

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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April 29, 2009
Start: 10:14 am
Recess: 12:45 pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
LEWIS A. FIDLER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Council Member Alan J. Gerson
Council Member Melissa Mark-
Viverito
Council Member Miguel Martinez
Council Member Darlene Mealy
Council Member Eric Ulrich

A P P E A R A N C E S [CONTINUED]

Lewis A. Fidler
Chairperson
Committee on Youth Services

Robyn Causey
Director of Youth Initiatives
Department of Youth and Community Development

Andrew Miller
Governmental Affairs

William Martin
Committee Clerk
Committee on Youth Services

John Welch
Streetworks
Safe Horizons

Meredith Dank, PhD
Adjunct Professor
John Jay College of Law
Research Associate
Center for Community Alternatives

Rachael Lloyd
Fonder and Executive Director
Girls Educational and Mentoring Services
GEMS

Tiffany
Outreach Worker
GEMS

Cynthia
Outreach Worker
GEMS

Nancy Downing
Director of Advocacy
Covenant House New York

A P P E A R A N C E S [CONTINUED]

Mary G. Adams
Assistant Executive Director for Programs
Inwood House

Carmen Quinones
Program Director
Homeless Runaway Programs
Green Chimneys Children Services

Lucky Michaels
Director
MCCNY Homeless Youth Services

Kenyata Taiste
Client and Volunteer
Sylvia's Place

Frances Wood
Administrator
MCCNY Charities

Paul Sealy
SCO Family Services

Megan Annitto
Legislative Counsel
Committee on Youth Services

Michael Benjamin
Policy Analyst
Committee on Youth Services

Rocco D'Angelo
Finance Policy Analyst
Committee on Youth Services

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2 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Good morning
3 everyone and welcome. Today the Youth Services
4 Committee will conduct an oversight hearing to
5 examine sexual exploitation of runaway and
6 homeless youth. The more research and attention
7 that is devoted to this vulnerable population, the
8 more apparent it is that the two topics, youth
9 homelessness and sexual exploitation cannot really
10 be separated. If you're talking about runaway
11 youth, you are generally talking about sexually
12 exploited youth.

13 For starters, remarkable high
14 numbers of youth living on the street report
15 experiences of past physical and sexual abuse at
16 home. For many that is what led them to the
17 streets in the first place. In turn, a history of
18 past sexual abuse leaves youth much more
19 susceptible to sexual exploitation once on the
20 street.

21 Unfortunately the statistics
22 exemplify that sad truth. Over 60% of youth in
23 shelters report having engaged in some form of
24 survival sex while living on the street. The
25 point is that if you're living on the street,

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2 thrown out or forced out of your family home, for
3 any of a number of reasons, it is nearly certain
4 that you have been subject to some form of sexual
5 exploitation or certainly been approached to trade
6 sex for food, money, drugs or shelter. In fact in
7 only 36 of 48 hours after being forced onto the
8 streets, most youth have already been
9 propositioned for a sexual exchange.

10 As the providers in this room know,
11 there are thousands of youths subsisting on the
12 streets of New York City without a secure home.
13 The specific problem that is the focus of this
14 hearing, sexual exploitation of youth is not new
15 to any of you. Unfortunately I know from my
16 conversations with those of you who serve on the
17 Runaway and Homeless Youth Task Force that we have
18 here in the Council, that this problem is only
19 increasing.

20 The mental and physical health
21 consequences of sexual exploitation for many of
22 these youth will be lifelong if not deadly. I
23 want to thank all of the providers that have been
24 assisting us in their--for their unrelenting
25 advocacy on behalf of the City's sexually

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2 exploited youth. To do this work day after day
3 takes dedication and courage, and only a small
4 number of people actually possess. We know that
5 we have our work cut out for us. And your
6 advocacy continues to be vital in that effort.
7 You've heard me say this many times, in many
8 different ways, and I will not rest on this issue
9 until I'm satisfied that we as a City are truly
10 doing all that we can for these young people.

11 We also have on our agenda
12 today, and I will break in at some point when we
13 have a quorum of the Committee, we are joined
14 right now by Council Member Miguel Martinez, a
15 resolution that was the subject of, I believe, our
16 last hearing. And we intend to move that
17 resolution today. And that resolution does a
18 number of things. It calls upon the United States
19 Congress to amend the Federal Runaway and Homeless
20 Youth Act; to implement regulations to increase
21 the maximum eligible age for services to 24; and
22 to recognize the unique needs of the LGBTQ runaway
23 and homeless youth.

24 It also calls upon the New York
25 State legislature to amend the State Runaway and

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2 Homeless Youth Act for the same purpose. And to
3 allow for regulations that, where appropriate,
4 that setting's not necessarily be gender
5 segregated. Also to allow the maximum stay for
6 youth in transitional independent living programs
7 to be calculated independently of their 21st
8 birthday, and to ease the 24 hour staffing
9 requirement for residential programs, and to
10 provide startup grants for State certification
11 applicants during the State certification waiting
12 period. All of which are ideas that have been
13 generated by providers working with the Committee,
14 none of which would cost an extra dollar but would
15 streamline our ability to provide those services.

16 Our partner in all these endeavors
17 is the Department of Youth and Community
18 Development. They have been extraordinarily
19 supportive of our efforts in this area,
20 particularly in terms of expanding access to LGBTQ
21 youth. I remind everybody that seven and a half
22 years ago when we undertook this issue for the
23 first time, there were no, no City funded beds
24 that targeted LGBTQ youth, and we've come several
25 million dollars to the better at this point.

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2 So having said all that I would
3 like to call our first witnesses, Robyn Causey and
4 Andrew Miller, from the Department of Youth and
5 Community Development.

6 [Pause]

7 MS. ROBYN CAUSEY: Good morning
8 Chairman Lewis Fidler and members of the City
9 Council's Youth Services Committee. My name is
10 Robyn Causey and I am the Director of Youth
11 Initiatives for the Department of Youth and
12 Community Development, DYCD. Sitting beside me is
13 Andrew Miller from Government Affairs.

14 Oh behalf of DYCD's Commissioner,
15 Jeannie B. Mullgrav thank you for the opportunity
16 to discuss the provision of services for sexually
17 exploited youth. For youth without a place of
18 shelter where supervision and care are available
19 their problems become overwhelming. These
20 conditions put young people at risk for a range of
21 problems including substance abuse, HIV and AIDS,
22 chronic medical conditions and mental illnesses
23 such as depression and post traumatic stress.
24 Once homeless, youth are at increased risk for
25 physical abuse, violent victimization and sexual

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2 exploitation including survival sex and
3 prostitution.

4 The negative consequences
5 associated with homelessness make it imperative to
6 respond effectively to the needs of runaway and
7 homeless youth and to focus on family
8 reunification and prevention. As you know, in
9 2006 DYCD strengthened its runaway and homeless
10 youth services by establishing a continuum of care
11 to better meet the needs of runaway and homeless
12 youth. The model includes a drop-in center in
13 every Borough; street outreach and transportation
14 services; specialized residential services; and
15 additional housing options.

16 This revised system has made it
17 easier for youth to access needed services and
18 improved coordination of resources. It also
19 offers specialized housing options for sexually
20 exploited youth, pregnant and parenting youth and
21 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and
22 questioning youth.

23 In December 2008 DYCD issued an RFP
24 for new contracts to refine the continuum of care
25 that offers four main service levels for RHY.

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2 Drop-in centers in each Borough; street outreach
3 services; crisis shelters where a young person may
4 stay for up to 30 days; and transitional
5 independent living programs for young people who
6 need longer term residential care. As you know
7 Chairman Fidler, DYCD is in the final stages of
8 contract development with agencies that have been
9 offered awards for new contracts that will begin
10 on July 1st, 2009.

11 We are pleased to report that
12 through this RFP we have continued to expand
13 residential options for young people. Where we
14 previously funded three facilities for crisis
15 shelter, we plan to fund four. Where we
16 previously funded five facilities to provide
17 transitional independent living programs, we plan
18 to fund six. This enables DYCD to provide even
19 more diverse programs in additional locations
20 across the City. We are grateful for the
21 significant support from this Committee and City
22 Council which supports additional services not
23 funded through the RFP.

24 DYCD's community based partners are
25 equipped to support vulnerable young people who

1
2 are facing a range of personal issues and barriers
3 to success including sexual exploitation. Each of
4 the four funded service areas has an important
5 role in assessing young peoples' individualized
6 needs and directing them to the appropriate care.

7 While every aspect of our runaway
8 and homeless youth system is designed to address
9 the varied needs of runaway and homeless youth,
10 today I would like to share some examples with you
11 in regards to how we meet the needs of sexually
12 exploited youth. In street outreach, our street
13 outreach vans go out every night to areas where
14 homeless youth are known to assemble and engage in
15 survival sex.

16 Our trained outreach workers help
17 each young person they encounter. They assess
18 their situations and encourage them to access
19 additional services. In addition outreach staff
20 provides information and resources on safer sex
21 practices.

22 Drop-in centers, Safe Space which
23 operates the Queens Drop-in center and a TIL
24 program also has a program operating in Manhattan
25 for sex workers primarily boys offering services

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2 such as vocational training and harm reduction.
3 Crisis shelters, in DYCD funded crisis facilities
4 each youth works with a Master's level member to
5 create an individualized service plan. These
6 plans outline a young person's short and long term
7 goals.

8 In addition all youth receive
9 comprehensive assessments which helps us to
10 identify their needs in regard to medical and
11 mental health care, substance abuse prevention and
12 family mediation. It was through this process
13 last year that 42 young people identified
14 themselves as victims of sexual exploitation.
15 However we know that many more young people are
16 afraid or ashamed to admit that they were
17 victimized at this stage.

18 Transitional independent living.
19 For young women who identify themselves as being
20 sexually exploited, DYCD funds Girl's Educational
21 and Mentoring Services or GEMS to provide long
22 term specialized residential services. We are
23 pleased that we will continue to partner with GEMS
24 with a new contract starting on July 1st, 2009.
25 GEMS helps sexually exploited youth to stabilize

1
2 their lives and works towards developing an
3 independent lifestyle free from the control of an
4 exploiting adult.

5 In addition to continuing to
6 broaden our services within the continuum we have
7 also strengthened our collaborations with other
8 City agencies. Some examples resulting from our
9 partnerships include sharing of data with other
10 City agencies that interact with vulnerable youth.
11 A match with the Department of Juvenile Justice
12 shows that in physical year 2007 and 2008, 7% and
13 8% respectively of youth who entered our runaway
14 and homeless youth system had been at DJJ. We are
15 also able to look at the demographics of those
16 most likely to end up in the shelter care system.

17 This helps both systems to target
18 resources better, to reduce detention usage,
19 enhance family engagement and prevent
20 homelessness. Forming a pilot program with the
21 Department of Homeless Services to provide up to
22 50 Section 8 Vouchers each year to vulnerable
23 youth exiting or transitional independent living
24 programs, coordinating resources with HRA to help
25 some runaway and homeless youth more effectively

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2 access needed benefits. And we also serve on the
3 Criminal Justice Coordinator Anti-Human
4 Trafficking Task Force which works with City
5 agencies, community based organizations and law
6 enforcement to better coordinate services for
7 victims of human trafficking.

8 In addition to these partnerships
9 we are very excited that for the first time
10 vulnerable youth including runaway and homeless
11 will be prioritized for jobs this summer through
12 DYCD's Summer Youth Employment Program. This is
13 particularly noteworthy because employment is an
14 important milestone for a young person to achieve
15 independent living.

16 Before closing I would like to take
17 this opportunity to share a true story with all of
18 you. On just Wednesday of last week, Arlene
19 Reeves from OCFS and I conducted an unannounced
20 site visit at Inwood House, a transitional
21 independent living program for pregnant girls,
22 funded with City Council discretionary funds.
23 While we were there, Inwood staff members were in
24 the process of conducting a case review with a 19-
25 year old lady who I'll refer to as Natalie.

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2 Natalie's story is unfortunately a
3 familiar one to all of us. She grew up in a
4 single parent household with her mother and her
5 mother's boyfriend whom she refers to as her
6 uncle. Being a single parent with minimal income
7 is very hard. The pressures of poverty assured
8 Natalie that she could make a better life for
9 herself on her own. In an attempt to do so,
10 Natalie ran away from home at the age of 17. Like
11 many of the young girls that we provide services
12 for, it didn't take very long for Natalie to
13 discover that it would be harder than she
14 expected.

15 Within two months Natalie began
16 trading the only thing that she felt that she had
17 which was her body in order to survive. Natalie
18 describes her life as a survival sex worker as
19 scary, dangerous and of course very difficult to
20 live with. Needless to say she suffered abuse at
21 the hands of a pimp, someone who she believed
22 loved her, someone who she though was working
23 along with her and someone who assured her that
24 she would be able to live happily ever after if
25 she would just continue to sacrifice herself.

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2 Natalie used her body over and over
3 and suffered from severe physical and sexual abuse
4 before she decided to change her life. By her 18th
5 birthday Natalie made the brave decision to leave
6 her pimp and was referred to Covenant House.
7 While she was there she received crisis services
8 before being referred to GEMS.

9 Natalie was focused, determined and
10 persistent in regards to changing her
11 circumstances. It was shortly after her admission
12 to GEMS program that she discovered that she was
13 pregnant with her pimp's baby. Natalie worked
14 with GEMS staff to discover thoughts of abortion
15 and adoption but she decided that she would rather
16 take care of her baby. GEMS worked within the RHY
17 continuum to transfer Natalie to Inwood House.
18 Currently Natalie is about five months pregnant.
19 She works at GEMS and attends a GED Plus program,
20 taking vocational classes to learn about Microsoft
21 and also works at a daily on the weekends.

22 During her case planning conference
23 she stated that she was going to get a job with
24 DYCD's Summer Youth Employment Program and obtain
25 a transfer to SCO-Teal for young mothers once she

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2 has her baby. Natalie requested that I express
3 her gratitude to everyone who has made the DYCD
4 RHY continuum possible. She stated that a
5 combination of these services and the people who
6 provide them have given her the much needed hope
7 and support that she quickly acknowledges is
8 necessary for her to become an independent, self-
9 sufficient adult and a responsible young mother.

10 Once again I would like to thank
11 all of you for the opportunity to discuss DYCD
12 services for vulnerable youth. I'll be happy to
13 answer any questions.

14 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thank you Ms.
15 Causey and we've been joined by our newest
16 Committee Member, Councilman Ulrich, welcome.
17 I'll start with a couple. I mean first of all the
18 story you just told of Natalie, you know, is I
19 think why everyone in this room does what they do.
20 The problem is that there aren't enough places for
21 Natalie to go. And there aren't enough
22 opportunities for interventions. And as I
23 promised you yesterday, we're not going to talk
24 about the RFP today. So you can relax.

25 MS. CAUSEY: [Chuckling]

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2 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: But, you know,
3 that is something that I'm sure will come back up
4 when we do the executive budget hearing some time
5 in mid-May with the Commissioner.

6 [Pause]

7 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: First let me--
8 you know, obviously I know that you personally
9 drop in at a lot of our DYCD facilities. Have you
10 noticed an increase, and let me take a step back,
11 the providers that participate in our RHY Task
12 Force indicated they had seen an up tick in HIV
13 and sexually transmitted diseases amongst our
14 runaway and homeless youth, and I wanted to know
15 whether DYCD has noticed anything along those
16 lines, and if so, what is it?

17 MS. CAUSEY: I'm responsible for
18 Chairing the Runaway and Homeless Youth Advisory
19 Committee. And providers have been reporting that
20 there has been--they have noticed an increase in
21 young people who are testing and there has been an
22 increase in young people who are reporting that
23 they are HIV positive.

24 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Do you view
25 this as an increase in testing or as an increase

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in the problem?

MS. CAUSEY: I'm not sure.

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Do you see this report--'cause I did hear as well from providers that they're not sure whether or not that the current economic circumstances and environment have caused a greater degree of risky sexual behavior and survival sex or that they've increased their ability and the number of young people who are actually testing. And so they will see a higher number of HIV positive results or STDs because of the testing.

MS. CAUSEY: I'm not sure either. It could be either of those two things or a combination of both.

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay. I don't know that anyone could really be sure but certainly it's something that we'd like to figure out.

When, you know, I'm pleased that DYCD is doing more inter-agency work, such as the work you do with DJJ. Really what I'm interested in, going beyond sharing data. And so what work do you do with DJJ, what work do you do with DHS

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2 that--I guess more DJJ, that would be intervention
3 once someone is in DJJ, in their system to perhaps
4 capture them before they become one of the 7% or
5 8% that then becomes homes on the streets of the
6 City of New York. Is there a specific program
7 link with DJJ to ensure on your end that these
8 people don't then become your client because
9 they're homeless?

10 MS. CAUSEY: We do a few different
11 things. We've had the Commissioner of DJJ, the
12 Commissioner of DHS, both of those Commissioners
13 have attended our Runaway and Homeless Youth
14 Advisory Committee meetings where our providers
15 have had an opportunity to express their concerns
16 and discuss how we could better collaborate
17 together. Our Youth Connect Program which is also
18 the Runaway and Homeless Youth Hotline goes to
19 Rikers and other facilities where young people are
20 and we give information about our drop-in centers.
21 We do not accept direct referrals from DJJ in
22 terms of young people coming back out. We don't
23 like to take referrals back into homelessness.
24 But what we do is we offer our drop-in center
25 support services where we offer the GED classes.

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2 We have the Summer Youth Employment Program which
3 is going to offer jobs to vulnerable youth for the
4 first time. And we also, in doing the data match,
5 think about policies that could better assist
6 families in terms of prevention and keeping young
7 people out of detention services.

8 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Oh well why
9 wouldn't you accept a direct referral from DJJ?
10 What are they supposed to do? Just discharge the
11 person, let them become homeless before we help
12 them? I don't know--I don't get that.

13 MS. CAUSEY: We work with them in
14 terms of mediating with their family so that young
15 people are not discharged into homeless--the goal
16 would be to find them a supportive network prior
17 to being released from DJJ and then we'll continue
18 to work with them in our drop-in centers.

19 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Well what if
20 that family mediation is unsuccessful? Or what if
21 you're just sending the child back into a
22 circumstance where they, you know, huh, they
23 already have a problem or they're already being
24 abused?

25 [Pause]

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2 MS. CAUSEY: DJJ works with the
3 court system to set up the discharge plans for
4 young people who are being released from
5 detention. But it's not our belief that a system
6 should discharge a young person to homelessness.

7 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: I don't think-
8 -well I would hope it's nobody's belief that the
9 system should discharge a young person into
10 homelessness yet, yet de facto that appears to be
11 what happens. That, you know, our study does show
12 that a number of young people, shortly if not
13 immediately, upon their release from..

14 MS. CAUSEY: Just a minute.

15 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Yeah, go
16 ahead.

17 [Pause]

18 MS. CAUSEY: Our studies show that
19 there's a lapse in time between detention--the
20 discharge from detention and homelessness. So we
21 do provide services for young people who have been
22 in the DJJ system.

23 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: I know. 7% to
24 8%--

25 MS. CAUSEY: [Interposing] Right.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --of, you
3 know, of a year, according to your data match--

4 MS. CAUSEY: [Interposing] That's
5 correct.

6 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --show that
7 they have had a recent interaction with the
8 Department of Juvenile Justice, the, that would be
9 an indication to me that somewhere along the line,
10 and I know that nothing is perfect, but that
11 there's a gap here. And if some, you know, do you
12 know from your data match how long a period of
13 time it is between their DJJ contact and becoming
14 homeless, on the averages?

15 MS. CAUSEY: We haven't looked at
16 the specific lapse but we do know that there is a
17 lapse in time between the release from detention
18 and entering a runaway and homeless youth program--
19 -residential--

20 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Interposing]
21 Well I mean--

22 MS. CAUSEY: --program.

23 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --I recognize
24 that's not directly on the topic today but I would
25 strongly urge you to take a look at that because

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2 if the lapse of time is days or a week or even a
3 couple of weeks, it's an indication, it's an
4 indication of what DJJ is doing in their discharge
5 planning is a Band-Aid.

6 You know, you're sending someone
7 back to a situation that was problematic to begin
8 with, with the hope that it's going to work better
9 than it worked before, which at the very least,
10 led that young person to an interaction with the
11 Juvenile Justice System. So, you know, we need to
12 do better not, you know, just more of the same.

13 Council Member Martinez?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Thank you
15 Mr. Chair. Can you just, in the Summer Youth
16 Application would there be a category where the
17 youth will have--how are you going to identify
18 those that are homeless or runaway?

19 MS. CAUSEY: There is a category on
20 the application. And we also have providers
21 specifically designated to work with that
22 population. What we've been doing from our office
23 is also advertising this. All of the providers
24 received a presentation from the Director of
25 Summer Youth Employment. We have forwarded a list

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2 of those providers working with this population to
3 the Department of Education and throughout the
4 entire continuum.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: So your
6 regular providers at--administer the summer youth
7 employment, in other words you're going to have a
8 specialized provider that will work with that
9 population.

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MS. CAUSEY: Yes we do.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: And in
12 Manhattan, are there--do you have any shelter
13 above 96th Street?

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MS. CAUSEY: Yes we do.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: And I
16 know you and I spoke and we met and I know the RFP
17 is out and I'm not going to get into that 'cause
18 the Chair said he wouldn't. Would there be an
19 opportunity other than through the RFP for
20 partnering up with institutions or organizations
21 that already--let me get my thought together. If
22 an organization is selected in the process of--
23 it's contracting with DYCD, I'm not going specific
24 into the new RFP; can that organization have the
25 flexibility or ability to partner up with smaller

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nonprofit organizations that may have beds

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available? Or do they have to be specific to the

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contract requirements?

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MS. CAUSEY: Organizations can

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receive a certification through the Office of

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Children and Family Services. And we coordinate

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that, help coordinate that through our offices.

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And those organizations don't necessarily have to

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be funded through DYCD. They can get money, you

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know, through other fundraising efforts. And they

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can certainly work collaboratively with our

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agencies that we fund.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Okay.

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All right. And I just wanted to make sure 'cause,

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you know, in Northern Manhattan at the, I'm sure

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you're aware of it, at the 179th bus terminal where

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you have an increasing population of runaway youth

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and drug use and prostitution taking place there.

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And it's become a big concern in the area.

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And I know we have the needle

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exchange program and so forth up in Northern

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Manhattan, but I think that we need to focus a

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little more on the youth that are either from

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Manhattan or even Jersey or ex-Jersey residents

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2 that are congregating and making this--where we
3 find a lot of our runaway youth in Northern
4 Manhattan in that area. Thank you Mr. Chair. I
5 think we have a quorum now.

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CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Yes and we're
waiting for Mr. Martin to come upstairs. And
we've been joined by Council Members Gerson and
Mark-Viverito. And as soon as staff comes up
we'll--

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COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ:

[Interposing] And let me just--

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CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --we'll break

to vote on the Reso.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Let me

just thank you for the meeting we had and the
details of what we're trying to do up there. I
just want to put that on the record.

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MS. CAUSEY: You're welcome. And I

want to assure you that I've made myself a note to
specifically tell our street outreach teams that
they should check into the situation around that
area. And we'll give you a report back.

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CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Could you

briefly describe for us the program that Safe

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Space runs for sexually exploited boys?

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MS. CAUSEY: Safe--the program that Safe Space operates in Manhattan is not a DYCD funded program however Safe Space is the drop-in center for Queens that we fund. And they also provide transitional independent living services for our young people.

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The Safe Space in Queens refers many of our young people who come in and identify themselves as being sexually exploited to their Manhattan drop-in center. And they have a program called Project Gain. And they do intensive counseling; you know, job readiness and work with young people to look at other means, other than sexual exploitation, harm reduction, etcetera.

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CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Is there a housing component to that program?

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MS. CAUSEY: They're allowed to use our continuum, of course, Covenant House would be--or one of our crisis facilities would be an entry point but Safe Space does have a TIL that does offer residential services--

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CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Interposing]
Well the--

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MS. CAUSEY: --for that population.

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: You know, we all know that the need far exceeds the TIL beds. So can someone participate in the Safe Space program for sexually exploited youth without being in a TIL program?

MS. CAUSEY: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: And how do they do that?

MS. CAUSEY: They would go to the drop-in center and the drop-in center would work with--the two drop-in centers would work together to do the referral and co-case management.

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: I guess the other general question that I have is that, you know, at what point are young people screened and tested for HIV and sexually transmitted diseases in your continuum and is that testing mandatory and how does it happen?

MS. CAUSEY: Testing is not mandatory. At every point of the continuum young people have an opportunity and are aware of testing. You know, that testing is available. So through the continuum we have professionals who

1
2 come in and train about the rapid testing, how it
3 works. And our providers often escort young
4 people who want to be tested. If--once they're
5 tested, separate records are kept on the
6 individual outside of their regular case records
7 to ensure confidentiality.

8 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: And when
9 someone tests positive either for HIV or an STD
10 what happens?

11 MS. CAUSEY: We would work with
12 those young people to ensure that they have the
13 appropriate medical care that they need.

14 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: And how do you
15 do that? That's...

16 MS. CAUSEY: Our providers are
17 extremely familiar with the resources. We've
18 recently had the HRA Commissioner come into the
19 DYCD RHY Advisory Committee to talk about easier
20 access to benefits. And we're working closely
21 with them through a committee that we formed. And
22 our providers, many of our providers as well have,
23 Covenant House for example has a clinic onsite and
24 we work closely with the people who provide those
25 medications to ensure that young people receive

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them.

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CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Well let me move to really what's the million dollar question for me because I think we probably see, we'll have our first contact is in government with the sexually exploited young person through the criminal justice system more often than not.

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What, if anything, is DYCD doing to work with the NYPD or the District Attorneys or the Corporation Counsel or any of the entities that would have that first contact to try and break the cycle that has this young person on the street, either engaging in survival sex or being exploited by a pimp? What affirmative proactive steps are being taken?

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MS. CAUSEY: I sit on the Task Force by the Criminal Justice Coordinators for Anti-Trafficking and last month I did a presentation on the Runaway and Homeless Youth Committee so that I could share resources and services with the different organizations that are there, community based organizations, law enforcement... and other groups who are also working with sexually exploited youth.

1
2 I sit on the Task Force and provide
3 presentation and we're also a resource. So that
4 office can contact me directly if they have
5 questions about our continuum. We can work with
6 them to make sure that young girls are
7 appropriately placed. You know, in--within our
8 residential facilities if that's what that
9 person's choosing to do.

10 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: I'm going to
11 follow up on that question in a second. We have--
12 we're going to take a moment to vote of Proposed
13 Resolution 1227A which I described earlier
14 regarding runaway and homeless youth. And I'd
15 ask--call the roll.

16 MR. WILLIAM MARTIN: William
17 Martin, Committee Clerk, roll call on the
18 Committee on Youth Services. Council Member
19 Fidler.

20 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Aye.

21 MR. MARTIN: Gerson.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: With the
23 acknowledgement of the leadership of our Chair Lew
24 Fidler and underscoring--with underscoring the
25 critical importance not only of us adopting this

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2 resolution but of the Congress following suit, I
3 vote aye.

4 MR. MARTIN: Martinez.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: I vote
6 aye.

7 MR. MARTIN: Mark-Viverito.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: I
9 vote aye and my apologies for having to step out.
10 I have a hearing across the street with my
11 Contracts Committee that I have to be at as well,
12 but I vote aye.

13 MR. MARTIN: Ulrich.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Aye.

15 MR. MARTIN: By a vote of five in
16 the affirmative, zero in the negative and no
17 abstentions, the item is adopted. Members please
18 sign the committee report. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: We'll--

20 [Applause]

21 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: If only we had
22 the power to actually make more than a resolution.
23 We'll hold the vote open for those members of the
24 Committee who are not yet here until the end of
25 the Committee meeting. Thank you.

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I just want to go back to this, you know, this NYPD, DA question. It sounds to me as if you're saying that if they should happen to mention it to, you know, DYCD, you'll work with them but there's no affirmative program in place. And I do know that the State of New York passed a Safe Harbor Act. And we have, you know, this Council's held a hearing on that and we urged them to do that. And I believe it goes into effect in April--

MS. CAUSEY: [Interposing] Um-hum.

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --am I correct?

MS. CAUSEY: I'd have to check on that I think so--

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Interposing] April of 2010, yes. I'm sorry; I didn't realize we were in April already. April 2010. What steps if any is DYCD taking in, you know, to conform with the Safe Harbor Act? Does that Act put any burdens or obligations upon DYCD?

And do you anticipate that the Safe Harbor Act will result in the requirement that there be affirmative steps taken to intervene when

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a young person is being sexually exploited and comes to the attention of the criminal or the juvenile justice system?

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MS. CAUSEY: On the Criminal

Justice Coordinating Committee that I sit on, we have some of our providers there as well who also sit on the committee. So Rachael Lloyd from GEMS is a part of that committee as well. And what we do, we help to coordinate services for young people.

So we make sure that everyone on the committee is knowledgeable of the services that DYCD offers. We listen to different cases. Our workers can accompany young people to court. Our workers can provide counseling. Safe Horizons also sits on that committee and many of their counselors work closely with young girls who are fearful of testifying or who have experienced, of course, the severe abuse that we know that comes along with this, so we offer support services through the continuum.

And I ensure that, you know, that services are available and that this committee knows of the services that we offer. And we're

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2 continuing to build a relationship within the
3 committee.

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5 In terms of the Safe Harbor Act, we
6 do, again, like I mentioned, we are going to fund
7 GEMS again this year in the RFP and we're excited
8 about that. And we work closely with that
9 organization in terms of talking about increased
10 beds and Rachel--GEMS offers services outside of
11 the continuum. So work--I'm sorry--oh [Saying
12 something to someone off mic] So at this point we
13 are not sure what the impact of the legislation
14 will be but we are--we are reviewing it.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay. So the
17 answer is kind of no. There is no proactive role
18 at this point and you don't know what the impact
19 of the Safe Harbor Act will be. And you don't
20 know whether or not it's going to require
21 proactive steps to be taken. I just want to say I
22 recognize that this is 11 months away. And I also
23 recognize the extraordinary financial
24 circumstances that we find ourselves in.

25

26 I don't think it's too soon to be
27 talking to OCFS, talking to the State, talking to
28 our colleagues in the State legislature, about

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2 what this Act should mean, how it needs to be
3 implemented. You know, GEMS is a wonderful
4 organization but they, they alone could not
5 possibly deal with the number of young people who
6 are on the streets of the City of New York, who
7 are being pressed into survival sex, street
8 prostitution, all of those things, by themselves.

9 So the answer to we're in
10 compliance with the Safe Harbor Act, can't be well
11 we fund GEMS. It's got to be much, much more than
12 that. You know, there is a real, solid,
13 wonderful, idealistic principle behind the Safe
14 Harbor Act that I know this committee has
15 supported in the past and I know I support
16 strenuously.

17 It's got to become more than an
18 idealistic principle if it's going to work. And
19 so I'm asking DYCD to begin that conversation with
20 OCFS, to keep this committee in the loop, to lean
21 on us to the extent that we can lean on our
22 colleagues in the State government, to make sure
23 that it's not a mere unfunded mandate of some
24 kind; that this is an opportunity for us to make
25 some real change and understand that a 17-year old

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2 young boy or girl who's on the street selling
3 their body is a victim and not a criminal. And
4 that they need to be treated as such. I think
5 that's the principle here. And I think we need to
6 go beyond, you know, where we are today.

7 That--I know you're shaking your
8 head yes and the tape recorder should--

9 MS. CAUSEY: [Interposing] Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --reflect that
11 you're shaking your head yes.

12 MS. CAUSEY: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay. I don't
14 have any colleagues left to ask if they have any
15 questions, so. [Chuckling] Should have held that
16 vote a little later. In any event, I know that a
17 number of them had other committee meetings to go
18 to. I will just--I'll leave you with that plea.
19 And I think everyone in this room who has an
20 interest in this topic is looking forward to the
21 progress that we should be making on this issue
22 with the Safe Harbor Act.

23 And I would say to you, again, as I
24 said to you before, at DJJ, the answer is to try
25 everything we can to prevent a young person from

1
2 becoming homeless before we provide services. And
3 I recognize and just to be fair, you can be sure
4 that when DJJ is sitting there, I'd say the same
5 thing to them.

6 And I recognize they become the
7 agency primarily responsible because the young
8 person is in their custody. But I also recognize
9 that DJJ does what they're supposed to do and DYCD
10 picks it up when DJJ fails. And the question is,
11 you know, how do we minimize the failures on DJJ
12 and how to we eliminate the gap. And I think it's
13 important that you look at the lapse of time, if
14 you're matching data, to get the best picture, you
15 know.

16 If in fact, you know, young people
17 are--the lapse in time is a year, well DJJ may be
18 less at fault, you know, or maybe that will tell
19 us something different than if the gap is three
20 days. 'Cause if the gap is three days then you
21 know that DJJ is just shuffling them back to a
22 situation that is clearly going to fail so that
23 they can say that they've discharged their
24 obligation.

25 So those are the things that we,

1
2 you know, it's out--this committee gets a grander
3 view. You know? And it's important that, you
4 know, if we're going to--if we're not--especially
5 when we're not able to provide a bed for every
6 young person that should have one, that we do our
7 very best to mitigate the number of young people
8 who do need one. So I thank you for your
9 testimony and we'll see you soon.

10 MS. CAUSEY: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: All right.

12 [Pause]

13 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay. We have
14 a number of panels.

15 [Pause]

16 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Yeah, is she
17 on? Is she in the group? Okay. We have Rachel
18 Lloyd from GEMS; John Welch from Safe Horizon
19 Streetworks; and Meredith Dank from John Jay
20 College, as our first panel. Would you please
21 come up?

22 [Pause]

23 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: All right.

24 We're going to hold GEMS to the next panel for a
25 second. Go ahead.

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[Pause]

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MR. JOHN WELCH: Good morning and thank you for this opportunity to testify. I'm John Welch, Program Director at Streetwork, Lower East Side, a program of Safe Horizon, serving homeless and street involved young people.

Safe Horizon is a victim assistance organization providing services and support to over 350,000 people a year whose lives have been touched by violence. I'd like to tell the committee about the services we offer, our experiences with young adults whose lives intersect with sexual exploitation and our plan to reduce services in light of current economic crisis.

Streetworks II drop-in programs on the Lower East Side and in Central Harlem offer support to between 80 and 120 homeless young people up to age 24 each day in a nonjudgmental style with the goal of helping them access services at their own pace. Our caseload includes just over 500 individuals a month and we provided services to about 1,600 individuals in calendar year 2008. Our 2 shelter programs offering 36

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2 beds in all are full each night and there are more
3 than 100 names on our waiting list.

4 Our services include concrete
5 support, food, clothing, laundry facilities,
6 showers and emotional as well as practical
7 support; one on one counseling; case management;
8 support groups; educational programming; HIV
9 prevention; psychiatry; medical services; syringe
10 exchange; and emergency housing. Our clients come
11 to us with multiple and complex problems and
12 nearly all have experienced extreme trauma at the
13 hand of people they were supposed to be able to
14 trust.

15 Several studies done over the years
16 at Streetwork have shown that been 80% and 87% of
17 our clients are involved in the sex trade. I use
18 the term sex trade to highlight the spectrum of
19 young peoples' involvement in sexual exchanges to
20 meet survival needs. While some of our young
21 peoples' exploitation fits into a familiar
22 prostitution paradigm, in which experienced adult
23 pimps force naïve young people into ongoing
24 prostitution, using any means from trickery to
25 kidnapping to extreme violence, the majority of

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2 youth that we see enter the sex trade through
3 peers and sometimes on their own.

4 However this does not mean that
5 they're not being exploited. They're exploited
6 because they have no other means of making money,
7 nowhere to stay, and many have histories of sexual
8 abuse that condition them to believe that their
9 value in the world lies in their willingness to
10 meet other's sexual needs.

11 There are many forms of involvement
12 in the sex trade as there are people involved but
13 what these young people have in common is a lack
14 of opportunity, lack of employment, lack of
15 income, and a lack of safety that comes with
16 homelessness and leads young people to sell sex.
17 Indeed a 2008 study done through John Jay College
18 of Criminal Justice, surveying sexually exploited
19 young in New York City which the panelist here is
20 going to tell you about, found that the vast
21 majority of homeless young people involved in the
22 sex trade did not fall into the familiar
23 pimp/exploited prostitute paradigm, though this
24 form of prostitution is also prevalent. Yet all
25 too often this is the image we think of when we

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2 imagine sexually exploited youth, allowing us to
3 ignore the more common experiences of life in the
4 sex trade that are dangerous, exploitative, and
5 over time, emotionally devastating to those who
6 sell sex.

7 To reach this majority whose
8 exploitation is more subtle and systemic, it's
9 crucial to continue to offer low threshold
10 nonjudgmental services where concrete components
11 like showers, meals and easy access to a safe,
12 open space, form the background for more intensive
13 work offered through case management and other
14 professionalized services.

15 Unfortunately the current economic
16 crisis will reduce Streetwork's ability to offer
17 this kind of service to this population and
18 provide an alternative to the streets where
19 inducements to enter the sex trade are everywhere.
20 We've been forced to end seven staff positions in
21 our Uptown drop-in center, three positions in our
22 crisis shelter program, and five positions in our
23 Lower East Side drop-in center. In addition
24 Streetwork programs will be significantly reducing
25 hours of service and client to staff ratios will

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get worse.

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This represents a devastating loss of services for runaway and homeless youth at a time when they need us the most. The New York Association of Homeless and Street Involved Youth Organization has requested a \$3 million carve out from the Federal money allocated for DHS and it's my hope that if this comes through, some of our-- we can have a restoration of some of what we provide.

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I also want to express my thanks for your support of Resolution 1227A. And we appreciate your commitment to this population of disenfranchised young people and urge whatever action possible to bring funding to NYC programs that service this population. Thanks for holding this hearing and feel free to ask any questions or contact us if we can be of help in working together for homeless young people.

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CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Before we go to Ms. Dank, we've been joined by Council Member Darlene Mealy and I'd ask the Clerk to call her on the Reso.

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MR. MARTIN: Council Member Mealy.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I vote aye.

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MR. MARTIN: Vote on Resolution

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1227A is now six in the affirmative, zero in the

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negative, no abstentions.

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CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thank you.

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Ms. Dank?

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MS. MEREDITH DANK: My name is

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Meredith Dank, and currently I'm an Adjunct

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Professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

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Although I am not a service provider from January

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2006 to November 2008 I was the Senior Research

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Associate for an NIJ funded study through John Jay

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College on the commercial sexual exploitation of

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children in New York City. The primary goal of

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the study was to provide a reliable and ethno-

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graphically rich description of the local CSEC

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population, including its size, characteristics,

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experiences and service needs.

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I'm going to basically summarize

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the methodology we employed and some of the key

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findings, and lastly some of the policy

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implications borne out of this study. So as far

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as the methodology goes, I won't go into too much

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detail but we used something called the Respondent

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2 Driven Sampling which is like snowball sampling.
3 And so we recruited seeds through--actually our
4 first seed was through somebody at Streetworks who
5 then referred their friends and it kind of
6 snowballed from there. What was good about that
7 was that we were able to reach out to sexually
8 exploited youth who were not seeking the help of
9 services who perhaps were couch surfing or on the
10 street homeless.

11 Now based on this we were able to
12 come up with population estimates. This was also
13 using DCJS, arrest data for youth 18 and under who
14 were arrested for prostitution and loitering for
15 prostitution, and based on that we estimated that
16 there were about 3,946 CSEC citywide. And then
17 another population estimate that we did came up
18 with approximately the same number of 3,769. One
19 of the limitations of this study that we
20 recognized is that we were not able to reach all
21 sub-groups of the population. And we believe that
22 internationally trafficked youth were also--were
23 not approached. So that number is probably
24 higher.

25 Some of the other findings were

1
2 that gender--we were able to interview 329 youth,
3 however after we went through that we found that
4 249 of the 329 were eligible. So the final sample
5 of 249 youth: 48% were female, 45% were male, and
6 8% were transgender. We also recognized that the
7 number of transgendered youth that we interviewed
8 was only 19 and that's quite low, so that
9 percentage, overall, of the population is probably
10 much higher. And the average age of entry for
11 boys, girls and transgendered was approximately
12 15.29 years.

13 As far as race and ethnicity,
14 African-American and mixed race youth made up
15 nearly half of the sample, while just over a
16 quarter of the youth were white or Hispanic. A
17 majority, over 50% were born in New York City and
18 less than one in ten said that they were born
19 outside one of the 50 states. Living situations:
20 many of the youth were currently homeless, with
21 32% characterizing their housing situation as
22 living in the streets, 24% stating that they lived
23 in a shelter; 6% lived in a squat, although some--
24 although girls were more likely to describe
25 themselves as living in their family home, in a

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2 friend's home, or in another home.

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4 As far as the network size: some of
5 the youth were involved in quite extensive CSEC
6 youth networks; more than one quarter claimed to
7 know 20 or more other CSEC youth, and an
8 additional 20% said that they knew between 10 and
9 20 CSEC youth. Girls, boys, and transgender youth
10 all reported high percentages of their friends as
11 responsible for their entry although some of these
12 friends seemed to be acting as surrogate
13 recruiters for pimps.

14

15 We did not find that market
16 facilitators, or pimps, were key actors for
17 initiating youth into the market, it was only 8%
18 or controlling them once they were in the market.
19 Only 10% of the sample, 6% of the boys and 14% of
20 girls, reported that they had a market facilitator
21 or a pimp at the time of the interview. Of the 41
22 youth with a market facilitator, 37 reported that
23 their facilitator was male.

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25 Now more than two-thirds of the
youth, 68% reported that they had visited a youth
service agency and of those, most had experience
with more than one agency. Virtually all of those

1
2 interviewed reported trading sex for money. Many
3 of the youth expressed deep concerns about finding
4 legal employment and making as much money as they
5 were currently making; more than half identified
6 finding stable employment as necessary for them to
7 leave their current lifestyle.

8 Besides employment, 51% cited
9 education and 41% cited stable housing as
10 necessary for them to leave their current life.
11 Less than 10% of the youth said that they could go
12 to a parent if they were in trouble. Furthermore,
13 only 17% said that they could rely on their family
14 members or family friends to help them out,
15 whereas another 17% said that they had no one who
16 could assist them in times of trouble or doubt.

17 Now for many of the youth who were
18 interviewed, the language of prostitution had been
19 normalized. Although several said that they felt
20 peer pressure to join in, their narratives were
21 generally less about being pressured to
22 participate as opposed to economic necessity, sine
23 fascination, and curiosity with what appeared to
24 be an emerging lifestyle. Many of the youth
25 reported contending with violence at the hands of

1
2 customers, pimps, and other CSEC youth on a daily
3 basis. Customers posed the greatest threat, as
4 some told harrowing stories of being kidnapped and
5 held hostage by customers. Now despite the
6 normalization process referenced above, 87%
7 expressed a desire to leave the life.

8 Now some Policy Implications that
9 we identified from this study. Now as boys and
10 transgender youth make up a significant portion of
11 the CSEC population, the focus can no longer be
12 solely on girls. Services that are currently
13 available to prostituted girls also need to be
14 offered to prostituted boys and transgenders,
15 which include: emergency shelter, long term
16 housing, intensive counseling, medical services,
17 educational opportunities, life-skills and job
18 training and employment opportunities.

19 Mandating youth, either through the
20 court system or by law enforcement, to partake in
21 services will most likely not result in the youth
22 exiting the life. As demonstrated by this study,
23 prostituted youth are significantly influenced by
24 their peers, whether it is through recruitment
25 into the market or reasons to remain in the life.

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2 Thus, finding ways to infiltrate the youths'
3 social networks will be instrumental in
4 effectively delivering much needed services.

5 One possible way to do this is to
6 find, with the help of existing youth agencies,
7 individuals with the largest and most diverse CSEC
8 network and have them conduct outreach to their
9 peers. Now training youth agency staff and law
10 enforcement will be key to gaining the trust of
11 prostituted youth. Without the proper training,
12 agency staff and law enforcement officials could
13 discourage a youth from ever seeking help again.

14 Almost, if not, all sexually
15 exploited youth have severe, deep-seated issues
16 with adults and authority, and if they are not
17 approached in a nonjudgmental and sympathetic
18 manner, they will no longer--they will see no
19 reason to leave the life.

20 And lastly to ensure that any and
21 all policy changes are properly implemented, both
22 the State and Federal government will be required
23 to set aside appropriate funding for both housing
24 and services. This will not be an inexpensive
25 endeavor and will require a dedicated team of

1
2 professionals to map out an efficient and reliable
3 plan.

4 Thank you very much for allowing me
5 to testify.

6 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Some of the
7 data that you report is a bit counterintuitive.
8 That doesn't mean that it's not right by the way,
9 it just, you know... I do want to talk about two
10 things that you commented on--

11 MS. DANK: [Interposing] Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --and, you
13 know, you talked about normalization of the life--
14 of prostitution and the--could you tell us what
15 percentage in your findings indicate that they
16 were participating in sexual--the sex trade out of
17 fascination or curiosity of what appeared to be an
18 emerging lifestyle?

19 MS. DANK: We did not. We weren't
20 able to quantify that number since it wasn't a
21 question that was directly asked to them. It was
22 just something through their narratives that were
23 explained. So I don't say many. There were
24 several as in less than probably 20 of them who
25 had stated this.

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2 However this is something that we
3 believe needs to be researched further. Just
4 because, you know, it wasn't just one or two,
5 there were a number of them who stated that it
6 seems, you know, something they saw on TV. It was
7 something they were fascinated with. However we
8 do also recognize that this could be a way of
9 justifying what they do.

10 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: That's where I
11 was going--

12 MS. DANK: [Interposing] Yeah.

13 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: -because when
14 you look at that finding--

15 MS. DANK: [Interposing] Um-hum.

16 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --with the
17 one, two bullets below, that 87% expressed a
18 desire to leave the life--

19 MS. DANK: [Interposing] Yep.

20 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --it sounds to
21 me like dissonance reduction more than anything
22 else so I was--

23 MS. DANK: [Interposing] And that's
24 why we recognize it needs further research. And
25 it's just an emerging theme that we noticed with

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2 the narratives.

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CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: And the other policy recommendation that you make that I find a little troubling, look, obviously mandating a young person who has a problem with authority to do anything is probably a difficult thing to do, but along the lines of the questions I was asking Ms. Causey, about intervention when a young person has NYPD or Juvenile Justice contact, and it strikes me that I'd rather have mandated interference than none.

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MS. DANK: Um-hum.

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CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: And certainly a pat on the back and saying, you know, you don't have to go back to that pimp. You don't have to go back to survival sex. We have options for you, if you're going to call that mandated then fine. But I think that the mandate really needs to be upon the police, the corporation counsel, the Department of Juvenile Justice to see to it that those services are provided. So. Could you speak a little bit to what you mean--

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MS. DANK: [Interposing] Yes.

25

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --and what you

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2 think the impact would be if a young person were
3 picked up in some street sweep by NYPD and were
4 going to be--had been arrested and--

5 MS. DANK: [Interposing] I think--

6 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --their only
7 way out of the criminal justice system were
8 mandated services.

9 MS. DANK: I guess mandated--if
10 they were mandated services, fine. I was thinking
11 or we were thinking more mandated to go to
12 juvenile detention centers. But I think it's also
13 the way that law enforcement approaches the youth.
14 And from the stories that they told us, police
15 officers, you know, a lot of times will manhandle
16 them or speak to them in an inappropriate manner
17 and almost, you know, in a very judgmental manner.
18 And that as a result they're going to fight back
19 from that and not cooperate with law enforcement
20 as a result.

21 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: It'll take a
22 tidal wave of attitude change--

23 MS. DANK: [Interposing] Oh
24 absolutely.

25 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --before I

1
2 would expect that the police department is going
3 to view these people as victims as opposed to
4 arrests.

5 MS. DANK: Absolutely.

6 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: But it strikes
7 me that, you know, even if they are manhandled or
8 inappropriately coming into the system, that they
9 ought to be diverted from the system--

10 MS. DANK: [Interposing] Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --I mean the
12 analogy that I would give you; the Brooklyn
13 District Attorney has a remarkably good program
14 for nonviolent drug offenders. It's called DTAP.
15 In order to avoid going through the criminal
16 justice system and taking what would obviously be
17 a jail sentence; the defendant opts to go to a
18 drug treatment program, knowing that if they do
19 not succeed in the program that they will be sent
20 to serve their jail sentence.

21 And if they do go into the program
22 they not only receive drug treatment but
23 vocational training and support services, the
24 success rate of the DTAP program is extraordinary.
25 The recidivism rate is negligible. And the cost,

1
2 incidentally the financial cost compared to prison
3 is significantly less.

4 MS. DANK: Um-hum.

5 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: The idea of
6 having such a mandated service, you know, that,
7 you know, you've been picked up for street
8 prostitution or prostitution and say--in providing
9 an alternative continuum of services to a criminal
10 record, is that something that you would find to
11 be a good thing or a bad thing?

12 MS. DANK: No I mean it's very hard
13 for me to speak on behalf of, you know, all the
14 service agencies that work--

15 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Interposing]
16 I'm asking you--

17 MS. DANK: --so as researcher--

18 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --a professor
19 of--

20 MS. DANK: [Interposing]
21 [chuckling]

22 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --who's
23 researched the issue.

24 MS. DANK: I mean I personally
25 think that would be obviously the better option

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2 because as they express to us, if they were given
3 these services they would most likely-- - - the
4 lifestyle. So if they were mandated to get these
5 services, housing, you know, employment, job
6 training that sort of thing, then, yes, I think
7 that would be, you know, the way to go as opposed
8 to sending them to a detention facility.

9 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Well and I
10 expected that would be your answer. I think that
11 is the right answer and--

12 MS. DANK: [Interposing] Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --I think
14 it's, you know, 87% have said--they have
15 volunteered that they would like to get out of the
16 life. I've suggested amongst the other 13%, the
17 majority of them probably would too whether they
18 said so or not. And the ones that don't are
19 probably suffering from a seriously debilitating
20 mental disability and need to be treated in spite
21 of their stated desire to live that lifestyle.
22 So. Thank you both for your testimony and I also
23 certainly want to thank Safe Horizons for the work
24 that you do. And hopefully as we go through the
25 budget process we'll be able to solve some of your

1

2 problems and... good to go forward. Thank you.

3

[Pause]

4

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay. Our
5 next panel, back to GEMS, Rachel Lloyd, with
6 Cynthia and Tiffany.

7

[Pause]

8

MS. RACHAEL LLOYD: Good morning.
9 My name is Rachel Lloyd; I'm the founder and
10 Executive Director of GEMS, Girls Educational and
11 Mentoring Services. As most of you probably know,
12 GEMS is the only nonprofit in New York that works
13 specifically with sexually exploited girls and
14 domestically trafficked girls. We were founded in
15 1999 in response to an overwhelming need for
16 services specifically for girls and young women
17 who'd been trafficked and sexually exploited.

18

This is actually my third City
19 Council Hearing on this issue. The first was in
20 2002 at which the NYPD claimed there were only 15
21 sexually exploited youth in the entire City. So I
22 think we've come a reasonably long way since then
23 with some solid research that's being done
24 throughout the City both the OCFS study and the
25 John Jay study.

1
2 Again in 2007, myself and several
3 of our youth leaders were here to advocate on
4 behalf of the Safe Harbor Act and obviously that's
5 something that has passed. And you're right, it
6 starts April 1, 2010 and there is a lot of work to
7 do in the next year to ensure that that's
8 implemented properly and that the law, as you
9 said, isn't just about a great principle but that
10 it actually goes into effect and makes a
11 difference in the lives of young people throughout
12 New York City and New York State.

13 GEMS served--and I wanted to kind
14 of address some of the statements that were made
15 about the John Jay study, last year GEMS served
16 279 girls and young women ages 11 to 21 all of
17 whom were under the control of a pimp and had been
18 introduced to the commercial sex industry either
19 via a pimp or by a friend who was working on
20 behalf of the pimp. So I think whilst that is,
21 you know, a helpful study in terms of representing
22 maybe the differences for boys and transgendered
23 youth or youth who may be engaged in survival sex,
24 it's critical to recognize too that pimps do make
25 up a significant portion of young peoples'

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2 recruitment into the sex industry.

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And particularly when you're talking about 12, 13, 14-year old girls who are being sold up at Hunt's Point or East New York or wherever, it's unlikely that they were introduced to this by a peer or decided to kind of enter the sex industry willingly or voluntarily. And that there is always an adult on those situations, there is always an adult behind those.

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The services that we provide--and I don't know if DYCD is still here, DYCD mentioned that we have a housing program, transitional independent living program that serves 9 girls and young women, ages 16 to 21 at any given time those girls have to come through the continuum. DYCD did provide the first beds specifically for sexually exploited youth three years ago which has been a big step.

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Obviously there's still an enormous need for services and for beds. There needs to be crisis specialized beds for this population as they don't always fit in general youth shelters or crisis shelters. They have very specific needs. And for the girls and young women that we serve,

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2 safety issues are a very real concern. They're
3 under the control of very real and very violent
4 traffickers and pimps, and so safety issues kind
5 of have to be taken into consideration both in
6 location of shelter and in terms of kind of the
7 youth within that shelter who may not have had
8 that same experience.

9 We're pleased at some of the
10 progress, obviously, that's been made, although
11 it's disappointing again to see this year the NYPD
12 decided not to come and testify. Hopefully they
13 would have changed their stat a little bit in the
14 last seven years but it would have been good to
15 hear from their perspective. They do have an
16 Anti-Human Trafficking Unit now which has begun to
17 address issues of domestic trafficking, not just
18 international trafficking. But as you said I
19 think there's a massive see [phonetic] change
20 needed from NYPD in terms of how they treat these
21 youth, their perceptions of who these youth are
22 and whether they're really victims or not.

23 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: I just--

24 MS. LLOYD: [Interposing] Okay.

25 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --in fairness

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to NYPD, we didn't invite them.

MS. LLOYD: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: And I--

MS. LLOYD: [Interposing]

[chuckling]

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --I don't

imagine they would have come anyway but--

MS. LLOYD: [Interposing] Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --we've got to

be fair.

MS. LLOYD: Okay. [Chuckling]. It

would be nice to think that they would have done,

although I don't know that they would have done

anything.

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: You know, I'm

sorry we didn't invite them and--

MS. LLOYD: [Interposing] And then

we could have said--

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --it would

have been very entertaining had they come and to

hear their point of view about this but... for

another day.

MS. LLOYD: Yeah. And obviously

with the Safe Harbor Act going into effect, it's

1
2 going to be critical that NYPD are involved
3 because it's going to be important for their role
4 to be that as treating girls as victims, treating
5 boys as victims, treating transgendered youth as
6 victims and making sure that the law is
7 implemented correctly; that judges, prosecutors,
8 everyone within the criminal justice system kind
9 of has this mind shift.

10 One of the other areas of Safe
11 Harbor that's going to need to be implemented is
12 the service providers training as well. When the
13 OCFS did a study in 2007, they found 2,200 youth
14 down in New York City who had been commercially
15 sexually exploited, about another 600 Upstate--I'm
16 sorry 399 in Upstate in 6 counties.

17 One of the challenges with that
18 study and it was a prevalent study that was given
19 6 months to a year to be completed which is tough
20 when you're dealing with an underground population
21 and a very transient population, but they found
22 that people didn't understand the question
23 commercial sexual exploitation.

24 And so people would either respond
25 in terms of child sexual abuse or they'd say no

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2 we've never seen this, we have no idea what you're
3 talking about. So while there may be an
4 assumption, particularly in New York City that,
5 you know, youth services providers have
6 familiarity with commercial sexual exploitation,
7 trafficking, etcetera, that may not--that
8 perception may not be kind of happening statewide.

9 And I'll say as somebody who trains
10 about 1,500 youth service providers a year both in
11 the State and specifically in the City, it's
12 challenging to recognize how ill-informed service
13 providers, social workers, folks within child
14 welfare systems, folks within the DJJ system, are
15 about this issue. And so the see change need to
16 not just come on the PD level but both with them
17 and in the social services system as well.

18 [Pause]

19 MS. LLOYD: Yes. And so I'm joined
20 by Tiffany who is a youth leader and an outreach
21 worker at GEMS.

22 TIFFANY: Hi. Good morning. So
23 basically I am an outreach worker at GEMS and
24 prior to that I was a victim of commercial sexual
25 exploitation at the age of 14. I was arrested. I

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2 was incarcerated. I was in jail. And throughout
3 that whole time I felt very bad. I had no idea
4 what I was going to do.

5

6 Having been--being arrested it did
7 not help the situation at all. I went back
8 exactly to doing what I was doing. I went back to
9 the streets. I ran away from home. And I
10 struggled with that for about two years.

11

12 Eventually I was badly beaten up and I winded up
13 coming to GEMS and through that I was able to get
14 the support that I needed to go back to school and
15 do other things that I was supposed to restore my
16 life that I needed. You know, the way things were
17 supposed to have been, the things that I deserved.

18

19 Eventually I moved on to becoming
20 an outreach worker and I am in college now. And I
21 see that the issue of what happened to me is much
22 bigger than myself. Every Thursday I go to
23 Crossroads which is a juvenile detention center in
24 Brooklyn. And I get girls all the time telling me
25 the same things that have happened to me is
happening to them and they have no idea what to
do.

26

And being that they are in jail,

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2 they're actually afraid to come--you know, to go
3 back to their regular lives. They're afraid that
4 they're going to go back to doing the same things.
5 They have no idea what they're going to do. And
6 by having me to come there and tell them about
7 GEMS and tell them about what happened to me, they
8 have hope. They understand--they have somewhat
9 better understanding of what's going on with them.
10 And they're offered things, you know, they're not
11 being told that they're bad. You know, they have
12 hope and they feel like they can go on to leading
13 a better and productive life.

14 I want to say that just a while ago
15 I was a homeless youth and even though I was out
16 of the life, being that I am 19 years old, I had
17 no idea what I was going to do. I was kicked out
18 of my home. And by having GEMS and having this
19 whole program that they offer, I was able not have
20 to worry about what I was going to do and be
21 forced to go back out into the streets and sell
22 myself.

23 I was able to have a home where
24 there was support and everything that I needed.
25 And, you know, that helped me out tremendously

1

2 because there are so many kids that don't have
3 certain things that they need and they're forced
4 to do things that they really don't want to do.

5

6 I also wanted to say that just by
7 being an outreach worker and informing young women
8 of what's going on, they often--a lot of times
9 when I first come and I'm talking to them, they
10 don't want to tell me exactly what's going on.
11 And, you know, I remember the woman; she said they
12 were introduced by friends.

12

13 A lot of times young women are
14 afraid to, you know--they don't want to open up so
15 much. They don't want to tell you the whole story
16 and they'll tell you a fried or other things and
17 eventually they go on and they--you know, they
18 tell you the bigger picture of things, you know,
19 how things really happened. And that's something
20 that I see a lot.

20

21 And, you know, by having someone
22 that's open and I'm not going to judge them,
23 they're able to receive help from me and the
24 support that they need. And I still keep in
25 contact with girls and it means a lot to me that
I'm helping these people because it's a lot of

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2 girls. And a lot of girls are losing their lives
3 and they're not getting the things that they need.
4 And I know that by me going to them and offering
5 my support they're going to do a lot better.

6 I also run an educational
7 initiative group at GEMS which basically helps
8 girls that are in school and it gives them the
9 support that they need. And a lot of times girls
10 feel like because of what happened to them that
11 they can't do the things that they felt like they
12 wanted to do when they were younger.

13 And by having me there and talking
14 to them constantly about yes you can and just
15 because that happened to you that doesn't mean
16 that you can't do better, they eventually achieve
17 those goals that they want. Whether it's getting
18 their GED, going to college or going to high
19 school or whatever it is, a plan for a job, they
20 eventually do those things. And I know that by
21 having supportive services that tremendously helps
22 them out a lot because it helped me.

23 MS. LLOYD: And this is Cynthia
24 who's also another youth leader and outreach
25 worker at GEMS.

1
2 CYNTHIA: Hello. I just wanted to
3 say and I'm so honored being here, like, I never
4 was here before so. It's really cool. I'm kind
5 of nervous too. I'm--

6 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Interposing]
7 It's okay. If I was gentle on the Commissioner,
8 I'll be gentle with you, so.

9 CYNTHIA: [Interposing] [Chuckling]
10 I'm used to talking to a large group of people.
11 We did a big training, CSEC training in Texas and
12 there was an FBI agents and lawyers and judges and
13 they were really amazed on all the different
14 issues girls go through 'cause their vision of
15 girls that come the life is they're difficult to
16 work with. That they don't want to say anything;
17 that half the time they're denying everything that
18 happens to them.

19 From my personal experience, I'm
20 not trying to put blame on nobody; I'm just
21 talking from my personal experience. I was in
22 ACS. I was 17. I was kidnapped but I was marked
23 as AWOL and discharged once I turned 18 from ACS
24 but I was kidnapped the whole time. And
25 unfortunately with my situation--

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CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Interposing]

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What do you mean you were kidnapped the whole

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time? Explain that--

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CYNTHIA: [Interposing] I was

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kidnapped by my pimp before I turned 18. So I was

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17, about to turn 18 and since I was gone, they

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just felt like I'd just ran away and that was it.

9

So nobody tried to look for me. Actually one of

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my friends hired a detective to look for me and he

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called him crazy. He thought my friend was trying

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to stalk me but in all reality he knew it wasn't

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like me not to even show my face with my friends

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and stuff. So.

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In my situation I know plenty of

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girls that have gone through this, whether they

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got kidnapped or went, you know, on their own,

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you're still a minor regardless. And it should

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always be looked into where this individual is.

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Services for young girls are very

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important 'cause I go to ACS, I also have gone to

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Crossroads, I've gone to Horizons. I've been

23

doing this for a while. And this is--the number

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is crazy, like every time we go, it's always one

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individual that's either surrounded by it or is

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2 involved in it.

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4 And this is why we thought it's
5 very important for young girls to have services,
6 not just services for after they get out the life
7 but services to prevent them from entering into
8 the life for the simple fact that there's a lot of
9 myths that come with this lifestyle like media
10 does play a role in a way because it portrays it
11 like a glamorous situation, like you can't go
12 wrong making money, you can't go wrong having fun
13 and hanging out in a club all day.

14

15 So to a young girl, she sees that
16 and she's in the ACS or in a facility where she
17 doesn't want to be and she's always being
18 controlled by people she doesn't really like,
19 she's going to want to go somewhere where she
20 feels like she's going to have more freedom. And
21 that's what the pimps portray to them. And that's
22 what the girls that the pimps have the mind
23 control over. That's what they tell the other
24 girls to tell them.

25

26 And that's why girls usually get
27 involved. Like it could be a girl coming to
28 another girl saying oh come with me, come make

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2 money with me. I mean I've lived in a group home
3 where girls have come up to me, also, and told me,
4 look I've got all this money. I got my nails
5 done. I'm looking mad pretty. All you have to go
6 to do is go to a strip club and just dance for a
7 little while. And in all reality they get drawn
8 into it because they are in a shelter, they are in
9 a group home and they're not doing as good as the
10 girls might seem like they are, you know?

11 So services for these girls are
12 very important because girls need to understand
13 that it's not a glamorous lifestyle and also girls
14 that are involved need a way of existing, need
15 that support service to show them how to exit the
16 life 'cause most--I didn't even know GEMS was
17 around. Like when I was in the life I really
18 thought that if I ran away I would get arrested and
19 put in jail because of what I was doing, even
20 though I was kidnapped.

21 I felt like nobody would believe
22 me. Actually I ran into a school after I ran away
23 from my pimp, I ran into a school where there was
24 a precinct and they didn't believe me until I
25 actually called my foster mother and told her what

1
2 happened to me. And even then they kind of
3 treated me poorly. They put gloves on to touch me
4 and move me to another room. And it was all
5 because they just felt like I was dirty basically
6 because I was on the streets and I looked like a
7 prostitute.

8 But in all reality I just wanted
9 somebody to hold me and say it was going to be
10 okay. So...

11 [Pause]

12 TIFFANY: I will say also that it's
13 very important because I know that me and Cynthia,
14 we both go to juvenile detention centers and by
15 educating them on the issue and telling them about
16 it, it can prevent them from knowing that if they
17 are going to, you know, maybe they've never
18 experienced it but because they are going to go to
19 a place like ACS or wherever they may be going to
20 and it may be bad, to let them know that they
21 don't have to do these things.

22 And, you know, that it's not all
23 that it may seem to be and that helps them out
24 tremendously because with that population because
25 they're already in difficult situations, that

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lifestyle may seem a lot more glamorous and oftentimes they're going to think they're going to run away from home into something else but really they're going to, you know, be in a lot more trouble. So.

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CYNTHIA: Services that I feel helped me and other young girls was constant groups where we was with other people that have been involved in the same situation 'cause we related to them. Sometimes when--even though girls are in it together, like they have separate minds 'cause everybody's looking out--that type of lifestyle everybody's looking out for themselves. So they kind of separate themselves.

So when we bring girls together to discuss this issue together, they start realizing like I went through the same thing, like, and they start connecting and they start opening up. That's when you see results 'cause when girls start opening up that's when you hear oh this is the pimp that took me. Maybe I should testify against him 'cause he had all these other girls and they're all here too. And they're all telling me the same thing. And it's wrong that this has

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to happen to us as young individuals.

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And this is why group is good for girls. This is also a good way to help them with their PTSD because a lot of girls come out PTSD. They'll be sitting there telling their story but they're laughing the whole time. That's a sign of PTSD for the simple fact that they're trying to disassociate themselves from their situation. They're trying to separate themselves from what actually happened to them for the simple--it hurts. It hurts from the inside. It hurts out.

So girls will not sit there-- sometimes will not sit there and cry and tell you what happened to them but most of the time like, yeah he hit me but it was because I was misbehaving and he had the right to do it. But they're already in a state of brainwash where they feel like this is how they suppose-d-this is how they're supposed to react to certain situations 'cause this is how they're taught.

And especially girls that have been in it for years, I was only in it for three months and girls that have been in it for years, it's a lot harder for them to get back into the role of

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2 being a child because they've been living the life
3 of a grown adult 'cause this is what they have to
4 portray themselves as.

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6 Even though the guys, the johns
7 that are paying for these girls, they see them as
8 young girls, but since they speak like grown
9 adults 'cause most of the time on the street girls
10 learn how to, you know, carry themselves in that
11 way. Like it doesn't mean that they're not young
12 little girls. That does not mean that. That
13 doesn't mean that they don't want to sit there and
14 play like little kids play. It just means that
15 they had to grow up faster than a lot of other
16 kids did.

16

17 And providing services will help
18 them come back to their age. Most of the time
19 girls are saying they're 23 and they're only 14
20 years old, you know? So they already having their
21 mind state like I have to be a grownup. I have to
22 be an adult. And this is why they come at service
23 providers or police officers or whoever's trying
24 to help them so strongly like nothing bad happened
25 to me, this is what I choose to do because this is
how they're brainwashed to talk and act.

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Do you guys have any questions?

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CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Yeah, well

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first of all I think we do these hearings

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backwards. And I'm sorry that I didn't put the

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two of you up there before DYCD. I mean you are

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the, you know, the face of why we're having this

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hearing.

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You know, the two of you,

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ironically, represent the way so many young people

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become homeless and then sexually exploited in the

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City. You by ageing out of ACS. And we've held

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numbers of hearings, and I wish ACS was here to

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answer for why they decided to just check you off

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because you were about to turn 18 when in fact you

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were disappeared before. And, you know, so that's

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one way.

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And the other is by, you know,

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contact with the juvenile or criminal justice

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system which Tiffany experienced. So you both

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exemplify and put a face on the problem.

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And I was going to save this

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comment for my concluding remark, what is

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disgraceful about today, in addition to, you know,

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the facts that, you know, are being laid out, is

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2 the fact that there isn't a single member of the
3 press here. We've been holding hearings for seven
4 years on runaway and homeless youth in part to
5 shine a light on this problem.

6 And, you know, it's very, very easy
7 to, you know, to dismiss the idea that there are
8 3,800 young people sleeping on the streets every
9 night because 3,800's just a number. But when you
10 meet somebody who's been through it. When you
11 hear the individual story and then ask somebody to
12 multiply that by 3,800, that tends to get peoples'
13 attention.

14 But the fact of the matter is we
15 are holding this hearing for the converted. For
16 those of us who already understand. And I, you
17 know, I do know, I mean, there will be some people
18 who will watch this at 2:00 o'clock in the
19 morning. It's being, you know, it'll be sent out
20 on the, you know, on the cable channel. And I
21 hope they get it, you know?

22 And but, you know, this, you know,
23 we have a new--we have a citywide newspaper that
24 will make a front page headline out of a runaway
25 model throwing her cat at her boyfriend. But the

1
2 idea that this doesn't merit a report. I think if
3 people knew, if people really knew and really
4 understood, I think we might see the change that
5 we're trying to get to.

6 So I apologize for the sermon, you
7 know, to you, to all of you. But it is something
8 that does deeply distress me about how we
9 prioritize things in this City. And why, you
10 know, the stupidity of not making this a priority
11 and solving these problems, even--even just in
12 terms of the efficiency of government, forget
13 about the compassion of it all, the efficiency of
14 government to solve this problem when Tiffany was
15 14, all right, instead of waiting and allowing it
16 to affect her life.

17 And thank god the two of you found
18 your way to GEMS, found your way to being able to
19 make your lives constructive and positive because
20 we all know there's a fork in the road. I mean,
21 and the two of you, and I don't mean to be
22 melodramatic, the two of you could just as easily
23 be dead as you are--it may have been easier for
24 you to be dead than for you to be sitting here as
25 constructive human beings, doing the right thing,

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2 doing the right thing for yourself and doing the
3 right thing for other people.

4 And why more people in the City
5 don't get that, I just--I can't fathom. You know,
6 I do want to ask both of you one question though
7 which is how did you find GEMS? How did you find
8 your way from where you were, I mean you had a
9 contact with, I guess, with NYPD.

10 And somehow you found the right
11 options. You were arrested and went back to the
12 streets. And so I guess nobody--did anybody at
13 least try to intervene when you were, I guess, 14?
14 Were you first arrested when you were 14? And if
15 not, then how did you find GEMS? Could you both
16 answer that for me?

17 TIFFANY: What happened was, when I
18 was first arrested, I'm thinking, when I was first
19 arrested I did have contact with GEMS for a little
20 while and I winded up just--I was going through a
21 lot of things and I wasn't going to GEMS like I
22 was supposed to.

23 And, you know, I stopped for a
24 while and eventually what happened was I almost
25 did die. I was in the hospital. And I really

1
2 didn't know what I was going to do at all. I knew
3 that, you know, I wanted to totally leave the
4 lifestyle but everything at home, the way things
5 were supposed to be, it wasn't that way.

6 And so I basically, GEMS came to
7 the hospital and ever since then I've been totally
8 involved with them. And they helped, basically
9 rehabilitate me into where I am today.

10 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Oh so GEMS
11 found you. All right, first you--you had had a
12 contact with them--

13 TIFFANY: [Interposing] Um-hum.

14 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --that, you
15 know, wasn't successful. How did that contact
16 come about?

17 TIFFANY: What happened was they
18 offered case management and basically someone, my
19 mom's, you know, my mom didn't really know what to
20 do at all. And a lady that used to work there,
21 she was a case manager, and basically she spoke
22 with my mom and she got me to come to GEMS. And
23 I, you know, I didn't--I just didn't want to go
24 and so I didn't.

25 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Now, I, you

1
2 know, if you don't want to answer this question, I
3 understand, but, you know, obviously you had some
4 interaction with your mother where she at least
5 was trying to help you. How did you wind up
6 leaving home? Why did you wind up leaving home?

7 TIFFANY: What happened was when I
8 was 14 years old, I was--I basically met a pimp.
9 I didn't know that he was a pimp and eventually I
10 found out. In my head I was totally in love with
11 him and I was willing to do whatever. And so
12 that's how basically I winded up leaving home.
13 And I would, you know, I would come home but
14 because my mother did love me but she didn't know
15 how to handle the situation, you know.

16 I didn't tell her what was going
17 on. And by me being, you know, arrested and other
18 things happening she would call me names and, you
19 know, our situation was really bad. We were
20 always arguing and I left home. So I would go
21 back into the streets.

22 And even when I was involved with
23 GEMS I, I didn't--you know, I would--you know,
24 there were days that I was supposed to go, I
25 wouldn't want to go. And, you know, eventually,

1
2 through me seeing, eventually through me seeing,
3 you know, exactly what was going on, I knew that I
4 needed help. I knew that if I wanted, you know,
5 if I wanted to do things the right way, I knew the
6 services that they did offer so that was what I
7 was going to do.

8 Because I almost lost my life just
9 like you said, it was very eye--I almost did lose
10 my life. And I knew I didn't want that to happen.

11 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: And Cynthia,
12 how did you find GEMS?

13 CYNTHIA: I found--they, well I was
14 placed in Covenant House when they found out that
15 I was kidnapped. And he was actually outside the
16 Covenant House looking for me less than 24 hours.
17 So and the way they found that out was because it
18 was in the computer system with his a/k/a name
19 that he was outside picking up other girls,
20 pregnant girls while he was trying to find me.

21 He already knew I was there 'cause
22 it's, of course, it's a youth shelter. So
23 basically what happened from there, I got in touch
24 with a special CSEC task force which I never even
25 knew existed. And they came and they moved me.

1

2

And from there it turned into an FBI case because they was looking for my pimp for two years prior to him kidnapping me.

5

6

7

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9

10

So it turned into a bigger situation and the FBI already knew about Rachael and about GEMS. So they placed me into their crisis housing. And I was living in a TIL for a little while and that's how I found GEMS through the FBI.

11

12

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Make me feel good. Tell me that your pimp was convicted.

13

14

15

16

17

CYNTHIA: Yes. He's been--now he's in jail for 23 years and he's going to have life--they're going to watch him for the rest of his life even after he comes out of the jail. I'm very happy about that too.

18

19

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21

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23

24

25

But on a personal note, also, it's been now 3 years. He had--he has had other people that worked with him to collect girls for his stable, you can say. And three years later they come--they're still coming at me to try to prosecute other individuals that have been involved. Now me being with--me being without a program or anything, I wouldn't know what to do in

1
2 this type of situation because I would feel very
3 vulnerable. I mean this is the FBI.

4 So me being at GEMS, kind of
5 educated me to my rights, the Safe Harbor Act, not
6 only that, there was a restitution fund from my
7 pimp that I didn't know I could receive until GEMS
8 told me and brought it to my knowledge. Also GEMS
9 had provided me a lawyer for this situation also
10 'cause it's been three years now and they're still
11 trying to get me to go to court for this same
12 case.

13 I'm really trying to move on with
14 my live, trying to educate young girls, trying to
15 help young girls get past these issues as well.
16 And GEMS has really helped--still helping me to
17 this day to get past my issues with my ex-pimp.
18 And I really appreciate it.

19 Like girls that don't know about
20 the Safe Harbor Act, girls don't know that there's
21 help out there, wouldn't want to go after a pimp
22 for the simple fact that they don't know like what
23 resources they can use to protect themselves
24 'cause it is a very high risk factor for them to
25 get either kidnapped again or just beaten very

1
2 badly or just fall into the wrong hands of the
3 wrong person. So it is important for people to
4 have services that have gone through this. It is
5 very important.

6 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Council Member
7 Mealy.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Yes. I
9 would just like to commend you ladies. I'm the
10 Chair of the Women's Issues Committee and I would
11 love GEMS to come and bring these young ladies
12 just as well. You mentioned trafficking is such
13 an experience that I never thought of, that in
14 depth of how much our young ladies go through.
15 And I just agree with you.

16 Our next hearing I believe it will
17 be next month, we're trying to get an NYPD there.
18 I think they're in denial right now. And we as
19 women and being exploitation with men,
20 transgendered, and we have to make sure that they
21 are here for this hearing. And let their voices
22 be heard.

23 And we have to get the police
24 department to realize that the statistics need to
25 be done and some people have to be held

1
2 accountable. And they cannot put their head in
3 the sand any longer 'cause this is happening and
4 it's happening to our young girls and our young
5 men. So I just--I'm looking forward to working
6 with you. And please keep your head up because
7 you are the queens of New York. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Yeah I, you
9 know, I want to thank GEMS and I want to thank the
10 two of you, Cynthia and Tiffany, for your
11 testimony. And keep doing what you're doing.
12 It's--it really is terrific. You should know that
13 there are people in government who do care and
14 will continue to care.

15 And we'll continue to do everything
16 we can to give you the resources to save the lives
17 of other young men and women who are, who've gone
18 down the part that you have escaped from. Yes.

19 MS. LLOYD: Just in closing, I mean
20 obviously we believe that services work. As John
21 Jay's Meredith was just saying earlier, young
22 people really do respond well to their peers and
23 the fact that GEMS is a survivor-led program, we
24 prioritize hiring survivors. We have an entire--
25 these two young women are obviously phenomenal

1
2 representatives of the girls at GEMS but there are
3 also lots of other young women at GEMS who serve
4 as role models, peer outreach workers, peer
5 educators, counselors, etcetera.

6 And it really is a critical
7 difference in programming to have survivors who
8 are involved in that kind of--all the issues of
9 stigma that are so strong around this issue are
10 kind of alleviated by having young people who have
11 had these experiences. What I will say as well
12 is, you know, we know that we have a 72% success
13 rate of helping girls exit the commercial sex
14 industry. Like I said last year we served 279
15 girls and young women. Just like everybody else
16 and other service providers in the room, as a
17 nonprofit we have been hit hard by the economic
18 downturn. We've gone from 19 full time staff to
19 12 full time staff.

20 So our staffing levels are
21 basically at the 2005 level that we were maybe at,
22 2004. And yet our numbers are at the 2009 level.
23 We've seen an increase this year already and one
24 of the biggest fears that I have for the young
25 people that we serve is that so many of the young

1
2 people are three weeks away from homelessness at
3 any given point.

4 Anyway, they're so vulnerable
5 already that even for girls who have been able to
6 exit, you know, last year we--go get a job, you
7 can sign up for this, you can register for this
8 program. The reality is that they were already
9 vulnerable before the economic downturn and
10 they're even more vulnerable now. They weren't
11 high on anybody's list of priority prior to this.

12 And it feels like they're slipping
13 further and further down the list of priorities.
14 The beds, there's less beds, there's less funding,
15 there's less services. One of our partners just
16 had their HIV prevention funding cut which is
17 shocking to me. So I mean, you know, the choices
18 that are being made at the City and the State
19 level may not be having an impact today, even
20 though many of us are seeing it already, but are
21 going to have a really serious impact over the
22 next year to two years.

23 And there's been a lot of learning
24 and a lot of work done around this issue over the
25 last few years, and we know what services work.

1
2 But we also know that we need the resources to
3 make sure that those are in place and in effect.
4 And if programs are being kind of gutted from the
5 inside out, I think many of us will see our
6 outcomes kind of decrease and the success rates
7 for our young people really go down because we're
8 just not going to have the resources to do it.

9 Obviously we fully support the \$3
10 million being set aside for runaway and homeless
11 youth prevention money and urge the Council to
12 consider the resources that the City has available
13 for this population. Thanks.

14 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Well I, you
15 know, obviously you are more than preaching to the
16 choir on that. And, you know, I certainly
17 recognize that the choices that are being made in
18 times that are more difficult and when the choices
19 are tougher, seem to be both pennywise and pound
20 foolish and lacking in compassion.

21 So I don't think my colleagues here
22 have made those choices. We have stood up over
23 the last number of years and increased the money
24 that we have put into this every year. You know,
25 certainly, we feel the DYCD is supportive. I'm

1
2 not so sure about the Mayor and his Office of
3 Management and Budget.

4 And it would be wonderful if on
5 Friday when the executive budget comes out for
6 this City of New York that the Mayor recognized
7 that reality. It would be really nice. And I'm
8 not holding my breath. But I will hold my breath
9 over here in terms of making sure that we do
10 everything we can to at very, very, very least
11 maintain the level of services that we were able
12 to bring up, bring the budget up to in the last
13 number of years. So if we can't do more than we
14 shouldn't, certainly shouldn't be doing less. And
15 I thank you for everything you do and for your
16 testimony today. Thank you.

17 Okay our next panel, Nancy Downing
18 from Covenant House, Mary Adams from Inwood House
19 and Carmen Quinones from Green Chimneys. I
20 apologize to this panel for having to follow that.
21 Because it would be very difficult to be more
22 compelling than what you just heard.

23 [Pause]

24 MS. NANCY DOWNING: Good morning,
25 my name is Nancy Downing and I am the Director of

1
2 Advocacy for Covenant House New York. One of the
3 roles that I serve as at Covenant House is also to
4 provide direct legal advocacy for the youth that
5 we provide services to. What I've notice in the
6 last year is an increase in the number of young
7 women and young men who are in need of services
8 because they have been victims of sexual
9 exploitation. Young women, both heterosexual,
10 both heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian,
11 transgender, I've seen numerous cases. I don't
12 think I can state the situation better than the
13 two young women, however, who just spoke to you.

14 It's difficult to get young people
15 to come and speak about their specific situation
16 because it is a situation that they even have
17 difficulty in expressing to their counselors, to
18 legal counsel. And it takes a lot of time and
19 care to get them to tell their stories. These
20 aren't simple cases. I've seen kids who have aged
21 out of foster care who have been victims of sexual
22 exploitation. Kids who have had teachers who have
23 recruited them into the sex life. I've seen kids
24 who have been put out on the street by their
25 parents because of coming out, because of their

1
2 sexual orientation who then have to engage in
3 survival sex. Story after story.

4 What we've seen also is a large
5 increase in the number of youth who are homeless
6 in the past year. Our statistics, and I don't
7 want to call them statistics, our kids, the number
8 of kids coming to access our services increased by
9 about 40% in the last 6 months of 2008. Those
10 numbers aren't going down because of our economic
11 situation.

12 I've also seen a large increase in
13 the number of young people who have been victims
14 of sexual exploitation. We can't ignore this
15 problem. We can provide what services we can and
16 quite honestly runaway and homeless youth programs
17 are where these kids come to access services.

18 We are the--we are the primary
19 contact for them in preventing them from being
20 long time victims of sexual exploitation. We can
21 provide them with healthcare services, counseling
22 services and other services that we need. Yet
23 what we see in the City and around the country is
24 that instead of increased number of services being
25 available, we're losing beds.

1
2 Not just at Covenant House by my
3 colleagues here at Inwood, Green Chimneys,
4 Sylvia's Place, on and on, we're losing the number
5 of beds that we need to be able to have access to
6 these young people who are victims. They are not
7 criminals. They are victims. I don't care if
8 they're 16, 17, 18, 18, 20 years old. They are
9 victims of sexual exploitation and victims that we
10 need to be providing services to.

11 There aren't the funds available to
12 provide all the services that are necessary but
13 the City is going to be getting approximately \$75
14 million in HPRP money. We're asking that \$3
15 million, which is less than 4% of that money be
16 dedicated to homeless and youth serving
17 organizations. We represent more than 10% of the
18 homeless individuals in this City. I don't think
19 that \$3 million is too much to ask for. You know,
20 it's what these kids need.

21 These children are our future. And
22 so I ask that we, again, I know I'm preaching to
23 the choir. I know that this, under your resolve,
24 Council Member Lewis Fidler and under this
25 Committee's resolve, we have come a long way but

1
2 we can't afford to lose ground at this point. And
3 these young people need our help. And so I come
4 just to ask for that. Thank you.

5 [Pause]

6 MS. MARY G. ADAMS: Good morning.
7 I am Mary Adams, Assistant Executive Director for
8 Programs at Inwood House. Firstly, I would like
9 to thank Chairman Lewis Fidler for his continuing
10 dedication to ensuring services are available for
11 vulnerable youth in New York City and his tireless
12 efforts to ensure their needs and voices continue
13 to be heard by our government and the public. I
14 would also like to thank the New York City Council
15 for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of
16 the sexually exploited runaway and homeless youth
17 and specifically on the needs of pregnant and
18 parenting youth who are homeless and have been
19 sexually exploited.

20 Inwood House has been serving
21 pregnant and parenting teens in New York City for
22 179 years. Our services include residential care
23 and a full continuum of service for approximately
24 200 pregnant and parenting teens who are homeless,
25 in foster care or aging out of foster care

1
2 throughout New York City. We also provide
3 community-based family support services to
4 pregnant and parenting teens in the South Bronx, a
5 community with New York's highest teen pregnancy
6 rates.

7 Funding for our services is
8 provided by Administration for Children's
9 Services, the Department of Youth and Community
10 Development through the City Council Runaway and
11 Homeless Youth Initiative, and private
12 foundations.

13 Nationally, teen pregnancy is a
14 critical link to persistent poverty. 70% of teen
15 mothers drop out of high school and 80% rely on
16 public assistance. Young people in New York City
17 are especially vulnerable as New York City has one
18 of the highest teen birth rates in the nation.
19 Approximately 8,000 teens deliver babies each
20 year.

21 Unfortunately only 45% of teen
22 mothers receive prenatal care in their first
23 trimester and correlating statistics indicate that
24 babies born to teen mothers are more likely to:
25 have low birth weight, develop cognitive and

1
2 behavioral disorders, do poorly in school and
3 suffer from abuse and neglect. In New York City,
4 almost half the female heads of household
5 currently residing in homeless shelters were teen
6 moms.

7 Yet, there is a paucity of services
8 for pregnant and parenting youth in NYC. Whether
9 the need be housing, medical care, mental health
10 care, education or employment, the services
11 offered require planning and execution skills
12 generally beyond a teen's developmental stage, and
13 are thus not easily accessible, putting the
14 pregnant teen or teen parent and her baby at great
15 risk.

16 Inwood House always has a waiting
17 list for our residential program for homeless
18 pregnant teens. In 2006, Inwood House released
19 data from a 4-year study of the pregnant teens
20 residing in our residential program. The average
21 age of first sexual intercourse was 14 and one in
22 10 reporting that their first sexual encounter was
23 forced. Nearly half reported that they had been
24 physically abused by a parent, a quarter had been
25 physically abused by a partner or someone they

1
2 were dating, and a more than a third reported that
3 they had ever been sexually molested.

4 The data underscored what we
5 believed to be true; that many of the young women
6 we were serving had serious histories of sexual
7 abuse and exploitation. Such trauma and
8 exploitation further exasperated the stressors
9 these youth were already under from their
10 separation from family and the normal challenges
11 of adolescent development and impacted their
12 overall wellbeing and ability to reach
13 developmental milestones. It also underscored the
14 special challenges that they face in approaching
15 early parenthood and their need for comprehensive
16 medical, mental health, education, and social
17 support services.

18 While the need to provide services
19 and care for vulnerable runaway and homeless youth
20 in New York City may seem obvious and urgent, that
21 need becomes even more urgent when it relates to
22 providing care and services for homeless youth who
23 are pregnant and parenting and in need of
24 specialized medical care for mother and child.
25 Add the complicating factor of sexual

1
2 exploitation, and the result is a trifecta of
3 intersecting risks and needs.

4 Developmentally, adolescents are
5 prone to risk taking behavior but separation from
6 families, histories of trauma and loss can leave
7 them hopeless and push them closer to high risk
8 behaviors and actions. Sexual exploitation of
9 youth already struggling with loss and abandonment
10 further impacts their intra-psychic development
11 and can lead to a loss of faith in their own
12 future and the possibility of a different life,
13 including healthy relationships, love and a
14 healthy family.

15 For the sexually exploited pregnant
16 young adult the incredibly high risk of sexually
17 transmitted disease and HIV and AIDS has obvious
18 and immediate implications for the health of the
19 baby. Beyond the human toll, the financial cost
20 of not intervening simply becomes too high; for
21 the young adult, the infant and for our City.

22 The profile of a pregnant teen too
23 often reflects a history of life in a poor and
24 violent household and community; school
25 disengagement and low academic performance; few

1
2 positive role models and relationships with caring
3 adults; lack of positive peer support; low self-
4 esteem; lack of orientation towards future goals;
5 lack of opportunities for meaningful employment;
6 and lack of information and use of birth control.

7 In light of these experiences,
8 pregnancy can become an option of hope, an attempt
9 to do their lives over and recreate a family and
10 the accompanying love they no longer have. It is
11 critical we're there to offer them a hand at this
12 crossroad. Pregnancy and early stages of
13 parenthood are the optimal points in time to
14 intervene to improve the long term outcomes for
15 the teens and their children.

16 The added challenge of helping
17 young people with a history of sexual exploitation
18 does not negate their chances of success, as long
19 as we can provide the safety and on-going services
20 they need. Without timely and appropriate
21 intervention, their determination to do well for
22 their child can be quickly undermined by decisions
23 made in haste, ignorance or the despair. I

24 n January 2009, with the support of
25 City Council Runaway and Homeless Youth Initiative

1
2 funding and the assistance of the New York City
3 Department of Youth and Community Development,
4 Inwood House opened a special residential program
5 for pregnant and parenting runaway and homeless
6 youth in New York City. At our Victor Street
7 Residence, young homeless and runaway pregnant
8 girls can enter the program and be guaranteed
9 safety and a full range of services to support and
10 assist them through pregnancy and their entrance
11 into parenthood.

12 Unlike other programs in New York,
13 these young adults do not have to leave and move
14 to another program once they've had their child,
15 but can remain for 18 months. This allows us to
16 plan and implement logistics for their long term
17 living situation and provide on-going services,
18 supervision and support during the crucial post-
19 partum period.

20 Young women who have experienced
21 sexual exploitation can have particularly
22 difficult issues related to trust, healthy
23 relationships and other dynamics that can
24 seriously impact the ability to bond with and
25 parent a child. But the Victor Street Residence

1
2 offers a unique setting wherein the young women
3 themselves become valuable and supportive
4 community members who offer each other the ability
5 to see positive change for themselves within
6 reach.

7 The young women serve as models,
8 mentors and supporters to each other throughout
9 their pregnancies, child birth and parenting. The
10 result is a community wherein acceptance is the
11 norm and genuine healing takes place. The ability
12 to keenly and intimately relate to each others
13 pain and experiences; the benefits of 24-hour
14 supervision and support by positive adults; and
15 comprehensive maternal and parenting services in a
16 safe environment provides an antidote which gently
17 undoes the trauma and damage from their experience
18 and allows them to break cycles of loss, abuse and
19 sadness that might otherwise absorb their life and
20 the life of their child, and future children.

21 The challenges of meeting the needs
22 of a youth who have experienced the loss and
23 trauma that all runaway and homeless youth have
24 faced may seem daunting, and when coupled with the
25 multiple needs of pregnancy and sexual

1
2 exploitation it may seem untenable. I am here
3 today to urge continued support for programming to
4 meet the unique needs of the pregnant and
5 parenting, runaway and homeless, sexually
6 exploited youth.

7 Primarily because it is our
8 responsibility both for the teen and the baby, but
9 also because providing such services breaks
10 devastating cycles of persistent poverty for our
11 most vulnerable youth and young children, and
12 enables them to play an important role in the
13 future of our City.

14 MS. CARMEN QUINONES: Good
15 afternoon. My name is Carmen Quinones, I am the
16 Program Director of the Homeless Runaway Programs
17 for Green Chimney's Children Services. I
18 supervise the operation of two transitional living
19 programs for GLBTQ youth, one is the federally
20 funded TLP and the DYCD funded TIL. Our main
21 focus on preparing youth for healthy, self-
22 sufficient adulthood within 18 months. I'm just
23 going to go very brief into some of the issues we
24 work with, with our youth.

25 The homeless youth we work with at

1
2 Green Chimneys are vulnerable to homophobia,
3 stereotyping and discrimination. Increasing the
4 accessibility to problems within these domains.
5 The trauma these youth experience causes problems
6 for the program to work with them on their goals
7 they set for themselves and the goals that we set
8 for them.

9 Transgender homeless youth are more
10 likely than other homeless youth to engage in
11 survival sex, which is sex in exchange for food,
12 money, shelter, drugs or hormones. Some
13 transgender homeless youth will just trade sex
14 just to have a place to stay tonight. We can do a
15 better job of partnering with State and local
16 governments, nonprofits organizations to provide
17 assistance to vulnerable youth.

18 There should be more to prevent
19 youth homelessness and to provide a pathway
20 towards self-sufficiency when youth fall through
21 the cracks.

22 We are asking City Council to
23 advocate for funding from The Homelessness
24 Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program of \$3
25 million that would aid at least 10% of the

1
2 homeless population in New York City to the
3 Department of Homeless Services for subcontractors
4 and agencies that are currently working with
5 homeless people, youth.

6 This is a population that is often
7 not represented and overlooked in most of the
8 funding, as most of the funding is available for
9 families and adults. We need more transitional
10 living programs, more bed, GED programs for GLBTQ
11 youth and especially transgender youth who engage
12 in sex work. We need to develop more or better
13 case management where you are seen as individuals;
14 who have an amazing strength, who are often--who
15 have often incredibly sensitive, caring young
16 people who have been given a bad break in life but
17 given the chance and services can rise above the
18 occasion. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thank you and
20 I just first want to say that all three of your
21 agencies do great, great work. And I thank you
22 for it. Ms. Quinones please mention to Theresa
23 Noland that I'll be looking to speak to her about
24 the TIL program, the DYCD TIL program that's run
25 by Green Chimneys and its hopeful future. So I do

1

2 need to speak to her about it and I--we were kind
3 of expecting her here today until, you know--

4

5

MS. QUINONES: [Interposing] But
the--

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CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --it's not--no
denigration to you. But I would have grabbed her,
taken her outside and throttled her a little bit.
And Nancy, you talked about the Federal stimulus
money. We did meet yesterday with Commissioner
Mullgrav to discuss some of the funding issues.
And Council Finance brought up the stimulus money.

And we are looking into what it can
be used for, whether or not we're eligible for it;
what the rules are, because as you know, the
stimulus package is a very complicated, you know,
set of rules coming along with the money. And
there are grants. There are loans. There are
strings. And, you know, I would certainly
advocate for at least the \$3 million.

In fact I believe Jim Bolus
[phonetic] is circulating a letter. I instructed
my staff to take that letter, write it over my
name and send it out as well. So hopefully we'll
be able to, in addition to, once again, allocating

1

2 the funds that the Council has funded in the past
3 to augment City baseline money, we may be able to
4 increase it with some of the stimulus money and
5 not only maintain but increase the level of
6 services. So.

7

I would ask all of you and all of
8 you in the room to press the stimulus issue very,
9 very hard because if it is permit--the mere fact
10 that it's permissible doesn't mean that the
11 Bloomberg Administration will apply it as such.
12 So, and they don't--shocking as it may be, they
13 don't always do what I want--

14

[Laughter]

15

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: So, you know,
16 I ask you for your continued advocacy on that
17 behalf. So. Thank you all very much. We have
18 two more panels. We have Kenyata Taiste
19 [phonetic] I guess it's pronounced, I apologize,
20 Toist [phonetic]. Aced? Okay. Something like
21 that. You'll correct me when you get up here from
22 Sylvia's Place. Francis Wood from MCCNY Homeless
23 Youth Services and Lucky Michaels from the same
24 organization. Just so--our final panel after that
25 will be Paul Sealy from SCO Family Services and

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Mark Rodriguez from the Political Parent Party.

[Pause]

MS. FRANCES WOOD: Hello. Oh there we go.

MR. LUCKY MICHAELS: Frances.

MS. WOOD: My name is--oh do you want to start?

MR. MICHAELS: I'll go first.

MS. WOOD: Go for it.

MICHAELS Okay my name's Lucky Michaels, Director of MCCNY Homeless Youth Services. And, you know, obviously I've brought two people for very specific reasons. But I want to talk specifically as a personal male survivor of sexual abuse. From age 11 I was sexually abused. And then by age 13 I was sexually exploited and became homeless myself for a number of years without adequate services, runaway and homeless youth services for me.

I came to New York City and have been, you know, obviously advocating on behalf of LGBTQ youth and, you know, just want to push the issue of, you know, of identifying the males that are being sexually exploited. This is, you know,

1
2 this obviously comes with PTSD for everybody who's
3 been a victim at some point in their life.

4 So I would advocate on behalf of,
5 you know, more low threshold services and
6 hopefully when the Safe Harbor Act takes effect
7 we'll see an increase in RHY drop-in or shelters
8 or safe stations similar to what Sylvia's Place
9 provides for LGBTQ youth. And just to respond to
10 the shelters--is there a shelter above 96th Street?
11 DYCD responded that yeah I think there's Green
12 Chimneys.

13 Just for the record, Green Chimneys
14 is a transitional independent living program and
15 you can't go from the street to a transitional
16 independent living program. We all know that
17 that's not the reality. That that's not part of
18 the continuum of care.

19 You know, they're, you know, the
20 crisis shelter beds. You know, we know there's
21 over 100 on each waiting list for those places and
22 it could take anywhere from 1 to 5 months to get
23 into those programs. And then while they're
24 waiting to get into those programs, they're with
25 programs like Sylvia's Place or the drop-in

1
2 centers where they're accessing low threshold
3 services, just the food, the shower, the case
4 management, the psych services, medical services.

5 And I also wanted to note that we
6 are not currently part of the continuum of care
7 for whatever reason. And DYCD still does not have
8 us on their RHY Advisory Council, don't know why
9 that is either. Aside from, you know...

10 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: But you're on
11 ours.

12 [Laughter]

13 MR. MICHAELS: So yeah, they don't
14 consider us as advisory council material
15 apparently. Although we have been serving this
16 population, you know, for quite some time now.

17 And, you know, regarding the \$3
18 million, you know, RHY ask, you know, hopefully
19 we'll see, you know, case management services
20 trickle down to programs that are serving the RHY
21 population in the drop-in centers that aren't
22 being currently being funded by DYCD.

23 Obviously that's going to be a huge
24 issue because we need more case management
25 services across the board. But most especially to

1
2 the special needs populations which are getting
3 little to no services as it is. And I've been
4 tallying, you know, bed losses and, you know,
5 comparatively, you know, the LGBTQ bed losses are
6 going to be disproportionately higher,
7 unfortunately.

8 And I brought Kenyata here--

9 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Interposing]

10 Well let me--before you go, I mean--

11 MR. MICHAELS: [Interposing] Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --you know,
13 you go to that--you can't possibly know that at
14 this point. I just, I don't, and I want to be
15 sure, you know, that there isn't misinformation.
16 The Council funding which last year was \$4.6
17 million, added on, hasn't been allocated yet. So-
18 -

19 MR. MICHAELS: [Interposing] That's
20 true.

21 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --you know,
22 and traditionally that money has gone more heavily
23 to the LGBTQ centers. And we do work
24 cooperatively with DYCD on those allocations
25 amongst those providers that are certified. So,

1
2 you know, I wouldn't, you know, what I would tell
3 you is that if funding remains flat at \$4.6
4 million, added on by the Council, and that is not
5 something that is a) I would accept as a Council
6 Member and b) certainly it would mean that we
7 failed miserably on the \$3 million economic
8 stimulus ask, then there will be fewer beds
9 because the price per bed has increased at the
10 request of the providers because it is a reality
11 to the cost and the ability of the providers to
12 sustain operations at the previous price per bed.

13 So, you know, if you have the same
14 amount of money and you've increased the price per
15 bed, there'll be fewer beds which to me is
16 unacceptable. So--but the assumption then that
17 there'll be fewer LGBTQ beds proportionately, you
18 should not reach that conclusion. I don't believe
19 that will be the final result. We may not know
20 that answer until July or August--

21 MR. MICHAELS: [Interposing] Well I
22 look forward to hearing, you know, what the
23 results of that are going to be. But I do
24 understand--like--I hope that in determining the
25 discretionary monies that you can--that these

1

2 LGBTQ beds that could be lost won't be. That's
3 all.

4

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: You see I
5 would hope that no beds are going to be lost and
6 so--

7

MR. MICHAELS: [Interposing] And
8 therefore--and--

9

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --and
10 therefore the issue of who's lost more
11 disproportionately will be moot. And that's my
12 goal, that, you know, my goal would be that we get
13 that stimulus money and we're able increase the
14 beds. And you can be sure that this Council has
15 been extraordinarily mindful of the fact that as
16 many as 40% of the runaway and homeless youth
17 identify as LGBTQ and therefore, you know, having
18 facilities that are welcoming to that population
19 are absolutely, positively necessary. So--and I
20 think we have allocated that money in the past.
21 With that kind of track record, so I think you can
22 have confidence that if we get the opportunity to
23 do so again that we will.

24

MR. MICHAELS: I appreciate that.

25

And thank you for, you know, seeing that the beds

1

2 were, you know, funded appropriately.

3 [Pause]

4

MS. KENYATA TAISTE: Hi. I'm

5

Kenyata Taiste [phonetic]. I just wanted to thank

6

you for saying my last name correctly 'cause most

7

people don't. You're like Tasty? I'm like no,

8

that's not right. So basically I'm here to talk

9

about my experience in the homeless shelter of

10

Sylvia's Place and AFC. Mostly Sylvia's Place

11

'cause Sylvia's Place to me is like my second

12

home.

13

And I'm originally from Charleston,

14

South Carolina. And to--I can't, hum. I can't

15

necessarily complain about my life or the way that

16

I was brought up or the things that have happened

17

to my life 'cause it's made me such a stronger

18

person today. But I have gone through a lot.

19

Where my mom died and a guy that I

20

trusted who was a friend of the family, sexually--

21

well I was staying with him and he sexually

22

assaulted me in a way so that I could stay with

23

him. And it was crazy. Which is one of the main

24

reasons why I left the South. Not--and also to

25

transition into the woman that I am today.

1
2 But, so I eventually, I left South
3 Carolina to move to New York City and I found
4 Sylvia's Place through some friends of mine, or
5 through some friends that I met at the LGBTQ
6 Center on 13th Street in the Village or Chelsea or
7 wherever that area is called.

8 And they brought me back to
9 Sylvia's Place and I was like, I'm, I'm not, ah,
10 well one would think that I'm not a homeless
11 shelter type looking person because in my--I've
12 never been in a circumstance in which it would,
13 you know, enable me to be homeless and living in a
14 shelter. So like I stayed at Sylvia's for a month
15 I think or two months. And I was like, you know,
16 I just can't--I can't take being homeless, like
17 it's just not for me.

18 So I--there's another guy that I
19 met, he basically was like, you know I really want
20 you to be with me. I'll give you everything you
21 want as long as you sleep with me. And I'm like...
22 hum. Should I move away and basically have sex
23 with this guy that I'm not attracted to or should
24 I stay here and fight and, you know, become
25 stronger? So I moved.

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And I was like completely over it. It was just wasn't doing anything for me. So I'm in--I was like you know what? It's time for me to be a grown person and to move back to New York City. So I came back and I came straight back to Sylvia's Place and I was like, you know what? I have a lot of pride and that's something that I need to work on.

So I stayed there and Kate and Tenino [phonetic] and basically the staff there at Sylvia's Place, like they really helped me to like get my, like important documents ready. Like figure out if I wanted to go to school. And like, basically like a lot of the things that most people at Sylvia's Place don't even like consider even, you know, thinking about. But we always like push them to anyway.

So like they basically helped me and then I eventually got my first apartment here. And I was living in the Bronx. And my landlord was this slumlord actually. And he eventually kicked me and like stole all my belongings. And so--because like I became so close to the staff at Sylvia's Place and then the staff at MCCNY like

1
2 it's like--it's like my second home, like I always
3 feel safe and secure and I always know that if I
4 ever needed help or needed someone to talk to that
5 they will always be there for me, or at least I
6 hope, for the love of god I hope that they'll
7 always be there for me.

8 And so like they allowed me to come
9 back and I stayed there for a month or two until I
10 got invited to move into an AFC emergency housing.
11 In which, that was nice. And they helped me out
12 too. But it really wasn't that fabulous.

13 So I eventually had to leave ALC
14 because I had a six months'--I could only stay
15 there for six months. And I came back to Sylvia's
16 Place and basically every time I come back to
17 Sylvia's Place like the transgendered girls,
18 because I am a transgendered woman and they like
19 look up to me and I don't know why but they do.
20 'Cause I guess they believe my life is so much
21 more fabulous than theirs, and I'm like no it
22 really isn't. Because like they talk to me about
23 the things that go on in their lives like how
24 they're like going to The Village to go like make
25 some money.

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And I'm like, you know, I went to college and although I'm in the same boat as you, I'm struggling to like make it for myself. It just, it kind of hurts me 'cause I'm like I understand that they're struggling or like they're going out there to make money so that they can look appropriate or close enough to appropriate to find a job. And only to go to this job and--or to--this employment or place of employment, to be turned down because of who they are. And for one that's not fair.

And then whenever they go to make this money by working The Stroll and, you know, working Port Authority and all these other places, like they don't necessarily have to be selling themselves or being pimped out by these guys who are like I love you because you're amazing. Which is, you know, a complete lie.

But sorry, this is just how I speak. [Chuckles] But it's like, even the police officers like give them--like the--okay. So the police officers either arrest them or use their services. And it's like aren't you supposed to be like protecting and upholding the law? That's so

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like messed up. I just don't get it.

So. These--my girls, 'cause they're my girls and I love them. And we have to look out for each other because if we don't, then who will? Like guys try and use us. Everyone always tries to use us for how we look 'cause I guess we're like a, what's the word I'm looking for, like a fantasy, I guess in some ways, to some people.

And so we're like always, guys are always like trying to use us for who we are not accepting us for who we are, but trying to use us for what we are. And it's just really messed up.

But Sylvia's Place has like done so many--has helped so many people in the LGBTQ, especially in the transgendered community because like I said they're--there's--the girls are selling themselves to get money to buy these things--

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Interposing]

Are you living in Sylvia's Place now--

MS. TAISTE: [Interposing] Yes I

am.

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --or? Okay.

1

2 So you haven't yet been able to transition back
3 into your own apartment--

4

MS. TAISTE: [Interposing] Yes
5 actually I'm the process of finding an apartment.
6 I do have a day job and a night job.

7

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: That was the
8 next question.

9

MS. TAISTE: [chuckling]

10

CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay.

11

MS. TAISTE: But it's just--because
12 of this economy it's crazy and everything's super
13 expensive and... so I'm like I'm trying to look for
14 an apartment or a room or something that I will
15 feel safe in. And like also, I also want to talk
16 about how transgender girls--and not saying that
17 genetic girls aren't--or anyone's more or better
18 than the other, but like to be a trans-woman, I
19 feel, at least, 'cause you know, I never, you
20 know, I'm not--genetic girls can have babies.

21

I feel like it's more--or we're
22 more prone to more problems than--especially a
23 higher risk for being murdered because... especially
24 the girls who work the streets or who sell
25 themselves. It's like a guy would like pick a

1

2 girl up and because this is his fantasy to be with
3 a trans-woman, he's like okay I finally have my
4 trans-woman, and the next thing you know he kills
5 her because he's succumbed to this fantasy and
6 he's actually done what he wanted to do. So like
7 a lot of trans-women are murdered, all the time,
8 for being who they are, and for trying to make the
9 money that they're--that they're using to
10 basically like live and survive.

11 And although Sylvia's Place like
12 helps out with like, you know, food and there's
13 donations and such. Like people come in and drop
14 off like their used clothes and even, newly bought
15 clothes. It's like sometimes that just isn't
16 enough because hormone therapy and although
17 Sylvia's helps with getting people to like start
18 Medicaid or like helps them like get their proper
19 paperwork, it's just... I don't know. I don't know.
20 Like there's so many ways I can describe how
21 awesome Sylvia's Place is. And how much help that
22 they need. But like in my eye they're always
23 going to be amazing.

24 Like there's other agencies out
25 there who can probably do so much more and so much

1
2 better things that Sylvia possibly can, Sylvia's
3 Place, and MCCNY can but to me they're amazing.
4 And I know how much they need help. And I
5 actually volunteer my time at both MCCNY Church
6 services and at Sylvia's Place but I--just being
7 able to talk to the girls and like identify with,
8 you know, what they're going through and like
9 trying to like push them in the opposite way of
10 being--of not being exploited but to like get
11 their live together. It's crazy.

12 [Pause]

13 MS. WOOD: Okay. I have the
14 daunting task of following Kenyata. But I'm
15 Frances Wood. I am the Administrator for MCCNY
16 Charities which operates MCCNY Homeless Youth
17 Services which operates Sylvia's Place.

18 For 6 Years, MCCNY Homeless Youth
19 Services has been serving one of New York City's
20 most vulnerable and overlooked populations;
21 runaway and homeless LGBTQ youth and young adults.
22 Operating in midtown Manhattan, our drop-in
23 program and shelter sees about 1,000 clients per
24 year and meets the needs of LGBTQ identified

1
2 homeless young people aged 16-24, but we have had
3 clients as young as 13 years old.

4 While our clients' issues and needs
5 are as varied as any population can expect, one
6 common thread is the shocking lack of services
7 that continues to shrink as government and private
8 funding sources dry up. We fully support and are
9 encouraged by recent Proposed Resolution No.
10 1227-A, which among other things, seeks to
11 identify LGBTQ youth as a unique population when
12 developing policy and programming for the general
13 runaway and homeless youth population.

14 One alarming trend that our staff
15 has witnessed among our youth is their increased
16 risk and instances of sexual exploitation. LGBTQ
17 individuals have an identifiable vulnerability
18 which manifests at very early stages of childhood
19 development. Sexual predators have and continue
20 to identify this trait among young people, which
21 leads to higher rates of sexual abuse and
22 exploitation of minors often before the LGBTQ
23 individual has had an opportunity to go through
24 the adolescent development and self-identification
25 stages leading up to adulthood.

1
2 Survival sex within the LGBTQ
3 homeless youth population has become a massive
4 problem and requires immediate attention from
5 leaders of the local and state community. Young
6 people dealing with sexual orientation and gender
7 identity issues are more vulnerable to verbal,
8 physical, and especially to sexual abuse because
9 of their increased tendency to turn to survival
10 sex due to the overwhelming lack of food, shelter
11 and other services designed to meet their unique
12 needs during this critical final stage in their
13 development into adulthood.

14 The trauma of becoming homeless is
15 undeniable, and this specific population reports
16 experiencing a more complicated history of trauma
17 than their straight counterparts. On any given
18 night, there are as many as 3,200 youth on the
19 streets of New York, and recent statistics suggest
20 that as many as 40% of these youth are LGBTQ
21 identified and 10% did not identify a gender,
22 which is vastly disproportional to the general
23 population.

24 Currently, there are 75 beds
25 appropriate for LGBTQ homeless youth and that

1
2 number is soon to drop to 65, because of DYCD
3 funding cuts which have eliminated some of the
4 LGBTQ specific programming that New York City
5 service providers has spent the past 6 years
6 creating. That leaves over 650 LGBTQ young people
7 fending for their lives on the streets and
8 searching for ways to survive in the harsh New
9 York City environment.

10 These young people are turning to
11 adult offering them shelter, food and/or money in
12 exchange for sex. Because these youth are in such
13 dire situations, they are often coaxed into
14 dangerous sexual situations including rape and
15 unprotected sex. Our program is seeing the
16 numbers of HIV positive rising dramatically and
17 more youth are testing positive for other STIs.
18 The stories of many of our clients include long
19 histories of family abuse, domestic abuse,
20 substance, hostile home environments, unsafe
21 foster care situations and involvement in the
22 criminal justice system.

23 When they find themselves homeless,
24 these patterns of abuse continue and increase
25 exponentially as many of them use survival sex as

1
2 a way to stay afloat because they are not being
3 provided adequate food and shelter which are basic
4 survival needs.

5 MCCNY Homeless Youth Services
6 reaches many clients in a year, but for every one
7 LGBTQ homeless youth we serve in a year, there are
8 countless others attempting to find their way on
9 the streets. Without agencies to lead them into
10 stable, housing, employment, education, and proper
11 medical services, survival sex often falsely
12 emerges as their only option.

13 Survival sex greatly increases a
14 person risk of turning to sex work as a
15 profession. Until the basic survival needs are
16 addressed, we as a community will not be able to
17 adequately address the high risk behavior of sex
18 work. Sexual exploitation of our youth and young
19 adults needs to stop now. And our agency is
20 joining others in the community to advocate for
21 solutions to this growing problem. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: I want to thank
23 all three of you for your testimony, particularly
24 Kenya. I know it's got to be a little daunting
25 and for you to come forward, you know, here and

1
2 testify and we appreciate it very, very much.
3 Especially, you know, those who come here and
4 speak of their own personal experience and you too
5 Lucky. I know that you're a lot more familiar
6 with coming here to testify. So I appreciate it
7 very, very much. And--

8 MS. TAISTE: [Interposing] Thank
9 you.

10 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --we will do
11 our very best as we go through the budget process
12 to make sure that the particular needs of the
13 LGBTQ young people who are living on our streets
14 are met, or at least as much as we can. So thank
15 you very much.

16 Our final panel is Paul Sealy from
17 SCO Family Services and Mark Rodriguez from the
18 Political Parent Party.

19 [Pause]

20 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Or just Paul as
21 the case may be.

22 [Pause]

23 MR. PAUL SEALY: Good afternoon.
24 Good afternoon. I just wanted to just testify
25 relative to our experiences over the last seven

1
2 years and coming, rendering testimony in regards
3 to RHY.

4 And we still come back to the same
5 fundamental issue that RHY services, despite the
6 fact that it's the catchall for young people that
7 are outside of mandated services in New York City
8 and New York State, still remains marginalized
9 when it comes to funding, and in terms of
10 priorities set forth by the City, and when I say
11 the City, I'm not speaking about folks in this
12 room specifically, but in regards to the Mayor's
13 budget and in regards to him identifying that RHY
14 services are paramount to the survival of young
15 people in New York City.

16 In New York State, our Governor's
17 Office, and Office of Children and Family
18 Services, as well, marginalized RHY programming.
19 Our programming essentially is the catchall for
20 what mandated services fail to provide for young
21 people.

22 Whether it be a young person that
23 ages out of ACS, they end up in our services.
24 Whether it be a young person that is categorized
25 and placed in a lockdown facility as the young

1
2 people demonstrated this morning, that's a true
3 reflection of an RHY young person. They're either
4 LGBTQ, run, LGBTQ, pregnant or parenting, young
5 people that are--have been involved in the
6 criminal justice system, and as a result of those
7 systems essentially not equipping a young person
8 over a long period of time with the necessary
9 services and things that they need for a person to
10 be just successful in life.

11 A caring nurturing environment, a
12 stable suitable environment, one that's focused on
13 a young person's progress towards adulthood. It's
14 not easy as these young peoples demonstrated to
15 live in New York City without support.

16 And so many of our young people that
17 we need today to day don't have the supports
18 necessary in order for a human being to be able to
19 be successful but yet there's a requirement for
20 them to do so by all the other powers that be.

21 We have a great challenge and the
22 challenge is to have the powers that be recognize
23 that the services that runaway and homeless youth
24 service providers and providers not only in New
25 York City but in New York State as well, that we

1
2 provide are paramount towards our success as a
3 community. And until folks recognize that, we're
4 going to continue to have hearing after hearing
5 after hearing about the marginalization and how
6 poorly funded RHY programming is.

7 And I would like to see a day when
8 the State budget recognizes RHY as a legitimate
9 resource. If you look at how RHY is funded in
10 comparison to mandated services in New York State
11 and in New York City it's ridiculous. We're
12 asking for less than 4% of monies that are
13 allocated towards--that are allocated towards
14 homeless services. The last time I checked if you
15 train a tree, my grandmother always would tell me
16 this, you train a tree when it's small for when it
17 grows bigger, you can't train it.

18 So our work is paramount towards I
19 can't say eradicating because there are so many
20 different things that go into a person being
21 homeless, but in order to be able to reduce the
22 impact of homelessness on adults and families in
23 New York City it's best that we get a start. The
24 earlier we get the start, the better it will be.

1
2 And clearly our programs show that
3 with the appropriate supports of so many
4 individuals in New York City we're able to curb
5 the potential for young people to become
6 chronically homeless adults. I know that about
7 six years ago our Mayor set a plan to essentially
8 end homelessness which I know essentially is a
9 political statement as we clearly know across this
10 country. But one of the things that I would like
11 to see is, is that we make a true commitment to
12 helping people have just the minimal skills
13 necessary in order for them to be able to self-
14 sustain.

15 And that's what we do in RHY. We
16 help young people to have the self-esteem
17 necessary to be able to self-sustain. If, as we
18 hear young people testify about being sexually
19 exploited, it's based on young people just having
20 that core self-esteem. We heard the young lady
21 speak about the fact that she felt, based on how
22 she was labeled by her mother, that essentially a
23 mother that loved her, that she essentially didn't
24 feel that her mom could understand what she was
25 truly going through because she essentially

1

2 labeled her. So many of our young people have
3 been labeled, stigmatized, and as a result of it,
4 they're so downtrodden that they resort to things
5 that are detrimental towards their wellbeing.

6

7 In RHY we're able to have them shift
8 away from that and see the true possibility of
9 what greatness lie within. So as RHY providers
10 and those that are left in the room, we have a
11 distinct responsibility to band together, and
12 that's what's most important.

12

13 We all have our priorities. I know.
14 We all have our love and admiration and our
15 passion towards specific populations. But we're
16 best served if together we work in unison in order
17 to be able to have the powers that be recognize
18 that RHY is a necessary service. That the
19 services that we provide are essential to the
20 growth of young people within New York City and
21 New York State.

21

22 So I ask each and every one of you
23 guys, you can rely on me. I'm willing to help
24 you. For our providers that are not certified
25 because we know, in order to be in the game,
you've got to play the game. That's clear.

1
2 So if the powers that be need you to
3 jump through hoops, at some point you've got to
4 jump through hoops. But trust me, the greatest
5 thing about it is that once you jump through the
6 necessary hoops, there's not a great deal--one of
7 the greatest things about RHY is it allows you to
8 be able to set up your program as necessary as you
9 need it to be, your services.

10 So you know, they count on you as
11 the experts. You work with young people every
12 day. So therefore, but you have to make the
13 concession, in order to be able to get in the
14 game. You can't play the game if you're not in
15 it.

16 So let's help one another. Who's in
17 the game? Help folks get in the game. Who's not--
18 -who's in the game? Help folks stay in the game.
19 That's what I do. That's what we do at SCO.
20 We're willing to help whoever needs help in order
21 to be able to be successful because the greater
22 cause is there's this one homeless young person,
23 whether they be sexually exploited, pregnant and
24 parenting, LGBTQ, adjudicated young person in New

1
2 York City, is one too many. And we can't stand
3 for that. So thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thank you Paul
5 and thank you for everything that SCO does and
6 thank you for giving 90% of my closing statement--

7 [Laughter]

8 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: All kidding
9 aside, you know, you made reference to the, you
10 know, holding hearings. And this is our 13th on
11 this subject of runaway and homeless youth. And
12 we'll continue to hold hearings even if I'm the
13 only person sitting here. And we'll continue to
14 hold hearings until we've accomplished everything
15 that could possibly be accomplished.

16 I want to repeat my disappointment
17 at the fact that we were talking to ourselves here
18 today. And that, you know, there wasn't a single
19 person who felt the need to walk upstairs from
20 Room 9 and say, you know, this is an important
21 story about the lives of New Yorkers.

22 And I dare say, had they been here,
23 particularly to hear the front line stories of
24 those that were sexually exploited and have
25 managed to fight their way out of it and rise

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2 about it and make their lives into constructive
3 existences, that they might actually have been
4 fascinated by it. They might have actually
5 written about it. They might have found that New
6 Yorkers really do care.

7 I think the point of this hearing,
8 frankly, I knew most of the thing that I heard
9 here today already. We've read them. We've, you
10 know, we've seen the reports. All of us who
11 participate on the RHY Task Force know all these
12 things.

13 The point was to shine a light on
14 it, to try and put a face on it, to let people,
15 average people in New York understand why this is
16 a priority. And you've all heard me say this and
17 it's apropos of some of Paul's remarks, if you
18 can't get your arms around the compassion of a
19 young person who has not been able to have what
20 many of us took for granted, which is a nurturing,
21 loving environment in their home, to the point
22 that they actually had to leave or chose to leave
23 because it didn't exist.

24 If you can't get your hands around
25 that then at least figure that every person, every

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2 young person that's left on the streets is more
3 likely to become HIV positive, more likely to
4 become a burden to the criminal or juvenile
5 justice system, more likely to develop a mental
6 disability.

7 The cost of dealing with any one of
8 those things is more than the cost of a shelter
9 bed. And that is something that everybody in
10 government needs to understand. And so, you know,
11 whether it's a matter of compassion or just common
12 sense in dealing with a problem, nipping a problem
13 in the bud before it becomes a bigger problem,
14 that's what these hearings are about.

15 And I thank all of you who've
16 testified, thank all of you who have participated
17 with us in our Task Force. And I want to thank
18 Megan Annitto and Mike Benjamin and Rocco
19 D'Angelo, our Committee staff for continuing to do
20 the work to put these hearings together.

21 I guess I will say that the one
22 thing that I have determined in--that is new today
23 is that we will be holding a hearing sometime in
24 the fall on the implementation of the Safe Harbor
25 Act.

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2 We will invite not just the NYPD but
3 the State of New York, OCFS, anyone else that we
4 feel is necessary to make sure that the Safe
5 Harbor Act is in fact implemented, not just in
6 spirit, but in reality because clearly it is the
7 appropriate approach.

8 But, you know, it's got to be real
9 and not just a principle. It's going to take a
10 while for the culture to change so that people
11 understand that a child who is on the street or
12 otherwise selling their body is not a criminal but
13 they are a victim. There is a reason, there are
14 circumstances that have put them there.

15 And the best answer would be very
16 similar to D. A. Heinz's DTAP program for
17 nonviolent drug offenders, would be to provide the
18 kind of support services that will get them out of
19 that life, into a self-sustaining, you know,
20 lifestyle that allows themselves to respect
21 themselves and respect others and be productive
22 human beings. And that is the goal. That is all
23 our goal. I thank you all for your participation
24 today. And I need to adjourn this hearing.

25 [Gavel banging]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Laura L. Springate certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura L. Springate". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Signature Laura L. Springate

Date May 21, 2009