 NAMASHA SCHELLING: Okay, then I'll, I'll  
9 stop then, thank you... [cross-talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, and just as  
11 a reminder everyone we just want to be able to get to  
12 everyone in the audience, I apologize.

13 NAMASHA SCHELLING: No worries, thank  
14 you.

15 MELISSA PAQUETTE: So, thank you Council  
16 Member Rosenthal for convening this and thank you  
17 Council Member Ayala for sharing your story, it's a  
18 story that a lot of our clients at Safe Horizon also  
19 share with you. my name is Melissa Paquette, I'm the  
20 Director of Safe Horizons Domestic Violence Law  
21 Project. We provide free legal services to low income  
22 victims of domestic violence throughout the city in  
23 the areas of family law and matrimonial law. I'd like  
24 to first address Intro 1085 and thank Council Member  
25 Treyger for recognizing that victims of domestic

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1  
2 violence are in need of expanded legal services. The  
3 divorce process in our state can be complex and  
4 daunting especially for those who in our adverse... in  
5 the court process to their abusive spouse. At our law  
6 project we intake victims at varying stages in the  
7 legal process. Some of our clients are still living  
8 with their abusive spouse, some of them are in year  
9 three of their divorce litigation and some have had  
10 no contact with their spouse in decades. Our clients  
11 report various victimizations including physical  
12 abuse, economic abuse, emotional abuse. In  
13 considering how legal services can be most impactful  
14 for victims, we encourage the City Council to  
15 consider the following questions: how do you define a  
16 victim of domestic violence; when in the legal  
17 process would assignment of a lawyer be most  
18 impactful; should there be an income tax to, to  
19 ensure victims most in financial need receive legal  
20 services; will lawyers assigned to victims have  
21 training in domestic violence. We recommend that the  
22 city conduct research and data collection to answer  
23 these questions and to ensure that these legal  
24 services are responses to the needs of victims. With  
25 regard to Intro 0542 and Intro 0351, our primary

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2 concern is that clients are the focus of the Family  
3 Justice Centers, so we don't want any surveys or data  
4 collection to take away time from client services  
5 that they have come to the center to receive. We also  
6 are concerned about confidentiality and accessibility  
7 in the survey results. So, making sure that the  
8 surveys are in multiple languages, written simply and  
9 protecting confidential conversations. Thank you  
10 again.

11 AMANDA HAYDEN: Hello, good morning. Hi,  
12 good morning. My name is Amanda Hayden and I am the  
13 Families Program Coordinator at the Lesbian, Gay,  
14 Bisexual and Transgender Community Center commonly  
15 referred to as The Center. We formed the center in  
16 1983 in response to the AIDS epidemic ensuring a  
17 place for LGBTQ people to access information, care  
18 and support they were not receiving elsewhere, and we  
19 are now the large... second largest LGBTQ community in  
20 the country and the first largest on the East Coast  
21 serving New Yorkers across all five boroughs. I've  
22 personally been at The Center since 2016 working in  
23 two different roles; as a Family Permanency  
24 Coordinator I oversaw our family acceptance work and  
25 trained dozens of mental health and social service

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1  
2 practitioners on LGBTQ affirming family support, in  
3 my current role I oversee all of our programming on  
4 family building and relationship support and we  
5 frequently see individuals seeking mental health  
6 support around relationships where there is a  
7 presence of active or historic domestic violence. I  
8 do want to take a moment to thank the Anti-Violence  
9 Project for their ongoing support related to our work  
10 in this area and as a member of the LGBTQ community I  
11 have personally supported multiple queer and trans  
12 friends through emotionally and physically abusive  
13 relationships. I can say firsthand that affirming  
14 information on services for LGBTQ survivors are  
15 limited, resources are strained, and we need support.  
16 We commend Mayor De Blasio for his recent Executive  
17 Order to expand the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic  
18 Violence with the expansion of many types of intimate  
19 partner violence frequently experiences by my  
20 community are given increased awareness. So, research  
21 consistently demonstrates that LGBTQ people  
22 experience similar or higher rates of intimate  
23 partner violence compared to cisgender or  
24 heterosexual counterparts. In addition, during the  
25 past two years we have witnessed a rise in hate

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2 crimes nationwide and the most recent FBI data  
3 includes... indicates that LGBTQ individuals comprise  
4 the second most targeted group. Furthermore, LGBTQ  
5 individuals have historically faced higher stigma  
6 about their relationships compared to cisgender and  
7 heterosexual individuals. Compounding this societal  
8 stigma is the fact that many law enforcement agencies  
9 and staffs are not affirming of the spectrum of  
10 identities creating a deterrent to report any  
11 violence. So, we, we support further data collection,  
12 consistent data collection and collecting data around  
13 sexual orientation and gender identity across the  
14 city.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
16 much, I really appreciate it and thank you all for  
17 your testimony. Professor if it's alright with you  
18 I'd like to follow up and have an in-person meeting  
19 to discuss the issues that you've worked on... [cross-  
20 talk]

21 JULIE GOLDSCHIED: Of course... of course.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, thank you  
23 very much. I'm going to call up the next panel; hang  
24 on, do we have... I'm sorry... who are our legal experts  
25 and I just want to note... hang on one second Judith

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1  
2 Goldiner and Celia Irvine from Legal Aid Society;  
3 Terry Lawson from Legal Services and Bronx Legal  
4 Services and Mark Hagar, I hope I'm saying that right  
5 from New York Legal Assistance Group and I, I just  
6 want to mention that we do have several  
7 representatives from the organization Voices of  
8 Women, we're going to hold on to that testimony till  
9 the end to just sort of drive home the point of  
10 everything we're talking about today so, so I want to  
11 thank you and know that you are much appreciated. If  
12 you could begin starting with you just announce  
13 yourself, give copies of the testimony to the  
14 Sergeant and again we're on a two-minute clock. Thank  
15 you.

16 TERRY LAWSON: Thank you. Thank you for  
17 this opportunity to testify. My name is Terry Lawson,  
18 I'm the Director of the Family and Immigration Unit  
19 at Bronx Legal Services which is an office of legal  
20 services NYC. Legal Services has been in the Family  
21 Justice Centers run by End GBV, GBV since their  
22 inception and last year we provided civil legal  
23 services in over 2,000 family, matrimonial,  
24 immigration and housing cases for FJC clients. We...  
25 sorry. We are very grateful for the Family Justice



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1  
2 Centers and the incredible work of End GBV. Before  
3 the FJCs came into place, we struggled to connect our  
4 clients to other service providers, to the police, to  
5 district attorneys' offices and these days we rely  
6 heavily on the counseling and case management  
7 services that are available at the FJCs. Their  
8 willingness... the End GBV's willingness to work with  
9 us to find the best solutions has made, made our work  
10 together more meaningful. With respect to Intro 1085,  
11 I want to thank Council Member Treyger and Council  
12 Member Ayala for this bill and also thank Council  
13 Member Ayala for speaking her, her truth. As people  
14 have testified already, survivors will benefit  
15 significantly from this bill. I wanted to also draw...  
16 reiterate what was said about these including  
17 representation for post judgment contempt proceedings  
18 an, and that they should be available for homeowners  
19 or for those who on paper have assets bur are unable  
20 to access those assets due to financial abuse. I want  
21 to thank Council Member Salamanca for his bill to  
22 make training available to cosmetologists and for  
23 working to reduce toxic masculinity in our  
24 communities by getting everybody on the same page on  
25 these issues and with respect to the data collection,

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2 I just want to ask the City Council to tread very  
3 carefully in imposing more administrative burdens on  
4 providers because it is the providers that are  
5 meeting with the clients and not End GBV so... and many  
6 of us are at the FJCs providing the services without  
7 funding from MOCJ so we ask that the Council tread  
8 very carefully before imposing additional burdens on  
9 already, already over taxed providers. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you, I  
11 appreciate that.

12 MARK HAGAR: Sorry, thank you. Good  
13 morning and thank you for the opportunity to be here  
14 and happy birthday. My name is Mark Hager, I am a  
15 Supervising Attorney at NYLAG's Matrimonial and  
16 Family Law Department. I'm going to speak briefly  
17 about the divorce bill. We're currently doing this  
18 type of work and recognize that there are large gaps  
19 in providing both low income and working poor,  
20 survivors of domestic violence with representation  
21 in, in divorce proceedings which has, has been said  
22 can take many years of litigation. Also I think it's  
23 important to note then when we're working with the  
24 working poor and low income we can be talking about  
25 pensions, my organization has litigated cases where

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1  
2 both the survivor and the perpetrator of violence  
3 were on a lease for a NYCHA apartment and when  
4 homelessness becomes an issue in a divorce you have  
5 almost no choice but to litigate the action to its  
6 completion and we would welcome the opportunity to  
7 speak with the Council further about the complexities  
8 of divorce actions that can often take years to  
9 resolve, there's significant complexity within the  
10 supreme court system in order to file and obtain a  
11 divorce successfully, it's very challenging for prose  
12 litigants to do that that. In addition, its also very  
13 difficult for survivors to have to go through that  
14 process on their own, sometimes with the burden of  
15 negotiating or litigating the settlement with someone  
16 who previously exhibited and, and most likely still  
17 has some amount of control and power over the other  
18 litigant. So, it's very challenging and we'd, we'd  
19 ask for the opportunity to speak with the council  
20 about those issues. I don't want to repeat what has  
21 been said already but we would also have... would want  
22 answers to questions about how this... how the terms  
23 are being defined in terms of domestic violence, who  
24 would be eligible and to make sure that, that  
25 providers who would be assigned and represent clients

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2 in these cases would be trained to specifically  
3 address the issues that are reoccurring within  
4 domestic violence relationships that are very  
5 nuanced. Thank you.

6 CELIA IRVINE: Hi, good, good morning and  
7 thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is  
8 Celia Irvine, I am a Staff Attorney at the Legal Aid  
9 Society, Judith Goldiner had to leave earlier. I'm,  
10 I'm going to speak with respect to Intro 1085. I am a  
11 Staff Attorney in the Manhattan... in Manhattan for the  
12 Legal Aid Society. My entire practice consists of  
13 contested matrimonial, I am one person. I represent  
14 people who are in all the stages of fleeing domestic  
15 violence, some have fled, some are still living with  
16 their abusers, some... and some are plaintiffs, and  
17 some are defendants. There's a huge need for  
18 services, we are forced to turn many people away  
19 every single day. There's clearly a need for expanded  
20 legal representation in matrimonial litigation. I  
21 would encourage the Council as you continue to  
22 explore these issues to look towards the non for-  
23 profit providers with proven track records of both  
24 representing victims of domestic violence in a trauma  
25 informed and holistic manner and representing

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1  
2 survivors in the more complicated as well as the  
3 simple matrimonial matters. I think we often outside  
4 of matrimonial lawyers refer to contested divorces as  
5 divorces where people are in dispute about being  
6 divorced but a contested divorce is a litigated  
7 divorce and it can involve a range of issues  
8 involving children and financial issues. I would also  
9 encourage the Council and the committee to look to a  
10 holistic and not a narrow definition of survivor of  
11 domestic violence as for many reasons which you are  
12 well aware of victims do not always seek orders of  
13 protection. And thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you, really  
15 appreciate your work that all of you do every day,  
16 it's a real public service, appreciate you. I'm going  
17 to call up the next panel. Do we have the.. I'm sorry..  
18 now from the assault, violence and justice focused  
19 community groups we have Mary Haviland if she's still  
20 here, oh, hi Mary, from the New York Alliance Against  
21 Sexual Assault; we have Miss Ray from the New York  
22 City Anti-Violence Project, thank you; Alisha Bailey  
23 from Fortune Society and Amy Barasch from Her  
24 Justice. Thank you so much. Thank you, you may begin.

25

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2 AUDACIA RAY: My name is Audacia Ray..  
3 okay, my name is Audacia Ray and I'm the Director of  
4 Community Organizing and Public Advocacy at the New  
5 York City Anti-Violence Project. We provide services  
6 and support to LGBTQ survivors of many different  
7 kinds of violence and I'm going to focus on Intro  
8 371-A and Intro 1085. Just very briefly on 371-A, I  
9 want to boost what Council Member Salamanca said, I  
10 really appreciate you also identifying that those  
11 spaces that barber shops and salons can be a space  
12 where we can identify people who might cause harm and  
13 I think that's a really important piece of that  
14 because really if we're going to be training people  
15 to recognize signs of inter-partner violence it can't  
16 just be about survivors, it also has to be about  
17 people who are potentially doing harm and also we  
18 need to complicate how we talk about gender in these  
19 contexts that abuse and survival are not binary  
20 identifies and they're not necessarily in alignment  
21 with, you know the, the person doing harm being  
22 masculine identified and the person being abused  
23 being feminine identified. So, that's something that,  
24 that EBP is always bringing up in these spaces and  
25 it'd be really important to discuss as, as that bill

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1  
2 moves forward. And I also.. I want to spend a little  
3 bit more time complicating the narrative around Intro  
4 1085. So, really the commonly held view is that the  
5 abusive partner is the one who's employed and  
6 controls all of the money so that the survivor is  
7 dependent on them. I'm a survivor of intimate partner  
8 violence and that was not the situation I was in,  
9 the... this bill would not have helped me because I  
10 work... I was working, and my abuser was not, he was  
11 spending my money and putting me into credit card  
12 debt and exerting power and control over our  
13 finances. He told me regularly that without me he'd  
14 be homeless, and he'd probably kill himself and that  
15 coerced me into staying for a while. I had family and  
16 community support so when I was finally able to leave  
17 and get an order of protection I would not have  
18 needed assistant for my own divorce expenses but  
19 because he was refusing to work or couldn't find work  
20 he didn't have the resources to, to pay for his  
21 expenses so it kept me trapped in that marriage and,  
22 and so I know it's kind of counterintuitive to say  
23 that we should be paying for the divorce expenses of  
24 people who has... who caused harm and we can, you know  
25 hash that out a little bit more but because of the

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2 way power and control exists in those relationships  
3 it can really continue to trap survivors in marriages  
4 that they need to be out of. I'm going to wrap it up,  
5 thank you so much.

6 ALISHA BAILEY: Hi, good morning. My name  
7 is Alisha Bailey... the red button, okay, thank you.  
8 Good morning, my name is Alisha Bailey, I'm an  
9 Alternative to Incarceration Counselor with Fortune  
10 Society. I'm here, here testifying today on behalf of  
11 the Fortune Society and I'd like to thank everybody,  
12 the members of the Council for being here and  
13 listening to us testify. I'll start out with what I  
14 wrote in regard to some statistics and stuff. One in  
15 four women and one in seven men will experience  
16 severe physical violence and intimate, intimate  
17 partner in their lifetime. Domestic violence and the  
18 resulting trauma can significantly impact the  
19 person's mental health. Experiencing abuse influences  
20 how a person feels, thinks and connects with the  
21 world. For some survivors the traumatic effects of  
22 abuse can be alleviated with increased safety and  
23 support while others require more comprehensive  
24 treatment care. For me, the help was available at the  
25 Justice... [clears throat] sorry... at the Family Justice



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1  
2 Center. The psychological, verbal, and emotional  
3 abuse for me had lasted five long years. Therefore,  
4 when the only sentiments expressed are negative or  
5 derogatory and purposely damaging to your  
6 psychological wellbeing, it can be hurtful. If  
7 nothing more... sorry, when I heard... unfortunately,  
8 nearly half of all of the men and women in the United  
9 States will experience psychological aggression by an  
10 intimate partner. What resonated for me to make  
11 changes is when I heard my teenage daughter mimic the  
12 learned relationship dynamic in her young dating life  
13 and like I freight train that hit me that this, this  
14 had to stop. Recently I organized a purple ribbon  
15 campaign for domestic violence awareness month and  
16 Fortune Society and designated a day for the agency  
17 to wear purple. I'm eager to continue sharing my  
18 experience and expertise as a survivor and weigh in  
19 on the proposed reforms like the ones before the  
20 committee today. I wholeheartedly support Intro  
21 Number 1085. In many African American and Hispanic  
22 communities people fear the legal system and  
23 therefore will not report abuse or let alone seek  
24 divorce. Intro Number 542 is also an important step  
25 in the right direction helping survivors increase

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2 access to economic resources and physical safety and  
3 legal protections. Regarding Intro Number 351, I  
4 believe this report will help the Mayor, the Speaker  
5 and the public understand certain domestic violence  
6 initiatives of the city leading to greater  
7 transparency. The Fortune Society just wanted to  
8 applaud the New York City Committee on Women for  
9 recognizing the complexities that being a survivor of  
10 domestic violence present and we urge you to explore  
11 further the intersection of incarceration and  
12 domestic violence. Thank you.

13 AMY BARASCH: Thank you. Thank you for  
14 the opportunity to speak today. My name is Amy  
15 Barasch, I'm the Executive Director of Her Justice, a  
16 nonprofit organization that stands with women living  
17 in poverty in New York City. We serve them with a  
18 pro-bono first approach to providing free legal  
19 assistance. We train, mentor and support volunteer  
20 attorneys to address the individual and systemic  
21 legal needs that they face. Our pro-bono motto  
22 enables our 18-person legal department to help over  
23 3,000 women and their 4,000 children in family  
24 divorce and immigration matters every year. Our  
25 clients are the working poor, with very limited

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1  
2 resources. They live in all five boroughs of the  
3 city. Over half are Latino, almost a third need  
4 interpreters in court, 80 percent are victims of  
5 domestic violence and most are mothers who are or  
6 become the heads of their households. Her Justice  
7 recognizes the severe shortage of lawyers available  
8 for low income New Yorkers in our areas of practice  
9 and are very grateful to the Council Member and the  
10 Council for discussing divorce in particular. In the  
11 family and supreme matrimonial parts, that burden of  
12 lack of representation falls with disproportionate  
13 weight on women who make up the bulk of the  
14 unrepresented in these matters. These areas represent  
15 two thirds of our practice and we have handled as  
16 many as 200 divorce clients a year. Many of the  
17 issues, the questions that we would raise with regard  
18 to Intro 1085 have been raised by my colleagues  
19 today. I just want to emphasize as I mentioned the  
20 particular harm that come to low income women  
21 generally when they're facing divorce and seeking  
22 representation, the distinction between uncontested  
23 and contested divorces and some of the implantation  
24 questions that would need to be addressed with the  
25 proposal. As we understand it the proposed bill would

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1  
2 address both uncontested and contested divorces and  
3 as was mentioned earlier although uncontested  
4 divorces are designed to be prose proceedings the  
5 reality is that over 30 forms must be submitted in  
6 these cases and at times the court does exercise its  
7 discretion to actually calendar these cases if  
8 they're not convinced that an underlying issue has  
9 been appropriately resolved so we absolutely agree  
10 that assistance is needed in these situations. It may  
11 however be that careful review of the process of the  
12 forms which have not been looked at in a long time  
13 might enable many of those cases to move forward in a  
14 ministerial way without representation. We would look  
15 forward to discussing the overhaul of that process  
16 together. We also did want to raise the question as  
17 to whether council if we're considering council, the  
18 provision of council in divorce matters whether we  
19 might want to look beyond exclusively the victim in  
20 partner violence. As my colleague mentioned, most  
21 proceedings move forward better when both parties are  
22 represented and although that may be counterintuitive  
23 a faster more just proceeding benefits everyone most  
24 especially the victim of abuse that is also tied into  
25 the fact that it's very difficult sometimes to

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1  
2 identify the actual victim. Abusers often portray  
3 themselves as victims and may have gone as far as  
4 filing for orders of protection. If representation  
5 were provided in cases to both partners when abuse  
6 has been alleged, then we would avoid that problem.  
7 We also, because we represent all women living in  
8 poverty, 80 percent of whom are victims of partner  
9 violence encourage the council to really think more  
10 broadly about the representation of... making  
11 representation available to low income people  
12 generally, there is representation currently  
13 available for the matters in divorce that would have  
14 been... for which you would have had representation in  
15 family court so another words custody and orders of  
16 protection but not for the financial element of  
17 divorce. So, if we expanded representation to those  
18 elements then there would be that right to counsel  
19 and as my colleague said often times the economic  
20 challenge is both the money and the debt are what  
21 really impoverishes somebody post-divorce. And then  
22 finally just some of the quality... the questions about  
23 who qualifies for... who would qualify for this benefit  
24 as well as what point during the proceeding and how  
25 would that determination be made are some of the

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1  
2 questions I think that we would need to grapple with  
3 but again we really appreciate the Council Members  
4 addressing the issue of divorce representation for  
5 low income people in New York City. Thank you.

6 MARY HAVILAND: Good morning, my name is  
7 Mary Haviland, I'm the Executive Director of the New  
8 York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault. I'm going  
9 to take a little bit of a different tact, I'm going  
10 to address the issues that I see coming up around the  
11 expansion of the role of the Office to... the previous  
12 Office to Combat Domestic Violence now the Office to  
13 End Domestic and Gender Based Violence and I'm going  
14 to skip ahead in my testimony just to make some sort,  
15 sort of observations. I do want to praise of the  
16 Office for the work they have historically done that  
17 has raised the, the, the issue of domestic violence.  
18 It... their leadership has led to policy improvements  
19 and access to city services for domestic violence  
20 that have been crucial including the Family Justice  
21 Centers and to their credit the evaluation of the  
22 Family Justice Centers, but I do want to recognize  
23 the 16 rape crisis programs in New York City. They,  
24 they are a host of experts in this area, they've  
25 developed sophisticated understanding in the care

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1  
2 required in the health sector, the clinical needs of  
3 survivors when healing from sexual violence, the  
4 systemic issues that face survivors who seek justice  
5 and generally the obstacles facing survivors with  
6 institutional responses to the issue. As a result I  
7 would really like to encourage the council to think  
8 about legislation that would empower these, these  
9 stakeholders and services in the community to have  
10 information about the Office and also to be  
11 participating in their... in their work in a daily way  
12 and so I... in my testimony and you can read it I  
13 suggest that a couple of things that the Office  
14 collaborate and meet regularly with these service  
15 providers, that they actively engage in the direction  
16 of additional resources dedicated to this issue to  
17 community sexual violence programs and that the  
18 council consider mandating an, an annual report that  
19 would report out on I have six different things  
20 listed here and I'm not going to go through them but  
21 report out on the Office's work so that people in the  
22 community cannot duplicate the work they're doing and  
23 also know about the work they're doing and I thank  
24 you very much for my... for the time today.

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: This is like a  
3 powerhouse panel, the whole room is a powerhouse and  
4 I just want to thank you for your public service,  
5 thank you for sharing your stories. We have your  
6 testimony, it'll help flush out the legislation that  
7 we have proposed, thank you very much for coming  
8 today. The next panel is, let me call up Mary Luke  
9 from United Nations; Dorchen Leidholdt from Sanctuary  
10 for Families and Joanna Alvarez from Black Women's  
11 Blueprint.

12 MARY LUKE: Hi, good afternoon, thank you  
13 very much Chairwoman Rosenthal and for the bills of  
14 Councilman Treyger and Lancman and thank you very  
15 much Councilwoman Ayala for your courageous testimony  
16 and sharing your story. I'm the President of the  
17 Metro New York Chapter of U.N. Women and also the Co-  
18 Chair of the Steering Committee of the New York City  
19 4CEDAW Act and so I'm really speaking to you on  
20 behalf of both of those organizations that obviously  
21 have violence against women as a primary focus. It's,  
22 it's really wonderful to hear the compassion and the  
23 commitment of both men and women in this area and  
24 today I really want to speak to the issue of language  
25 access. I think that under the strong leadership of



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1  
2 Commissioner Noel we have fantastic Family Justice  
3 Centers that are available and that have a network of  
4 community-based NGOs, we have services like the  
5 multilingual domestic violence hotline as well as  
6 language line dual handset phones but there could be  
7 a lot more. So, it's really important to recognize  
8 the importance of language access to domestic  
9 violence survivors. When I was a hotline counselor at  
10 Women Kind, I talked to many survivors who spoke no  
11 English, we were fortunate to have counselors in 18  
12 different Asian languages and they had 14... they had  
13 1,600 first time callers on their hotline and so it's  
14 so important that victims are able to tell their  
15 stories in their own language particularly when  
16 filing police reports or petitions for orders of  
17 protection. These services can be so complicated and  
18 so personal obviously. So, let me just speak a little  
19 bit to the issues of Intro 351, I recommend that... I'm  
20 in favor of all of these bills but I recommend  
21 modification of 351 to include the numbers of  
22 attorneys placed and working in FHACs by language,  
23 gender, and ethnicity be reported. In the service  
24 satisfaction surveys they need to be in multiple  
25 languages not given by staff but by independent

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1  
2 persons and that low literacy clients have the  
3 opportunity to, to answer specifically and in Intro  
4 1085 we also recommend that attorneys who are  
5 assigned have access to multiple languages, with  
6 interpreters so that the clients can be prepared and  
7 be able to be properly represented in court  
8 appearances. Thank you very much.

9           DORCHEN LEIDHOLDT: Good morning, my name  
10 is Dorchen Leidholdt and I'm the Director of the  
11 Center for Battered Women's Legal Services at  
12 Sanctuary for Families. New York State's largest  
13 provider of dedicated and comprehensive services for  
14 victims of domestic violence, human trafficking and  
15 related forms of gender-based violence. Because of  
16 the limited time I'm going to focus on only one of  
17 the bills before this committee, Intro 1085, which  
18 recognizes the urgent need for free, high quality  
19 legal representation in matrimonial cases for  
20 survivors of domestic violence unable to afford  
21 attorneys. Intimate partner abusers are all too  
22 frequently... all too frequently include complex  
23 economic abuse as part of the toxic mix of physical,  
24 emotional, sexual, and other damaging forms of  
25 coercive control. In addition to the emotional trauma

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1  
2 of remaining legally chained to an individual who  
3 threatened you, hurt you and made you fear you're  
4 your life and the safety of your children, the  
5 economic consequences of being trapped in marriages  
6 to an abusive spouse are often severe. Marriage to an  
7 abusive partner puts survivor's future income and  
8 savings in jeopardy, leaves the door open to the  
9 abuser making critical medical decisions on the  
10 victim's behalf as has been pointed out and racking  
11 up debt in the victim's name that may detrimentally  
12 affect her ability to rent an apartment or access  
13 credit. Trapped in an abusive marriage victim cannot  
14 remarry or have other children without their abusive  
15 spouse being considered the other parent in the eyes  
16 of our current state law. All of this makes severing  
17 marital ties critically important for married abuse  
18 survivors. As Council Member Ayala made clear divorce  
19 has profound implications for an abused survivor's  
20 long-term safety, freedom and economic security.  
21 Family courts in our state are designed for prose  
22 litigants offering the availability of court  
23 appointed attorneys for child custody and visitation,  
24 child welfare and protective order cases. In the  
25 supreme court where matrimonial actions are litigated

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1  
2 however, court appointed counsel are unavailable in  
3 some of the most important issues; divisions of  
4 marital property, child support and maintenance. Lay  
5 people, especially those struggling with a traumatic  
6 sequela of abuse, are ill equipped to represent  
7 themselves in these complex matters. Domestic  
8 violence is almost invariably premised on an acute  
9 imbalance of power. Divorce exacerbates this economic  
10 imbalance by forcing victims to go into debt to pay  
11 attorneys who often charge legal fees of 500 dollars  
12 an hour or more. After exhausting their savings and  
13 taking on more and more debt, victims frequently find  
14 that they are unable to continue to pay legal fees.  
15 Many private matrimonial laws, lawyers have no  
16 compunction about terminating representation once  
17 their clients have run out of funds. Sanctuary  
18 recently took over the representation of a case in  
19 the integrated domestic violence court in which a  
20 mother struggling to provide a middle class existence  
21 for herself and her daughter in a two year period  
22 spent her life savings and racked up... racked up  
23 200,000 dollars in debt paying for matrimonial  
24 lawyers who were ill equipped to address the long  
25 history of domestic violence and left her without the

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1  
2 protection from abuse that she and her daughter  
3 desperately needed. Broke and indebted, with credit  
4 damaged beyond repair, she found herself once again  
5 slipping under her abuser's economic and physical  
6 control as she stood in court unrepresented while her  
7 abuser stood beside his well remunerated counsel. The  
8 scales of justice tip precariously and due process  
9 becomes an illusion when an abusive partner appears  
10 in court with an attorney and the victim appears  
11 prose as is too often the case. Without a highly  
12 skilled advocate to inform them of and fight for  
13 their rights and faced with the possibility of years  
14 of litigation and terrifying unknowns, victims are  
15 likely to agree to unfavorable terms just to put  
16 their case behind them. Yes...

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Miss Leidholdt,  
18 thank you so much and we have the words of... [cross-  
19 talk]

20 DORCHEN LEIDHOLDT: Thank you and, and..  
21 [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: ...your testimony..  
23 [cross-talk]

24 DORCHEN LEIDHOLDT: ...if, if I just may  
25 give the... [cross-talk]

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: In the last... yep,  
3 absolutely and in your last paragraph... [cross-talk]

4 DORCHEN LEIDHOLDT: Just... well... [cross-  
5 talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: ...you make some  
7 comments about how to fix the... [cross-talk]

8 DORCHEN LEIDHOLDT: Yes, well... [cross-  
9 talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: ...bill if yu could  
11 wrap up just... [cross-talk]

12 DORCHEN LEIDHOLDT: Will do... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: ...with the biggest  
14 highlight that pops out at you.

15 DORCHEN LEIDHOLDT: So, simply to say  
16 Intro 1085 is a commendable start to addressing these  
17 concerns but specific language is needed to ensure  
18 that it is applied as intended and we really look  
19 forward to partnering with the Council Member  
20 sponsors in, in improving on this important bill and  
21 in... and advocating for it. Thank you so much... [cross-  
22 talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
24 much.

25 DORCHEN LEIDHOLDT: Yep.

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN

2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: If you could  
3 introduce yourself, thank you.

4 JOANNA ALVEREZ: Good afternoon, my name  
5 is Joanna Alvarez and I'm from Black Women's  
6 Blueprint. Thank you for the invitation to give  
7 testimony on the issue of domestic violence here in  
8 New York City communities. Black Women's Blueprint  
9 works to place black women and girls' lives struggle  
10 squarely within the context of larger suggested  
11 concerns and is committed to building movements where  
12 gender matters and social justice organizing so that  
13 all members of the black communities achieve social,  
14 political, economic equality. We are in favor of the  
15 proposed bills to support survivors with legal  
16 services as well as training for cosmetologists in  
17 the issue of domestic violence. Our experience at  
18 Black Women's Blueprint reveals that the number of  
19 sexual assault and domestic violence and those that  
20 go unreported are considerably higher in our African  
21 American communities. Silence prevails and the  
22 invisibility is almost complete within our black  
23 communities and in greater society above black  
24 women's lives about the level of victimization, the  
25 systematic exclusion of our specific gendered

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1  
2 experiences and the broader agenda for civil and  
3 human rights. According to the National Intimate  
4 Partner Violence Survey, one in five women have been  
5 raped at some time in their lives. Black women can  
6 experience rape at 22 percent higher than a white  
7 woman. There are several reasons for the disparity  
8 and breaking silences about sexual assault and  
9 domestic violence and especially rape. First the  
10 marginalization of African Americans as a population  
11 due to the effects of racism, socio-economic and  
12 historical factors. Second, our experience working  
13 with black populations in New York City reveal that  
14 victims do not avail themselves to services as is not  
15 congruent with African American cultural norms on  
16 their communities to explore... to expose  
17 intercommunity, interfamilial issues that places  
18 already marginalized communities at further risk for  
19 discrimination and harm. Codes of loyalty and  
20 protection of community which have historically  
21 existed and especially been taught to black women and  
22 girls who represent the bulk of sexual assault and  
23 domestic violence committees and communities, can  
24 also discourages black women from seeking help based  
25 on ideologies that reporting a sexual assault and



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2 domestic violence will further vilify a black man or  
3 betray their community and place already marginalized  
4 communities at further risk for discrimination and  
5 harm. The project of truth telling, and testimony  
6 cannot end here, it has to continue as there are  
7 thousands and maybe even millions of stories still to  
8 come to forward. This is only the beginning of our  
9 work as truth bearers holding the stories of black  
10 women closer on spirits and the traumas that we  
11 ourselves hold. In this moment we can call for truth  
12 telling, honest recognition, painful confession and  
13 the beginnings of reconciliation. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
15 much. Thanks to all of you, really appreciate it. If  
16 I could just ask... sorry, hang on... Miss Alvarez do you  
17 have a copy of your testimony and we can make xerox  
18 copies here or if you want to send it electronically,  
19 I just want to really make sure your testimony is in  
20 the record.

21 JOANNA ALVEREZ: Yes, I can send it  
22 electronically.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I really  
24 appreciate that, thank... [cross-talk]

25 JOANNA ALVEREZ: Thank you... [cross-talk]

1 COMMITTEE ON WOMEN

2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: ...you for your  
3 time. And you know in many ways we could have started  
4 the day here but I'm going to leisurely end the day  
5 with Voices and call up Sharlena Powell; Elizabeth  
6 Cohen; Sabra Jackson; and Nedene Simon all from  
7 Voices of Women Organizing Project and we're not  
8 going to put a clock on... we have plenty... we have all  
9 the time in the world for you and really appreciate  
10 your staying to hear about what public servants are  
11 doing on behalf of the survivors and hearing what  
12 they're doing I'd be really interested in hearing  
13 whatever you plan to say in your testimony but also  
14 specifically your thoughts about what we talked about  
15 today, what the city talked about in terms of what  
16 they're doing and you know whether or not you think  
17 the resources we have are sufficient, if they're  
18 misdirected, if... you know emphasis needs to be  
19 somewhere different. Thank you, could you please  
20 begin and introduce yourself.

21 SABRA JACKSON: Good afternoon everybody.  
22 My name is Sabra Jackson, I'm a survivor of domestic  
23 violence. I am a Board of Directors Member of the  
24 Voices of Women Organizing Project. Just to have a  
25 conversation like this with... in front of the City

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1  
2 Council, thank you, that's the first thing. All of  
3 those warriors who have shared their stories, thank  
4 you. With that being said I'm going to speak very  
5 shortly so that the rest of my sisters who have  
6 survived an ordinance of things can speak. So, as I  
7 said my name is Sabra Jackson, I'm a survivor of  
8 domestic violence. I'm here on behalf of survivors  
9 not only just to tell our stories but to also share  
10 our concerns. I stand as a proud member of the voices  
11 of Women Organizing Project, a grass roots  
12 organization of survivors of domestic violence to  
13 organize to improve systems that abuse women that  
14 rely on safety and for justice. There are many  
15 systems whose response to survivors of domestic  
16 violence can stand to be improved which we discussed  
17 today. However, we are here to discuss some  
18 additional clarity for the new initiatives and  
19 recommendations being put forth and overseen by the  
20 Mayor's Office of to End Domestic Violence and Gender  
21 Based Violence. Once again, I'm going to say in my  
22 experience in 2004 there was not even a discussion  
23 like this so to be able to sit in front of the City  
24 Council and to be able to voice my experience as a  
25 survivor, we thank you again. Its important that we

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1  
2 acknowledge the crucial role of the Office.. the  
3 Mayor's Office to End Domestic Violence and Gender  
4 Based Violence plays a survivor's recovery.. plays in  
5 the survivor's recovery process. For many survivors  
6 of domestic violence and their children and their  
7 services provided by the Mayor's Office can be the  
8 difference between life and death. So, I'm going to  
9 say it again, for many survivors of domestic violence  
10 and their children the services provided by the  
11 Mayor's Office to End Domestic Violence and Gender  
12 Based Violence can be the difference between life and  
13 death. So, we would like to continue to engage in  
14 continued discussions with the new initiatives and  
15 the suggested recommendations being put in place and  
16 how they will impact survivors and their children.  
17 For survivors that can be an unsafe place to be in.  
18 Systems can be changed.. system can change, must be  
19 done in 100 percent of input of survivors and their  
20 advocates. So, I'm going to cut this short and every  
21 survivor's story is different, there is not a one  
22 size fits all that is a solution to the complex  
23 problems. It is crucial for the Mayor's Office to End  
24 Domestic Violence and Gender Based Violence to  
25 continue to explore and encouraging survivor's

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2 involvement, listening to our needs and the  
3 recommendations for change and once again we are  
4 going to say, there is no exaggeration to a  
5 survivor's involvement in policy making and changes  
6 could, could be a matter of life and death for  
7 survivors. Thank you.

8 NEDENE SIMON: Hello, hello. Thank you,  
9 Committee Council, for the opportunity to be here and  
10 happy birthday to Miss Rosenthal, it is too my  
11 birthday this month. And I want to thank you to Diana  
12 Ayala, Ayala for your testimony, thank you. My name  
13 is Nedene, I am a... I once was a victim of domestic  
14 violence and now I'm a proud survivor of domestic  
15 violence and a member of the Voices of Women known as  
16 VOW. VOW is a grass roots organization of survivors  
17 of domestic violence who organize to improve the  
18 systems that abused women rely on for safety and  
19 justice. It's an... it's important that we provide  
20 critical services to victims in need of a safe,  
21 compassionate and a swift manner all to let victims  
22 know that they are not alone and for many victims,  
23 this is lifesaving knowledge. One of the key gaps in  
24 providing critical domestic violence services is the  
25 lack of encouragement to survivors to apply for

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1  
2 employment opportunities that provide services to  
3 victims of domestic violence. We believe that  
4 agencies that receive funding for domestic violence  
5 services should implement a peer delivered service  
6 model approach and begin by having on all their  
7 employment opportunities include language that  
8 encourages survivors of domestic violence to apply  
9 for open positions. Moreover, we believe that City  
10 Council and the Mayor's Office to End Domestic  
11 Violence and Gender Based Violence should mandate  
12 that funding for domestic violence service delivery  
13 include this process. Hiring survivors helps other  
14 survivors establish connections with someone who  
15 shares a similar story, can decrease system  
16 navigation and frustration, promotes positivity and  
17 can inspire hope which many survivors have lost  
18 during an abusive relationship. This is just a  
19 beginning and we encourage all on work in the  
20 domestic violence services field to begin to  
21 implement a peer delivered services model approach.  
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you, that...  
24 we're taking notes up here, thank you.

25 NEDENE SIMON: Uh-huh, thank you.

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2 ELIZABETH COHEN: Hello, I'd like to  
3 thank everyone for making this possible and bringing  
4 much needed help and attention to this area. My name  
5 is Elizabeth Cohen, I'm a member of VOW and I'm also  
6 a victim of abuse and I'm going to read my testimony.  
7 Legal representation for everyone regardless of  
8 income and especially for victims of abuse in supreme  
9 court and in post matrimonial supreme court is key to  
10 equal justice and protection of abused partners and  
11 their children. Abusers often use money to control  
12 their partner, when the partner leaves, they are at a  
13 tremendous disadvantage. The partner may have stopped  
14 working for pay, to take care of their children and  
15 may face the challenge of reentering the workforce at  
16 minimum wage. Private matrimonial/family lawyers earn  
17 hundreds of dollars an hour, with no sliding scales.  
18 The cost of private legal representation can and does  
19 wipe out whatever money a partner has, while they are  
20 trying to put a roof over their heads and food on the  
21 table in a safe place for themselves and their  
22 children. Many well-intentioned people tell the  
23 abused partner that there is free legal assistance  
24 available from organizations such Legal Aid, NYLAG,  
25 and Her Justice, as if resources to help were

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1  
2 plentiful. But the reality is that when you actually  
3 need these resources and ask for help you don't get  
4 it. The pool of people needing help far exceeds the  
5 available resources. The organizations appear to cope  
6 with the scarcity of resources by selecting flavors  
7 of the month and narrow casting them. But divorce  
8 from an abusive partner is not a simple narrow issue  
9 and the net result is that help is not available for  
10 most people. Self-representation does not work. The  
11 system is not user friendly. Putting a self-  
12 represented abused partner in court against an abuser  
13 with an experienced matrimonial lawyer is like taking  
14 an ordinary person and putting them in a ring with a  
15 prize fighter, you don't have to watch to know who  
16 will win. On the other hand, the abusive controlling  
17 partner has money so excellent private legal  
18 representation is not a problem. In fact, the court  
19 system provides a legal way to abuse their ex  
20 partners and children for the rest of their lives.  
21 There is no limit on how long a divorce can be  
22 litigated. One source said the record so far is 21  
23 years. An abuser can take an abused partner back to  
24 court over and over again to impoverish them and  
25 prevent them from being able to find full time



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1  
2 employment because they are constantly being served  
3 paper... with papers and called to court. Children  
4 provide another opportunity to attack the former  
5 partner. Because, unlike the financial terms of a  
6 divorce settlement, custody can always be changed. In  
7 an abusive situation the children are often treated  
8 like furniture to be divided or shared, their  
9 feelings are not counted. Made powerless by the  
10 system, they lose their childhoods. I believe there's  
11 a connection between the fact that the largest group  
12 living in poverty in this city is single parents with  
13 children and that one in five children in this city  
14 do not have enough to eat, with the lack of legal  
15 representation in all divorce matters in court. There  
16 are many divorce cases before no, no fault divorce  
17 was passed that have not been identified as domestic,  
18 domestic violence because if a partner made abuse the  
19 grounds for the divorce and could not prove it, they  
20 were not granted a divorce and many victims were  
21 discouraged from labeling the abuse in court by their  
22 lawyers. Use of the court system to continue abusive  
23 attacks through excessive litigation for years, and  
24 very lopsided and unfair settlements should be  
25 considered as indicators of abuse. Guaranteed legal

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1  
2 representation regardless of income is essential to  
3 the preservation of our most important human rights.  
4 And I'd like to add my own experience is that I am  
5 currently still engaged in legal matters with my  
6 former husband and we have been... its now 13 and a  
7 half years that I have been involved with the legal  
8 system and I now have approximately 35 bankers boxes  
9 full of legal papers in my home concerning my own  
10 matter and my ex-husband has done very well in the  
11 process, he is now remarried, he has a country home  
12 on a lake, he has a large apartment, a car and goes  
13 on vacations while my children and myself can... are  
14 very concerned about paying our rent and putting food  
15 on the table. I'd just like to give you that as well.  
16 And I'd like to make a point, I was listening  
17 carefully to some of the comments that were made  
18 especially in the beginning and people referred to  
19 having access to justice or access to legal, legal  
20 counseling, there's a huge difference between access  
21 to counseling and advice which is a good for first  
22 step and actually having access to representation,  
23 its very different. I have... I was a former corporate  
24 librarian, I have over the 13 and a half years sought  
25 legal assistance from many different organizations

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1  
2 and I haven't gotten any and I have gotten some legal  
3 advice on helplines recently and I have visited the  
4 Family Justice Center and I did get some advice and  
5 it was wonderful, they... see the improvement in the  
6 way people are treated but at... as at this point I  
7 still have been unsuccessful in getting  
8 representation for myself and I'm not looking forward  
9 to the prospect of returning to court in the future  
10 self-represented so, I'd like to just share that with  
11 you. There's a big difference and I want to thank the  
12 Council Members that are supporting in particular  
13 1085 very much because this is something that is  
14 truly needed. I have some other suggestions but  
15 because of the time limitations I'm going to stop  
16 here. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Would you like to  
18 put those other suggestions in writing for... to submit  
19 or would you like a meeting or... [cross-talk]

20 ELIZABETH COHEN: Whatever... I'd be happy  
21 to do both.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, great. We...  
23 you know I don't want you to stop talking.

24 ELIZABETH COHEN: Thank, thank you, thank  
25 you very much. I, I think part of what, what needs to

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1  
2 be done frankly is I think the process of marriage  
3 and divorce have to be looked at as a whole. I think  
4 if we examine it thoughtfully there's... the process is  
5 backwards, I think perhaps if more is done at the  
6 beginning when people first get married and things  
7 are set up properly with the anticipation that things  
8 may not work out, I think it'll be easier and quicker  
9 to resolve them at the end. Things like for example,  
10 requiring people to disclose when they get married  
11 their assets and file that so that when people want  
12 to leave its very clear what they started with and  
13 then you're only negotiating what has been created in  
14 the interim during the marriage, that's one thing  
15 that's an issue. I think also people's attitudes  
16 about children, about custody, about what's  
17 acceptable in a marriage. For example, there should  
18 be a manual, what, what is... what is and isn't  
19 allowed. I'm going to make the example of people  
20 going for a drivers permit, it's, it's... you... when you  
21 go for a permit there's a booklet that you're given,  
22 a very nicely written booklet which is great and  
23 you're supposed to read it and take a little test  
24 before you can get a permit and then of course you  
25 have to have lessons and you have to demonstrate your

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1  
2 knowledge of the road and your driving ability to get  
3 a license. When you go by contrast to get married the  
4 only thing you have to fill out at lease when I did  
5 was a one-page form and that was it and there was no...  
6 there was no book explaining to you what was and  
7 wasn't allowed. People come to it otherwise from  
8 their own life experience with different expectations  
9 and I think people should know from the get-go  
10 what's, what they're getting into, it'd be very  
11 helpful to have some kind of manual whether it was  
12 online or in paper. I also think that it would be... I,  
13 I... all the laws that concern and all the areas that  
14 concern people when they get married, it cannot be  
15 found in one place as one matrimonial lawyer said to  
16 me, they're all over the place, there's not one legal  
17 book I could recommend to you that you could read to  
18 know what the are so things like the people's  
19 pensions or health care choices all of these things  
20 are... the lay 22844) person doesn't have a clue what  
21 they're getting into when they agree to marry  
22 somebody and they have no idea what's involved in  
23 getting out of marriage so I think if there's more  
24 input and thought into what we're really asking  
25 people to sign when they get married and more

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1  
2 information provided and perhaps the input of more  
3 lawyers at the start rather than at the end it would  
4 be easier to end unsuccessful abusive relationships.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

6 ELIZABETH COHEN: Thank you.

7 SHARLENA POWELL: Thank you. Thank you to  
8 my colleagues. Good afternoon, my name is Sharlena  
9 and I'm a survivor of domestic violence. I would like  
10 to emphasize survivor as I'm fortunate to be standing  
11 here before you to speak with you today. There are  
12 many victims who unnecessarily meet a tragic fate.  
13 I'm a member of the Voices of Women, VOW, a grass  
14 roots organization of survivors of domestic violence  
15 who organize to improve the systems that abused  
16 victims rely on for safety and justice. There are  
17 many systems whose response to survivors of domestic  
18 violence can stand to be improved however, I'm here  
19 to advocate for the passage of once again from June  
20 2017, Intro 1610 for OCDV to provide training to  
21 cosmetologists on the signs of domestic violence and  
22 available resources for its victims and or clients.  
23 We recognize the dedication in this revised motion  
24 and propose... and proposed intent number 371-A. It's  
25 important for us to acknowledge the crucial role that

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1  
2 hairstylists can play in a victim's life. They can  
3 notice signs of abuse like bald spots where hair once  
4 grew, or bruises covered by makeup. For many a hair  
5 stylist is a confidant and individuals may disclose  
6 an abusive relationship. I agree, I can agree on that  
7 from first hand experience. It is important that  
8 cosmetologists receive, receive the proper training  
9 on the effects of abuse, its cycles and engaging in a  
10 victim so that they are able to provide them with  
11 information on where to go for help. The information  
12 provided to survivors should be clear on next steps  
13 as navigating New York City's domestic violence  
14 response systems and, and, and that can be extremely  
15 confusing. We recommend that all trainings provided  
16 by OCDV include survivors of domestic violence to  
17 provide participants in the trainings with  
18 comprehensive understanding of what it means to be a  
19 victim of domestic violence; its cycles and how it  
20 effectively... how to effectively engage victims of DV  
21 from a... from a survivor's perspective. Systems  
22 navigation really is key, cosmetologists are at the  
23 ground level to help combat domestic violence and the  
24 many forms that it takes. Once again as Sabra  
25 mentioned it is not a one size fits all solution to

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2 solve these complex problems and yes, it is crucial  
3 to continue to explore creative ways of clearing the  
4 pathway for safety for survivors of domestic  
5 violence. We thank you Council Members Salamanca and  
6 Rosenthal for supporting this important legislation  
7 and thank you for listening.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
9 much, everything all of you had to say was so  
10 powerful today. We are eager to have your testimony  
11 as part of the record. I think Elizabeth you provided  
12 written testimony, for the others if you'd like we  
13 can make a copy of your testimony right at the end of  
14 this hearing, is that okay with you?

15 SHARLENA POWELL: Yes...

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: If not you can  
17 submit it electronically, but we really appreciate  
18 it. I'm going to call the hearing to a close, I, I  
19 just want to say for the record how much I, I've  
20 appreciated this hearing learning from the experts,  
21 hearing from survivors and victims and certainly  
22 hearing about the administration's efforts to deal  
23 with this scourge, you know upon reflection we're on  
24 the... we, we also had a hearing about the NYPD's  
25 special victims division that investigates rapes, you



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1  
2 know where a, a victim would come forward and, and  
3 the total number that come forward is around 5,600  
4 and, and we know that's but five to 25 percent of  
5 what really exists out there but what I was really  
6 touched by today is when someone mentioned the word  
7 rape as part of domestic violence and that gets lost  
8 in the sauce. These types of violations, physical  
9 rape, you know of course everyone's suffering from  
10 post-traumatic stress disorder and walking around  
11 with such burdens on their lives. I, I also.. oh and  
12 Council Member Treyger wants to make a closing  
13 statement as well, very brief. Okay, well why don't  
14 you go ahead and then I'm just going to finish up  
15 please.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I, I first want  
17 to just really, really commend Chair Rosenthal for  
18 helping put this all together and your leadership has  
19 been inspiring really on a citywide level not just  
20 here in these chambers, so I want to thank you and  
21 your office and the committee staff for doing an  
22 extraordinary job. I want to thank my colleague,  
23 Council Member Ayala, I was actually not aware of her  
24 powerful, very emotional story as I was working on  
25 this legislation but I thank her immensely for

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1  
2 turning her pain into purpose and for sharing  
3 something that I believe many folks are also going  
4 through, experiencing at this time and I strongly  
5 commend you and support you, we have your back and  
6 we're going to get this done Council Member. I also  
7 recognize as the sponsor of 1085 that advocates and  
8 organizations that have been at the front lines of  
9 this work for so many years have to be front and  
10 center at the table helping make sure that we deal  
11 with the technical questions and issues, very valid  
12 issues that we've heard here today but in closing,  
13 its also disheartening to hear from the  
14 administration about our current approach to this  
15 issue because I think the message of today and the  
16 message of this awareness month and in general every  
17 month really about raising awareness has been you're  
18 not alone but the current policy as we've heard from  
19 so many powerful speakers today is that at the most  
20 critical juncture of need when you need that critical  
21 assistance not just access but actual representation  
22 to secure your freedom in so many different ways and  
23 capacities the message is you are on your own and  
24 that is not acceptable, its unacceptable, not here in  
25 New York. So, we will work with advocates, we will

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1  
2 work with organizations, we'll work with my  
3 colleagues, we will, and we must get this done. Thank  
4 you so much.

5 ELIZABETH COHEN: Thank you.

6 SHARLENA POWELL: Thank you.

7 NEDENE SIMON: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Council Member  
9 Treyger that was beautiful, I echo your sentiments  
10 and, and, and proud to fight alongside of you, I mean  
11 the one thing that is so unique about domestic  
12 violence is that it really takes all aspects, the... a  
13 wide variety of government resources to help out  
14 every moment I think is a crisis; divorce, it's a  
15 horrible culminating event. I, I was going to mention  
16 that the New York Police Department responds to an  
17 average of 650 DV calls a day on average, they are  
18 investigating 760 DV cases a day and that they have  
19 450 officers, DV officers. I, I also... you know just  
20 to get to the point of the resources that are needed  
21 are much more than what the need is and that was  
22 something I'm, I'm repeating it back to you but I'm  
23 going to end on your... what I heard in all of your  
24 testimony, which was that the Mayor's Office of End  
25 Gender Based Violence saves lives every day, that's,

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1  
2 that's a powerful statement and if they are not well  
3 enough resourced they are not saving all the lives  
4 that need help here in New York City, you know this  
5 notion that the DV staff should, should be survivors  
6 themselves, you know this notion of peer delivered  
7 service model is, is right spot on and I, I thank you  
8 for bringing that up and of course the demand for our  
9 lawyer and, and for the help, you know to make sense  
10 of, you know people are at the lowest point and, and  
11 needs city services from every direction including  
12 lawyers. So, I want to thank you for staying today,  
13 thank you for your testimony and really thank all the  
14 Council Members and staff for their work. I'm going  
15 to call this hearing to a close.

16 [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

November 14, 2018